

STONESTHROW DIRECTORY



SAVE THE PLANET ONE BIRD AT A TIME P.26

WHY WE SHOULD EAT LOCALLY GROWN FOOD P.32

USEFUL LOCAL TELEPHONE NUMBERS / ARTICLES / HOROSCOPES

WHAT'S ON / LOCAL RESTAURANTS & TAKEAWAYS



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AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2022

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

"We're all going on a Summer holiday..." August marks the long break for pupils, students and teachers across the UK and it's anticipated that millions of us will be jetting off on holiday for sand, sea, swimming pools, sangria and sunbeds – especially after all the limitations that were placed on us during the last two Summers. One of the many benefits of the Summer is the positive effect that it has on many people's mental health. The sun gives us more vitamin D, which raises energy levels and just simply makes us feel happier. So there's no excuse for not getting out and about in the sunshine (safely, of course)!

There are a couple of articles in this magazine, both encouraging us to make positive changes in our every day life to preserve the world we are living in by the way we shop and eat and by supporting our wildlife, starting with our own back garden. Plenty of events are taking place this Summer, as well as regular meetings resumed by your local charitable organisations: see p.24-25 for more. Our fleet of advertisers are all trusted local experts in their field and bring years of experience along with the quality product or service they provide. Please remember to mention Stonestrow Directories when calling, so we can introduce you to more local talent, offers and discounts available exclusively to our magazine readers.

Whatever August and September have in store for you, we hope you manage to have at least a short break away from your routine and spend some time in the sun. Even if you can't take a plane to somewhere warm and exotic, our region is abundant with beautiful and inspirational places where you can relax, get up close and personal with nature, and feed your body and soul.

Here is the date of this year's last Bank Holiday:

29th August - Summer Bank Holiday.

Have a great couple of months and whatever you do - keep yourself and your loved ones safe.

Yours, Stonestrow Publications

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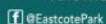
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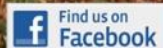
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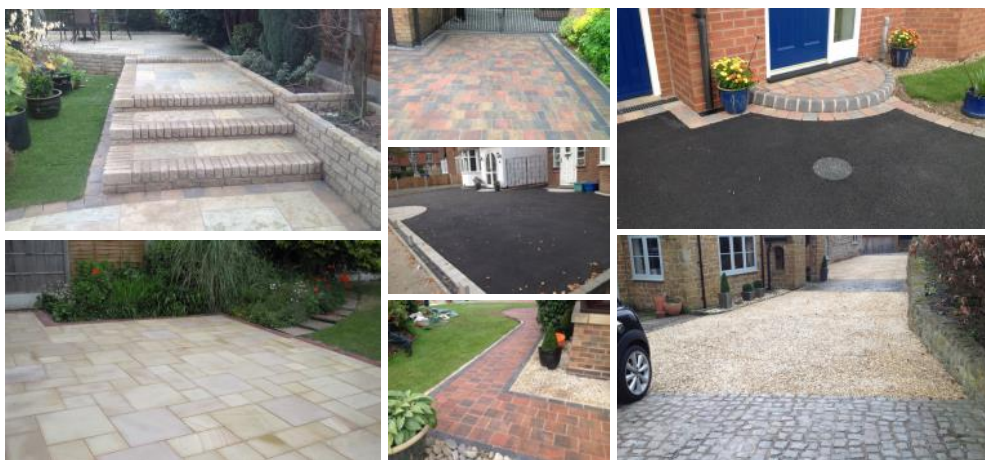
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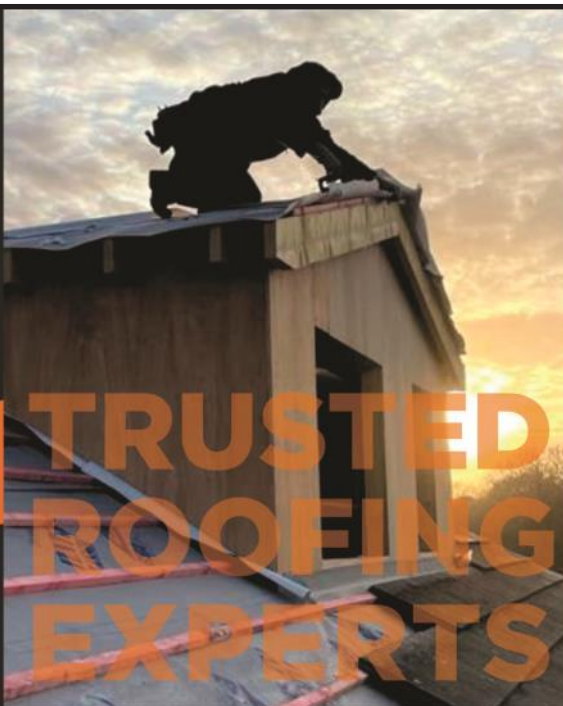
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WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

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Date: every Saturday / Time: 10am - 11.30am /
Venue: Balsall Common Village Hall, 112 Station
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Date: Every 2nd Wednesday of the month /
Time: 1.30pm - 3pm / Balsall Common Village
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Manners on 13th October and a practical

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Heart of England WI Facebook page or by
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Balsall Common Fun Run

Date: 18th of September / Time: all day / Venue:
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us on 01676 532 590 or visit www.solihull.gov.uk/library-events

Cinema Organ Society

Date: 4th of September / Time: Doors open 1.30
pm. Curtain up 2.30 pm / Venue: Fentham Hall,
Marsh Lane, Hampton-in-Arden, B92 0AH
Our guest organist today is Simon Gledhill.
Admission £10 on the door, including
refreshments and parking. Please telephone
01564 794778 for more details.
www.facebook.com/COSMidlandsCompton, or
www.cinema-organs.org.uk

Berkswell and Balsall Common Sports & Community Association

Date: varied / Time: varied / Venue: The Lant,
Meeting House Lane, Balsall Common
With cricket, hockey, running, sailing and tennis
clubs plus a clubhouse and bar. Facilities also
available for private hire. See www.bbcscs.co.uk
or Facebook - BBCSCA / Berkswell Sports Bar for
more information.

Firebird Singers

Date: every Friday / Time: 7pm—9pm / Venue:
Meriden Village Hall, Main Road, Meriden
Anyone that enjoys singing is welcome to join the
choir. We sing to raise money for worthwhile
causes. Make new friends, have a good sing song
and a cup of tea at half time. If you are interested
in joining the choir Please contact Anna
on 07792525999 or Val on 01676 522963

Fashion Xpression: Tote Bag

Date: 11th of August / Time: 10am—2pm /
Venue: Balsall Common Library
Take part in fun activities and learn new skills.
Workshops designed to develop curiosity and
build self-confidence, while supporting wellbeing.
Express your personality through colour and

patterns - and do it sustainably! Take home a unique tote bag that'll turn heads! FREE places (including lunch) for children eligible for benefits-related free school meals. £30 per day for children who are not eligible. Please book your places through www.artattheheartcic.org or your school office (where schools are participating). Don't forget to complete the consent form (available on the website).

Gadgeteers Crafts

Date: 16th of August / Time: 10am—1pm / Venue: Balsall Common Library
Drop into the library and make some fun creations to celebrate the Summer Reading Challenge 2022—Gadgeteers! Suitable for ages 5 and up, accompanied by their grown-ups. For more details visit www.solihull.gov.uk/library-events

Mystery Mosaic: The Enchanted Forest

Date: 23rd of August / Time: 10am—2pm / Venue: Balsall Common Library
Take part in fun activities and learn new skills. Workshops designed to develop curiosity and build self-confidence, while supporting wellbeing. Have fun adding your own mystical creatures to a giant community mosaic. Take part in telling a story to reveal the secrets of the Enchanted Forest. FREE places (including lunch) for children eligible for benefits-related free school meals. £30 per day for children who are not eligible. Please

book your places through www.artattheheartcic.org or your school office (where schools are participating). Don't forget to complete the consent form (available on the website).

Concert in Knowle

Date: 10th of September / Time: 7.30pm / Venue: Knowle Village Hall
The Knowle Village Hall Association have pleasure in presenting the Birmingham Canoldir Male Choir and the Birmingham Icknield Male Voice Choir " Singing Together", led by Musical Director Steve Roche. This will be a lovely evening of song by two very distinguished choirs. Tickets £15.00 available from Stephen Yeomans: 01564 778163; Carolyn Abbott : 01564 779898 ; and from the Friday Coffee Morning at Knowle Village Hall: 10am –12pm. The concert is in aid of the Hall Refurbishment Fund.

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SAVE THE PLANET

ONE BIRD AT A TIME



Imagine no bird song, no sight of busy birds building nests, feeding their young, or splashing in a small puddle.

Our bird population is experiencing a rapid decline...there has been an 89% drop in numbers since 1967, and previously common birds such as sparrows, chaffinches, starlings, skylarks, thrushes, yellowhammers are all on the red list for decline.

We have lost over 69% of house sparrows since 1970!

WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

Farming practices, such as grubbing out hedges, ploughing to the very edge of fields, increasing use of pesticides...no insects ...no birds.

Building of houses and roads and loss of green space.

Places to shelter and nest is another factor. We take the land to build on but fail to understand the then even greater need to grow hedges, trees, dense shrubs and bushes, so birds have shelter and safe places to nest.

More people about, more domestic cats, disturbance of birds generally.

DOES IT MATTER?

What do birds really do for us?

Birds control insect pests. A single breeding pair of blue tits with up to 10 fledglings need to catch about 10,000 small green caterpillars during the time the babies are in the nest (around 3 weeks).

One brilliant pest control agent!

They protect our crops, our trees and our



gardens.

Birds eat our aphids, ticks, beetles, mosquitoes, mice, slugs and snails.

Birds act as a vital suppressor of insect pests, a critical part of our eco structure.

The larger birds will take a mouse, and owls are masters of mice control! They may well eat 2 to 3 mice a night.

Birds eat seeds, so control our weed population.

Plant food. Bird droppings fertilize the soil.

Health. Bird song is known to reduce stress and blood pressure.

HOW CAN WE HELP THEM?

Plant shrubs, trees and hedges, to provide shelter, insect food, and nesting sites. Rowan and crab apple trees, cotoneasters, honeysuckle, holly, sunflowers to name but a few that provide berries and seeds.

Never trim hedges between March 1st to September 1st. It is illegal to disturb nesting birds, their eggs or young.

Avoid covering your garden with decking or gravel. No bird ever found its breakfast worm in our decking!

Put up nesting boxes, at over 5 to 15 feet up, not in strong sun or wind.

Leave out shallow dishes of water for the birds to bathe in...it helps to keep feathers clean and so enables birds to fly well. Keep the water clean, never more than 2 inches deep, and with a stable stone in the water for a bird to stand on.

Avoid all insecticides

You can provide suitable food, but be consistent, birds become reliant on our easy meals. Some will even wait at the set time for you to come, but do ensure it is not close to bushes that cats can hide in!

OUR REWARD is insect and mouse control. Yes, but find me the person who doesn't love the sight and sound of birds.

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HOROSCOPES: AUGUST / SEPTEMBER

ARIES MARCH 21 - APRIL 20

Warrior planet Mars, your ruler, is practical and strong in Taurus indicating that your financial sector is in focus and there could be some major changes on the way. Stay vigilant and postpone and high risk ventures. The Aquarian full moon on the 12th encourages you to work with new business partners as opportunities for new community projects could be on the horizon. September: Energetic Mars, your ruling planet, is in Gemini all month giving your vitality and your self-confidence an extra boost. All forms of communication can be looked at in a different light. Adjustments to your health and wellbeing are also favoured as the full moon in intuitive Pisces on the 18th gives you a chance to tune into your inner needs.

TAURUS APRIL 21 - MAY 21

August could turn out to be the most important month this year as maverick Uranus and dynamic Mars join up in your sign. Be prepared as your outlook on most things in your life will be up for radical transformation and change. Love and romance planet Venus is in soft and gentle Cancer, suggesting that you really want to make a relationship work. September: The Sun illuminates the love sector of your chart this month, pushing you to be open and honest about your relationships and all things to do with your romantic encounters. Venus enters practical Virgo on the 4th highlighting your creativity and suggesting that a new project could now get underway. The Pisces full moon on the 10th offers an intuitive boost.

GEMINI MAY 22 - JUNE 21

Venus is in your financial area until the 12th, make the most of this fortunate transit by restructuring the way you plan and think and be sure to remain open to exciting opportunities that are coming your way. Energetic Mars enters your sign on the 20th indicating that this is a highly creative month and you are at your best when working with others on a personal level. Warrior planet Mars is in your sign all month giving your vitality a welcome boost. Take care that you don't scatter your energy and try to remain focused on important projects. September is positive for sorting through domestic issues and any space clearing that needs doing is favoured. The Libra new moon on the 25th favours all things romantic.

CANCER JUNE 22 - JULY 22

During August the Leo Sun suggests that creative money making schemes are at an all-time high. Take advantage of the powerful energy of the Aquarian new moon on the 12th, this unique energy should offer insight into some practical new ideas that leave you feeling successful and prosperous. The Virgo new moon is particularly auspicious for communicating your wishes. September: Venus changes sign on the 4th, by arriving in Virgo she suggests that you make a very practical review of an important relationship and make any necessary changes. Interesting developments begin to emerge as dynamic Mars in Gemini encourages you to make some innovative new business plans and really tune into your intuition.

LEO JULY 23 - AUGUST 23

August is your special time as the Sun shines brightly in your sign indicating that you can take time out to relax and enjoy your life. Mighty Jupiter is powerful and strong in fiery Aries confirming a particularly exciting and festive time ahead. Warrior planet Mars in Taurus, encourages you to take up the challenge on an important project, you'll need to use your intuition to make necessary changes. September: The love planet Venus leaves your sign on the 4th, suggesting that now is the time to take a more serious approach to where you are in an important relationship. Mars is energetic and curious in Gemini, encouraging you to join up with a new circle of friends and be open to some exciting opportunities.

VIRGO AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 22

August offers a radical shake up in anything to do with your higher education and with any plans for future travel. Communicative Mercury, your ruler, is in your sign from the 4th suggesting that exciting new beginnings are evident. The love planet Venus is gentle and romantic in the sign of Cancer until the 12th, a new travel companion may well appear on the horizon. September: It's your birthday month and as dynamic Mars in Gemini illuminates the high point of your chart your attention turns to your ambition and to reaching your goals. Use this time to be bold and confident and make some solid plans for your future. Creativity is highlighted and good communication is the key for providing new solutions and innovations.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23 - OCTOBER 23

August puts the emphasis on your joint finances and resources as Mars and Uranus in Taurus ensure that some radical changes are about to take place. Stern Saturn in Aquarius makes a challenging aspect and urges patience and caution with any ideas for new ventures. The new moon in practical Virgo on the 27th brings your intuition to the forefront. September: Mercury, the sign of commerce and communication, goes in to the retrograde phase in your sign on the 10th. This is not the best month to stride forward with new plans, better to use this time wisely for balanced communication and assessing any new business ideas. The new moon in your sign on the 25th offers excellent opportunities for new beginnings.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22

Warrior planet Mars and unpredictable Uranus are together in your opposite sign of Taurus flagging up some challenges within your relationship. Adjustments will need to be made so that you can move forward positively. The Virgo new moon on the 27th offers new insight around putting yourself first and doing what makes you feel really happy and fulfilled. September: Energetic Mars is illuminating the finance and resource sector of your chart, Mars in Gemini can offer many ideas and make you feel rather scattered. Do what you can to focus on the best possible outcomes. The Pisces full moon on the 10th stimulates your intuitive side and gives you the opportunity to see new ways forward based on faith and trust.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 21

August is an optimistic time for Sagittarians as positive planetary activity is at its height. Abundant Jupiter, your ruler, is courageous and optimistic in fiery Aries and powerful Mars and Uranus, both in Taurus, ensure that there are positive changes on the horizon. Reorganisation is essential, particularly around the time of the Virgo new moon on the 27th. September: Your goals and ambitions are the focus for this month as the radiant Sun highlights your career potential. Important plans should be completed before Mercury goes retrograde on the 10th. The Pisces new moon, also on the 10th, sets the pace for positive new areas of development within your home, your awareness and intuition should be at their peak.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22 - JANUARY 20

August brings some important personal issues to your attention as Stern Saturn, your ruler, makes a challenging aspect to abundant Jupiter in Aries. Facing facts both personally and professionally will eventually make your life much easier as you progress forwards. Venus is in positive position, indicating that you might be entering into a new relationship. Your health and wellbeing are big in focus during September as energetic Mars illuminates this area of your life demanding that you make some changes. Certain decisions that you have been putting off for a while will need your full attention now. The radiant Sun shines in Virgo giving you the opportunity to broaden your horizons and plan some further study.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 18

Home and family life come to the forefront during August as a variety of domestic issues demand your attention. Venus arrives in your opposite sign of Leo on the 12th offering you the opportunity for some deep introspection as to where creative changes need to take place. The full moon in your sign on the same day is both powerful and illuminating. September puts love and happiness firmly in the spotlight, as energetic Mars travels through curious and playful Gemini all month. This looks exciting and could well clear the way for some new and exciting romantic encounters. The Pisces full moon on the 10th challenges you on a financial decision that needs investigation, for the best results trust your inner wisdom.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19 - MARCH 20

The Aquarian full moon on the 12th emphasises the area of your chart concerned with introspection and intuition. Good communication is now vital as a work related issue may need your full attention. Planetary energy is good, suggesting that you have the vitality and drive to be receptive to any exciting new opportunities that appear on the horizon. September's powerful full moon in your sign on the 10th turns your attention to how you appear and come across to others. You may be seeking a completely new image and are keen to develop your mystical and creative side. Love planet Venus arrives in practical Virgo on the 4th, suggesting that you need to review any interactions that are not working.

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WHY WE SHOULD EMBRACE EATING LOCALLY GROWN FOOD



IT'S HEALTHIER FOR YOU AND BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The role of the food we eat has come into the spotlight in addressing climate change, and it is now evident that we must do more to help global efforts by adapting our shopping and eating habits. More than half of our food now comes from abroad, mainly the EU, South America and South-East Asia. The further food travels, the greater the carbon footprint, and the greater the impact on the environment.

Local food is now a mainstream trend, with more and more people seeking out local options for fresh produce and other goods. But what qualifies as “local” food? And how big an impact does eating local food have on your health and the planet?

There is no legal definition of “local”, but the Campaign to Protect Rural England defines “local” as within 30 miles of where you live. But for some people, “buying local” is more about the values of small-scale and community-based producers than about a specific geographic configuration.

But why buy local food? Some commentators point to the drawbacks: the limited range of options, its often more expensive, and fresh products have a shorter shelf life. But there is an increasing demand from consumers to be told where our food comes from and the practices of the farmers that grow and produce it.

Buying locally has a wide range of benefits:

IT'S BETTER FOR YOUR HEALTH

Local foods often retain more nutrients because local produce is allowed to ripen naturally, while food that travels long distances is often picked before it's ripe. Choosing fruits and vegetables grown in season may also be healthier. For example, when researchers compared the vitamin C content of broccoli grown in season with broccoli imported out of season, they found the latter had only half the vitamin C.

IT'S BETTER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Food is one of the leading drivers of climate change. Eating more local food reduces CO2 emissions by reducing food miles — the distance food travels from farm to consumer. The Wildlife Trust estimates that if all our food came from within 20km of where we live, we could save £1.2 billion every year in environmental and congestion costs. Buying locally also means less packaging is used to keep food fresh and saleable, plus less plastic packaging means less waste getting into our seas and harming our wildlife.

IT'S BETTER FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY

A recent report on the benefits of local food by the New Economics Foundation estimated that for every £1 spent in the local food network Growing Communities in London, a further £3.70 is generated in social, economic and environmental value. When you choose to buy locally grown food you are supporting a diverse food economy as well as creating jobs in farming and food production.

Shopping locally became a big thing during the pandemic, with nearly two-thirds of consumers in the UK rediscovering the High Street. Let's keep the trend alive!

About the Author:
Helen Say is a freelance copywriter and blogger
www.cblservices.co.uk



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