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# Love is in the air!

Welcome to the February edition

Hopefully you had a Valentine's Day full of love, whether it was love from a partner, a family member, a friend, or a pet!

But if Valentine's Day just passed you by, why not show your home some love instead? There's a wide range of local businesses and tradespeople in here who can help you improve your home, whether you need doors, driveways, or decorating...

Until next month,



Zoe Reece  
Tel: 07557 220585  
Email: [zoe@dorridgedirectory.com](mailto:zoe@dorridgedirectory.com)  
[www.shirleyindex.com](http://www.shirleyindex.com)

A woman with short brown hair, wearing a bright yellow sweater, is shouting into a white and blue megaphone. She has a joyful expression with her mouth wide open.

**GOT SOMETHING  
TO SHOUT ABOUT?**

**ADVERTISE IN THIS DIRECTORY**  
GET THE WORD OUT

**Contact Zoe Reece on 07557 220585 /  
[zoe@dorridgedirectory.com](mailto:zoe@dorridgedirectory.com)**

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# community events

## Community Support Coffee Mornings

**Last Tuesday of every month,  
11.15am-12.45pm**

### Drum & Monkey, Dorridge

Each coffee morning, organised by Bright Down Home Care, will feature a different guest speaker, focusing on topics such as dementia, MS, stroke recovery, and motor neurone disease. For the February meeting a representative from Parkinson's UK will be attending to give a talk and answer any questions. More info: 01564 784598.

## 80's Party Night

**28 February The Limes Country Lodge, Earlswood**

Get ready to disco back in time and join in for an evening of neon, nostalgia, and non-stop hits from the



decade of big hair and even bigger tunes. Dust off your leg warmers and shoulder pads, as fancy dress is encouraged, and embrace the era in style! Their DJ will be spinning the best 80's tracks, so grab your friends and family and get ready to rewind to the 80's in style! Tickets from [www.limescountrylodge.co.uk](http://www.limescountrylodge.co.uk)

## Crufts

**6-9 March  
NEC, Birmingham**

Get your tickets to the world's greatest dog show, brought to you by The Kennel Club, and get ready to experience the ultimate day out for dog lovers of all ages. To book please visit [www.thenec.co.uk/whats-on/crufts/](http://www.thenec.co.uk/whats-on/crufts/)

## West End Nights

**14-15 March  
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Come on a journey through shows from a history of over 60 years. Knowle Musical Society have performed everything from Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, Rodgers and Hammerstein classics to the premiere of the more unusual Tale of Two Cities musical and everything in between. In this show they will celebrate some of their favourite musicals. Call 0121 704 6962 to book.

## ABBA Tribute Night

**15 March  
National Motorcycle Museum,  
Hampton in Arden, Solihull**

Get ready for a night of dazzling music, unforgettable memories, and all the magic of ABBA! Tickets from £12.50 at [www.tributenightpromotions.co.uk](http://www.tributenightpromotions.co.uk)



# Restaurant Review **Limoncello, Shirley.**

A few friends had been to Limoncello Italian restaurant in Shirley recently, and recommended it, so we decided to go and try it for ourselves.

I love tapas style food, so we opted for a sharing starter with Parma ham, salami, 2 types of cheese, accompanied with some vegetables and bread. It was lovely – a perfect starter – light, delicious, and definitely whetted our appetite for the main course.

I opted for Pollo alla griglia (grilled chicken, but it sounds better in Italian!) with a mushroom and white wine



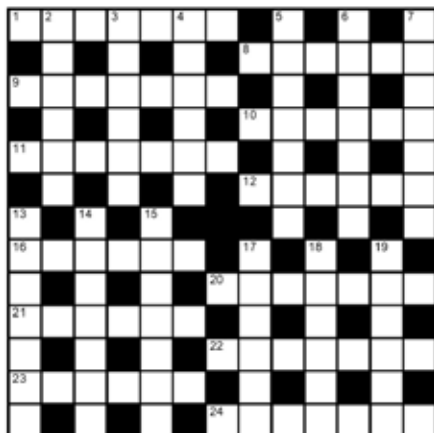
sauce, and a side of chips. The sauce was delicious, and there

was plenty of it. My partner had lasagne, which was delicious, although possibly a little too rich. However, we've had lasagne in other restaurants before which has been stodgy and dry – and this was the exact opposite.

After all that there was definitely no room for dessert, so we washed it all down with coffee and Amaretto. And of course... a free shot of limoncello, from Limoncello.

**To discover where to eat in Solihull please visit [www.hellosolihull.co.uk/eating-out-in-solihull](http://www.hellosolihull.co.uk/eating-out-in-solihull)**

## crossword



## clues

### Across

- 1 Herbaceous perennial with edible stalks (7)
- 8 Itsy bitsy, teeny weeny, yellow polka dot \_\_\_\_\_ (6)
- 9 The Moor of Venice, Shakespeare play (7)
- 10 Type of biscuit (6)
- 11 About-face (7)
- 12 Picked, selected (6)
- 16 Composer of Fantaisie-Impromptu (6)
- 20 Sang A Perfect Day and Walk on the Wild Side (3,4)
- 21 Tropical lizard (6)
- 22 Andalusian town (7)
- 23 Pollen-producing part of a flower (6)
- 24 Aerial, signal receiver (7)

### Down

- 2 Enmity, contempt (6)
- 3 Infused, fermented (6)
- 4 Appreciate, enjoy (6)
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_ West, Dalton and Spall (7)
- 6 Bystander, spectator (7)
- 7 Explanation of how the universe began (7)
- 13 Astronomical event, can be solar or lunar (7)
- 14 Beloved, favoured (7)
- 15 Innovator (7)
- 17 Anne \_\_\_\_\_, second wife of Henry VIII (6)
- 18 Contusion, blemish caused by injury (6)
- 19 UK's smallest bird of prey (6)

answer on page 14

# Ideas for February half term In Solihull

## For those on a budget this half term

- Enjoy a stay-at-home games day. Have some board games at the ready or if they're all 'boring' head to your local charity shop who should have a collection of jigsaw puzzles and board games.
- Set up your own treasure hunt, where they have to find the treasure (chocolate bar?!) by finding clues and following the trail.
- Kids love a challenge! Task them with reading a page a day or a book over the week, depending on their ability. Or try a drawing competition – there's some great videos on YouTube.
- Don't forget about simple card games like Uno, snap, Go Fish, and Rummy – the rules are simple and it brings out everyone's competitive side! Or paper games like hangman, creating your own word searches and mazes, and noughts and crosses. With any leftover paper just Google origami ideas and see if you can create origami animals or hats.
- For those feeling more creative you could get you kids to build a fort – all you need are chairs,



towels, sheets, maybe a clothes airer – as well as the promise they'll tidy it all up at the end of the day!

## Ideas on where to go if it's raining

It's always handy to have some ideas at the ready for those rainy days this half term in Solihull when no-one quite knows what to do with themselves.

- If you fancy mini golf or bowling you could try Spinners in Touchwood.
- Wrap up warm and head to Planet Ice in Solihull – just turn up for a skate or maybe book some lessons and stop your kids from looking like Bambi on ice!
- For those feeling active head to Flash Climbing

Centre in Solihull. They offer a range of classes to suit all ages and abilities.

- Cineworld in Touchwood is another good option – it always feels such a treat to watch the latest movie on a big screen with a bag of popcorn.
- Burn off some energy at Tudor Grange Leisure Centre – go swimming, try their roller disco on Friday and Saturday evenings, or book a tennis or badminton court.

.....

**To discover how to get the most out of Solihull please see our other articles, from ideas on eating out, to the best local businesses in the area: [www.hellosolihull.co.uk/articles](http://www.hellosolihull.co.uk/articles)**



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## Ideas for a cracking Sunday lunch in Solihull

For many people their idea of a perfect Sunday would be a stroll, a hearty Sunday lunch, and then a film, or maybe even a nap! If you're looking for a great Sunday lunch in Solihull then have a look at our suggestions, based on reviews from Trip Advisor, as well as from personal experience.

The top 5 restaurants

for a roast beef Sunday lunch in Solihull, according to Trip Advisor are:

- The Malt Shovel at Barston
- The Boat in Catherine de Barnes
- Ye Olde Saracen's Head in Balsall Common
- The Orange Tree, Chadwick End
- The Forest Restaurant in Dorridge.

And if you compare Google reviews for the best Sunday lunch in Solihull the top-rated restaurants also include Fox - Hampton Lane in Catherine de Barnes, the

Bull's Head in Earlswood, and Platform Three in Olton.

Meanwhile, if you're on a budget for your Sunday lunch in Solihull there are affordable options available such as The Colebrook in Shirley who offer a 1 course Sunday lunch from just £10.99.

Whether you stay in and cook them yourself, or go out and let someone else do all the hard work, we hope you enjoy your next Sunday lunch!

.....  
**To see a full listing of all the restaurants in Solihull please visit [www.hellosolihull.co.uk/eating-out-in-solihull](http://www.hellosolihull.co.uk/eating-out-in-solihull)**



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# Mindbenders

Can you find the hidden phrases?

**BUR**

haysneedletack

**TIME**



answers on page 14

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# Naturalistic Garden Planning

**M**y gardening resolution for 2025 is to further embrace naturalistic gardening. Over the past decade I've found that I'm leaning increasingly towards supporting rather than fighting nature in my own garden and I encourage others to do the same. Naturalistic gardening is a great way to foster biodiversity.

**Planning** - Think of this as a long-term venture, which will grow and develop over years not months. Start by observing the natural environment. Consider the soil type, light conditions, and moisture levels. Is your plot sunny, shaded, or prone to dampness? These factors will guide your plant selection.

Next, think about the style and feel you want. Naturalistic gardens are informal and mimic wild habitats, such as meadows, woodland glades, or coastal dunes. Choose one of these as your inspiration and design your layout accordingly.

A key principle of naturalistic design is to create a tapestry of plants that blend harmoniously. Avoid rigid rows or overly manicured shapes. Instead, plant in drifts or clusters to mimic the way plants grow in the wild. Paths made of natural materials like



gravel, bark, or stepping stones can help guide visitors while maintaining a soft, organic feel.

**Planting** - Select native and wildlife-friendly plants to support pollinators and other beneficial species. For a sunny spot try wildflowers like ox-eye daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), cowslips (*Primula veris*), and field scabious (*Knautia arvensis*).

For shadier areas, consider ferns such as hart's tongue (*Asplenium scolopendrium*) or woodland flowers like bluebells (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). Grasses, including tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and meadow foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*), will add movement and texture.

Shrubs and small trees, such as hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) or silver birch (*Betula pendula*) will add

structure and provide shelter for birds and insects. About twenty years ago I planted a wild hedgerow. It was the best gardening decision I ever made. It's full of birds and other wildlife all year round.

When planting, mimic natural patterns by mixing species and varying heights to create layers. Avoid bare soil; densely planted areas help suppress weeds and retain moisture.

Once planted, a naturalistic garden requires less maintenance than traditional gardens. Allow plants to self-seed and spread naturally. Mulch with organic matter to enrich the soil and suppress weeds. Resist the urge to tidy too much - leaving seed heads and fallen leaves to provide food and habitat for wildlife during winter.

# Mushroom Stroganoff

A creamy but light and delicious supper



**Preparation time:** 10 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes

**Serves:** 2

## Ingredients

2 tsp olive oil  
1 onion, finely chopped.  
1 tbsp sweet paprika  
2 garlic cloves, crushed.  
300g mixed mushrooms  
150ml vegetable stock  
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce  
3 tbsp sour cream  
Small bunch of parsley,  
roughly chopped.

## Method

Heat the olive oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the onions and soften for about 5 mins. Add the paprika and garlic, then cook for 1 minute more. Roughly chop and add the mushrooms, then cook over a high heat, stirring often, for about 5 mins. Pour in the stock and Worcestershire sauce.

Bring to the boil and allow to simmer until the sauce thickens (5-10 minutes). Remove from the heat and stir through the soured cream and most of the parsley. Serve with rice (it goes particularly well with brown or wild rice) stirring through the remaining chopped parsley just before plating the dish.



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			8	3				
8						6		5
	2			1	8			3
7								6
1			6	2				9
2		6						4
				6	3			
	7	4	5					

## how to play sudoku

### It's simple!

Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box, contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition. You don't need to be a genius. These puzzles use logic alone. Watch out! Sudoku is highly addictive.

solution on page 14

## local police contact for Shirley

Email: shirley@west-midlands.pnn.police.uk

### LOCAL COUNCILLORS

#### SHIRLEY WEST

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**Karen Grinsell**  
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## useful numbers

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Shirley Lions Club 0345 833 9547  
Solihull Council 0121 704 8001

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NHS non-emergency 111  
Solihull Hospital 0121 424 2000  
Spire Parkway Hospital 0121 704 1451  
Shirley Medical Centre 0121 705 1105  
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National Rail Enquiries 03457 484950  
Network West Midlands (buses) 0345 303 6760

### Solution to Mind benders

1. Rub the wrong way
2. Needle in a haystack
3. Second time around

**midbenders**  
from page 10

4	6	3	9	7	5	8	2	1
5	1	2	8	3	6	9	4	7
8	9	7	2	4	1	6	3	5
6	2	9	7	1	8	4	5	3
7	4	8	3	5	9	2	1	6
1	3	5	6	2	4	7	9	8
2	5	6	1	9	7	3	8	4
9	8	1	4	6	3	5	7	2
3	7	4	5	8	2	1	6	9

**Sudoku Solution**  
from page 13

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

**Crossword Solution**  
from page 7



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