

Take steps to help sick pets

National pet charity Blue Cross is calling out for animal lovers to go the extra mile throughout August and raise money for poorly and homeless pets.

The month-long Steps for Pets event is challenging UK pet lovers and fitness fiends to take extra steps each day.

For more information on Steps for Pets and to download a pack, visit www.bluecross.org.uk/stepsforpets

Brum rages over hi tech

Birmingham ranks third as one of UK's most impatient cities. The research into patience levels was commissioned by www.broadbandchoices.co.uk, who asked 1,500 people to rate their patience.

The survey saw 71 per cent in Birmingham say they are guilty of 'load rage' - losing their temper with technology that doesn't work properly

Railway steam gala returning

The Severn Valley Railway's annual autumn steam gala will run from September 20 to 23 this year. Visiting locomotives include the LMS Princess Coronation No 6233 Duchess of Sutherland and LMS Stanier Black 5 No 45231 The Sherwood Forester.

Town food bank use rises by 80 per cent

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THE number of families using a food bank in a Shropshire market town has risen by 80 per cent in the last year.

Oswestry and Borders Foodbank was started in 2011 to help individuals and families who have fallen on hard times.

Last year they supplied 1,600 emergency food packages, however in this financial year that number has risen to 23,000.

Also the number of families who get supplies has risen from 10 to 18, an 80 per cent rise.

Warnings have been issued that thousands of families in Shropshire will have to cut their weekly food bill, due to the roll out of universal credit.

Liz Jermy, manager of the food bank, warned the issue will not be going away any time soon.

She said: "We would like for there to be no need for a foodbank and we could shut our doors but that isn't going to happen."

"We have definitely seen an increase over the last year, since the last financial year."

"Everyone has a different story about why they are coming to the food bank."

"Some people have had a work ethic for 30 years then have fallen ill and had a mortgage to pay."

"We have seen people come in and be shocked as they didn't think they would have to come to a food bank, men have walked in here and broke down."

Around 45 volunteers work on the Oswestry and Borders food bank.

Foodbanks and organisations have now come together to identify the towns and villages across the county in most need of help.

Bike festival roars into action



Some of the varied bikes ranging from pre-war thumpers to modern superbikes taking part in the Broseley Festival of Motorcycling

The sound of roaring engines returned to Shropshire for the Broseley Festival of Motorcycling.

The event attracted about 200 machines spanning the history of motorcycles, from pre-war thumpers to modern day superbikes, from café racers to cruisers, trikes and motorcycle engine cars.

Scores of residents turned out to see the machines whizz past and money was collected for Midlands Air Ambulance as part of the event.

The festival included a hill climb and a route took riders from Woodbridge Inn at

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Coalport Bridge, along the Coalport Road and into the outskirts of Broseley. There was also a full ride-out through the Shropshire countryside, with bikers passing through neighbouring Much Wenlock, Ironbridge and Barrow.

Chris Barnard, who is part of the organising committee for the event, said: "It has gone really well."

"Last year we had about 70 bikes and this year we've come close to 200 so there's

been a big rise. There's a whole range of machines from the 1920s to now."

"It was very busy and people lined the route and were cheering."

"We hope to have raised £500 for the Midlands Air Ambulance."

"We will be running it again next year," Mr Barnard added.

The Broseley Festival of Motorcycling is one of three annual festivals held in the town.

For more information about the festival and its line-up visit broseleyfestivalofmotorcycling.org

New blow to rescue hopes for top store

Hopes of a rescue for department store House of Fraser have received a fresh blow as it emerged that relations with tycoon Mike Ashley had deteriorated.

The struggling department store chain, which has branches in Shrewsbury and Telford, has been in desperate talks to save the business after a £70 million lifeline from a Chinese conglomerate was pulled on Wednesday.

Sources said the company could be forced to call in administrators 'within weeks' if new funds fail to arrive. Ashley, who owns the Sports Direct chain and Newcastle United football club, has an 11 per cent stake in House of Fraser and had been tipped as a possible rescuer.

His representatives are understood to have made an approach to the company.

Other potential saviours include rival billionaire Philip Day, who owns a string of brands including Edinburgh Woollen Mill, Peacocks and Austin Reed.

There is also understood to be interest from retail turnaround funds Hilco and Alteri. But it appeared that hopes of a lifeboat bid by Ashley are growing increasingly distant.

House of Fraser recently announced that its stores in Shrewsbury and Telford will close next year. Branches in Wolverhampton and Birmingham will also close.