

Special Guardian's Autumn Newsletter

Where did the summer go? Now the children are back in school and the mornings and evenings are dark. But holidays and Halloween are not far away!

Half term dates (for most Shropshire schools) are 27th to 31st October, so in this newsletter we have included some ideas of things to do and links to discounted tickets.

Come and chat with Louise Bowen in Shrewsbury

Louise will be at the Early Help Hub at Sunflower House, Kendal Rd, Shrewsbury SY1 4ES on **1st October 9:30am – 11:30am**. Why not pop along for a chat and a coffee.

Come and chat with Jane Otter in Oswestry

Jane will be at the Early Help Hub at Oswestry Library, Arthur Street, Oswestry, SY11 1JN on **Thursday 20th November 9:30-11:30**. Please feel free to drop in for a chat.



Kinship Carers are family or close family friends who step up, often during an unexpected crisis, to care for a child (one or more) when their parents aren't able to. This may be because the parent has died, is unwell, has gone to prison, is experiencing problems with drugs and alcohol, or are neglectful or abusive.

In Shropshire, there are around 700 Kinship Carers, and there is a friendly and supportive **Shropshire Kinship Care support group** that meets regularly – face-to-face and on-line. The group is a place where Kinship Carers can meet, share, support each other and get practical advice on all aspects of being a Kinship Carer and also access to information and support through the Kinship national charity

Being a Kinship Carer is a wonderful “gift” and hugely positive “lifeline” to a child. But it is challenging and demanding. But with Shropshire Kinship Care group, you aren't alone. Why not get in touch for an initial chat? No commitment required. **Email Peter Thompson, Shropshire's group leader** (and a Kinship Carer): shropshirekinship@gmx.com or call on 07541 485 475, any time. ***We'd love to hear from you!***

Half term - things to do

Special Guardians Quiz



Why not join us with the family (questions for all ages) for an online fun quiz?

5pm on Wednesday 29th October. We will send out a TEAMS link to join the quiz nearer the time.

This quiz is a late celebration of Kinship Care Week which runs from 6th -12th October 2025. [Kinship Care Week - Kinship](#)

[Link for vouchers and reduced admissions for those on Universal Credit.](#)

<https://www.dayoutwiththekids.co.uk/hub/parenting/universal-credit-days-out-2025>

Pumpkinfest at Shropshire Wildlife Trust



Saturday 25 October 2025 - Friday 31 October 2025

9.30-12.30 Weekend, 10am-3pm Weekdays

Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

Visit The Cut this October half term for their fabulous Pumpkinfest!

Find your perfect pumpkin in the spooktacular gardens and get creative with your carving! About the event Enjoy the pumpkin carving experience safe in the knowledge that you can leave the mess with them! Templates and equipment provided with free Halloween crafts and activities!

Refreshments available to purchase from the shop café.

Adult supervision of children required.

£3.50 per pumpkin.

The event will be outside but undercover, please dress appropriately for the weather.



Severn Valley Country Park

Visitor centre & café. Alveley, Bridgnorth, WV15 6NG

Free - Children's play areas and family play trail

Car parking charges are £1.50 for 2 hours or £2.50 all day.

The centre piece of the river themed play area is a Severn Trow, which can be mistaken for a pirate ship! After you have enjoyed exploring our ship, have a go on the swings, roundabout, balance beams, wobble boards and climbing frames. From the play area, you can 'follow the fish' and visit all play equipment and wooden sculptures on our family play trail.



Also at Severn Valley - Wild toddlers – Term Times only Wednesday 11am-12pm – £5.50 per session

Fun term time sessions for children under 5. Join us to discover, play, connect and learn! Each week explore a new theme. Get hands-on with the outdoors or get crafty indoors (depending on the weather!).

Suitable for ages 18 months – 4 years (toddling toddlers). Younger siblings are very welcome (no charge for under 18 months). Activities may not be buggy friendly.

Price includes a snack – toast and squash (or similar).

Please call 01746 781 192 to book and pay in advance.



Unlock a Fang-tastic October Half Term at Shrewsbury Prison

From 25th October to 2nd November, embark on a Halloween Trick or Treat Trail, included in your day visit! Search for hidden items, solve a mysterious puzzle and unlock a prize. This family-friendly, ghoulish adventure is the ideal chance to create unforgettable memories.

Please note that the Halloween Ghost Tours are only suitable for ages 12+ and for those who can handle jump scares! Do you think you're brave enough?

[Unlock a Fang-tastic October Half Term at Shrewsbury Prison - Shrewsbury Prison](#)

Blists Hill Ghostly Gaslight – for older children 13+



Friday 25th October - Saturday 26th October

Timings: From 6pm until 9pm

Blists Hill Victorian Town TF7 5UD

Visit Blists Hill Victorian Town this Halloween for a spine-tingling and spooky evening full of Victorian-inspired horror, hauntings and nightmarish goings-on.

Explore the Victorian town under the cover of darkness and meet some of the town's shadier inhabitants who come out but once a year.

As you make your way through our town surrounded by the supernatural, you'll have to avert your eyes as you stumble into bloody murder scenes and sinister characters.

Make sure to keep your wits about you when you arrive on Dracula's Demeter! Legend has it he likes to pick off his guests one by one, leaving just a few survivors to share his horrible story.

The Forest Glen Refreshment Pavilion, New Inn Public House and the Fried Fish Dealers will be open for food and drink. You are encouraged to come in Halloween costume.

Dogs are not permitted at Ghostly Gaslight.

TICKETS

ADULTS: £20, or £18 for PASS PLUS, Patrons and Friends of IGMT

CHILDREN (13-16): £14, or £12.60 for PASS PLUS, Patrons and Friends of IGMT

Carers can visit for free when with a full paying adult or child who they are caring for. Find out more.

Warning and disclaimer: This event is aimed at an older audience (13+). It contains themes of violence, murder and death, and features flashing lights, loud noises, startles and scares. Please email tic@ironbridge.org.uk if you require more information.



Big Fish Little Fish – Halloween Family Rave in The Cellars

Sunday, 26th October, 2025 at 2:00 pm

Sunday, 26th October, 2025 at 4:00 pm

Venue: The Buttermarket, Howard St' Shrewsbury SY1 2LF

Don your ghostly garb and shake your bones to some absolutely stonking tuneage from our very own DJ Raks! Party with your kids amidst the bubbles and snow foam, confetti and giant balloons! There will also be a creepily cool, multi-activity craft area and a baby chill out space for our tiniest ravers. Oh, and of course the licenced bar will be open!

Theme: HALLOWEEN!! Fancy dress is not the law, but is massively encouraged – kids and adults!

TICKETS: Child £10:00. Adult £13:00 Pre-walkers Free.

[!\[\]\(fe3aebe81acea8d45108cd2768939da7_img.jpg\) Big Fish Little Fish - Halloween Family Rave in The Cellars | The Buttermarket](#)

Advice and Support Information



Early Help Coffee and Chat Drop Ins

It's fair to say that all parents from time to time need some help and support with issues that impact on family life. There is help and support available in Shropshire through our Early Help coffee and chat drop ins – some of which are also stay and play sessions.

You can get free Information, advice and support on all aspects of family life, at our Family Drop-Ins. You can chat, have a cuppa and see how we can help you with:

- Family life
- Parenting support
- Domestic abuse support
- Money worries
- Housing support
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- and much more

To find your local drop in please visit the [Shropshire Family Information Service Directory](#)

What age can my child be left home alone?

We often get asked what age children can be left home alone? With the holidays coming up you may be wondering whether you can leave them for a few minutes while you nip to the shop or a couple of hours while you work.

There's no legal age a child can be left home alone, but it's against the law to leave a child alone if it puts them at risk. Every child matures differently, so it would be almost impossible to have a "one size fits all" law. The NSPCC have some really helpful resources covering this which include:

a quiz to check if your child is ready to be home alone

a downloadable guide

key things to think about like teaching them what to do in an emergency

how to find the right babysitter for you.

[Leaving Your Child Home Alone - Advice | NSPCC](#)

The only number you need



Whether you think a parent or family needs some support, or you are worried a child might be at risk of abuse or neglect, there is only one number you need – **0345 678 9021**. From this number you will receive the support you need to get the right help at the right time to support families and safeguard children.

Autism information and support event for all ages



Find out more about autism support in Shropshire with these upcoming events.

Autism West Midlands and Shropshire Autism Hub will be available to offer information advice and guidance for children, young people and adults at any stage of diagnosis.

You can join them for an informal chat at:

Oswestry library, SY11 1JN on Wednesday 6 November 2024, 9.30am-12 noon.

Bridgnorth Library, WV16 4AW on Wednesday 13 November 2024, 9.30am-12 noon.

For more information, please email pip.long@shropshire.gov.uk

Youth Vaping



Vaping is not recommended for young people because it's not risk-free and they are not completely harmless, yet so many of our young people are vaping. In response to growing concern around vaping among children and young people, a youth vaping Resource Toolkit has been developed for use by those caring for and working with children and young people.

The Toolkit includes helpful resources to support parents, carers and those working with children and young people to have conversations and deliver education around youth vaping. They're also designed to increase awareness of the risks of vaping for children and young people and help them to make informed decisions.

You can access information on youth vaping [here](#).

Meet and Chat SEND

The Autumn Meet and Chat SEND sessions are starting next month for parent carers of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)



Parent Carers can join us for an informal drop-in session where they can ask questions, get advice, and explore the support available to them within Shropshire. Speak to a range of professionals who can help with:

- [Education, health, and Care Plans \(EHCPs\)](#)
- [School support and advocacy](#)
- [Health and Wellbeing for children with SEND](#)
- [Social care and family support](#)
- [Mental health and emotional wellbeing](#)
- [Advice for navigating SEND challenges](#)

Each session will have different professionals available, but parent carers are encouraged to come along, have a chat, and find the help they need! Visit the [Family Information Service \(FIS\) directory](#) for information on dates and venues.

Parenting Help and Support Line



The Parenting Help and Support Line are here for parents with a friendly listening ear and practical advice on everything from behaviours that challenge to sleep issues. No judgment, just support.

Call 01743 250950 Monday - Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm or Friday, 9.30am - 3.30pm or email: parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk



Getting on better – relationship support

Worried about your relationship or feel you're arguing too much? Not all arguing between parents is harmful but when it's intense or happens a lot of the time, there can be a negative impact on the children.

If your relationship is going through a difficult phase, you can find ways to argue 'better', resolve disputes and reduce conflict at home with our range of free courses, resources and apps. Have a look at the [Getting on better](#) pages of the Early Help website.