



Happy new year from us all here at Shropshire Family Information Service! Christmas feels an age ago now, but pay day seems even further away, so we thought we would bring you an issue that focuses on free things this month.

Remember, we cover everything and anything to do with family life, so if you have a question, chances are we'll be able to help, or if we can't, we'll point you in the direction of someone who can. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [X](#). Call 01743 254400 or email ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk



Shropshire e-library

Did you know Shropshire Library's e-library lets you read or listen to thousands of adults and kids books and magazines without leaving the house?

E-books and audio books

Cloud Library has thousands of e-books and audio books, which can be accessed on Android, Apple or Kindle devices. Just download the relevant app and login in with your library id and pin number (forgot your PIN? You can reset it here [Prices](#)

[and PINS | Shropshire Council](#)). For younger readers there is a kid's mode to make the app even easier to use.

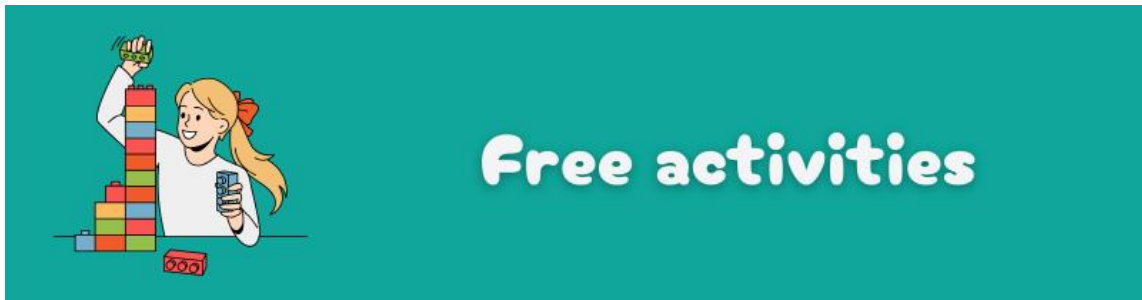
E-newspapers and magazines

This service is provided by [PressReader](#) and gives access to over 7000 newspapers and magazines, including most of the UK national papers. So whether you are looking for recipe inspiration, fitness or fashion advice, or the latest news, save money and see if PressReader stock the publication you want.

To access this service you will need to click 'sign in' then select 'Library or Group' sign in, choose Shropshire Libraries from the list, and then enter your library card number and [PIN](#).

Free access expires every 30 days but can be refreshed simply by logging out and then in again.

[Find out more](#)



Fun for free

At your library

Libraries are so much more than books, long gone are the days where you were expected to talk in a whisper. Shropshire's libraries are warm, welcoming, community spaces. You'll find loads of free activities on offer for all the family including things like:

- Rhyme and story time sessions for 0-5 year olds
- Stay and play sessions for pre-schoolers
- Baby Sensory sessions
- Lego and Duplo clubs
- Board game clubs
- Creative writing and crafts
- Jigsaw libraries

You can find out what is going on at your local library on the library events page [Library events | Shropshire Council](#) Some libraries also have social media pages where they advertise events and activities.

[Albrighton Library on Facebook](#)

[Bridgnorth Library on Facebook](#)

[Church Stretton Library on Facebook](#)

[Ellesmere library on Facebook](#)

[Ludlow Library on Facebook](#)

[Market Drayton Library on Facebook](#)

[Oswestry Library on Facebook](#)

[Pontesbury Library on Facebook](#)

[Shrewsbury Library on Facebook](#)

[Whitchurch Library on Facebook](#)

Play Ground Buddy app

This is a fantastic free app which helps you discover new playgrounds. It will show you where they are on a map and what facilities they offer. You can also keep track of the playgrounds you have visited, give them reviews and improve listings by adding photos and info. There must be hundreds of playgrounds across the county, why not challenge your family to visit every playground in your area this month? You can find out more and download the app here [Playground Buddy - Helping Families Find Playgrounds](#)

4 All Foundation

The 4 All Foundation is a charity that provides a wide range of activities, clubs, and initiatives across the county. Some of the things they currently have on offer for free include:

- Junior Boxing and Family Fun Fitness sessions in Shrewsbury
- Chill Youth Club and Girls Youth Club in Whitchurch
- Build a Story Sack in Tilstock
- Kids multi-sports sessions in Ironbridge

You can find info for all their activities here on their website [Activities | 4 All Foundation](#) Events and activities are being added all the time so it is worth checking back regularly.

Rural Art Hub

If you like getting arty then the Rural Art Hub have some fantastic activities on offer, including:

Cool Beans Creative Club for Young People.

For ages 5 and up. Saturdays 10-12 at Babbinswood Farm, Oswestry SY11 4PF.
Pay What You Can

Come and explore a MULTIVERSE of possibilities. There are activities using natural and reused materials emerging from your ideas and interests - Den Building, Drawing, Sculpture, Architecture, Craft, Sound, Creative Writing and Film + much more.

Free Collage and Drawing Workshops

- Tuesday 18 February 2025, 10.30am-12.30pm at Oswestry Memorial Hall
- Thursday 20 February 2025, 1.30pm at Oswestry Library

You can find out more about what's on offer on the [Rural Art Hub Facebook page](#).

RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch

Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey. Every year, hundreds of thousands of nature lovers take part, helping to build a picture of how garden birds are faring. Click here to find out how to take part in this free event [Big Garden Birdwatch](#).

To celebrate the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre are holding a Wild about Wings event.

Wild about wings - Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms SY7 9RS

25 January 2025 11am - 3pm

Bring the whole family along to celebrate all things birds.

With guided bird walks, bird song quiz, children's activities where you can make bird feeders and much more.

Guided bird walk - FREE at 11am - 12pm and 2pm - 3pm
Join the Centre Manager for a guided tour of the meadows looking at winter birds and exploring a range of different habitats. No need to book, just turn up on the day.



Food banks to community food shares

Food Banks

If you are struggling to buy food you may be able to get emergency food through a food bank. To use a food bank you may need a referral. There are many people who can make a referral for you including health professionals, advice workers, housing associations and Shropshire Council. You can find your local food bank and further information here on the [Shropshire Larder website](#).

Food Shares and Community Kitchens

Food shares and Community kitchens redistribute surplus food on a 'pay as you feel' basis - meaning you pay as much as you can or are willing to spend. These are often **open to everyone** and are aimed at stopping food waste. Local projects include:

- [Shrewsbury Food Hub](#)
- [Osnosh Community Kitchen - Oswestry](#)
- [Ludlow Foodbank Open Table Events](#)
- [Ludlow Hands Together Community Fridge](#)
- [Highley Community Project](#)
- [Telford Community Grocery Store](#)

Community Meals

There are several organisations where you can go for a light bite or meal, including:

- [Grace Church Shrewsbury](#)
- [Osnosh Community Kitchen Oswestry](#)
- [Cosy Cafe Albrighton](#)
- [Mayfair Centre Church Stretton](#)



Feel fit for free

If one of your new year's resolutions is to move more, then these free fitness recommendations may come in handy!

Junior Parkrun

Junior Parkrun is a fun, friendly and FREE weekly 2k event for 4-14 year olds. Our closest ones are:

- Shrewsbury (Quarry Park)
- Telford (Town Park)
- Hafan Yr Afon, Newtown
- Wyre Forest, Bewdley
- Queens Park, Crewe

They happen at 9am every Sunday. The emphasis is on having fun so you can complete the course however you want, run, walk, hop, skip, it's all good! It's a great way to get out in the fresh air, move your body and make new friends. Find out more here: [junior events | parkrun UK](#)

You are also welcome to complete the 5k Parkrun as a family, these are held on Saturday mornings you can find your local event here: [events | parkrun UK](#)

Couch to Fitness Programme with Our Parks

Get active from the comfort of your own home with Couch to Fitness by Our Parks. Bit by bit you'll feel fitter, when you stick to their free online fitness programme. It's amazing what a difference it can make! They have lots of different options as part of the programme including:

- Prenatal and postnatal programmes
- Family Fit
- Dance workouts
- Bitesize workouts

Find out more here: [Couch to Fitness | Couch to Fitness](#)

Virtual Village Hall

Brought to you by the charity, Royal Voluntary Service, the Virtual Village Hall is a free, online activity hub and community. It's designed to help people stay physically and mentally active, socially connected and having fun, as well as supporting them to better manage their health, including long-term health conditions.

From Art to Zumba, there are 12-15 free live sessions every week and a library of 2,200 free sessions to choose from, all led by expert tutors and presenters, including some well-known faces. It's free to join and take part with no sign in or subscription required.

They have some fantastic exercise classes including beginners Salsa with Luba Mushtuk from Strictly, Street dance, HIIT workouts, Pilates and Yoga. You can see all the activities on offer here: [Online Activity Sessions | Virtual Village Hall | Royal Voluntary Service](#)

NHS Healthier Families

The NHS Healthier Families website has lots of ideas for games and activities, with your favourite Disney and Marvel heroes, that will keep your kids moving. The website also has advice on healthy eating, recipe ideas and lunchbox inspiration. You can visit the website here: [Healthier Families - Home - NHS](#)



Free health and wellbeing courses

Online courses

Make 2025 to be the year you feel more in tune with your family with these free online courses from In Our Place.

Expertly designed by NHS professionals they will help you to become a more confident parent by learning about child brain development, behaviour that challenges, communication and your own wellbeing needs, because parenting is a journey that is always changing!

The courses are broken down into short modules that can be studied at your own pace. course titles include:

- Understanding your baby
- Understanding your child: from toddler to teenager
- Understanding your child with additional needs
- Understanding your child's feelings (a taster course)
- Understanding your child's mental health and wellbeing
- Understanding your teenager's brain
- Understanding your relationships
- Understanding your own trauma

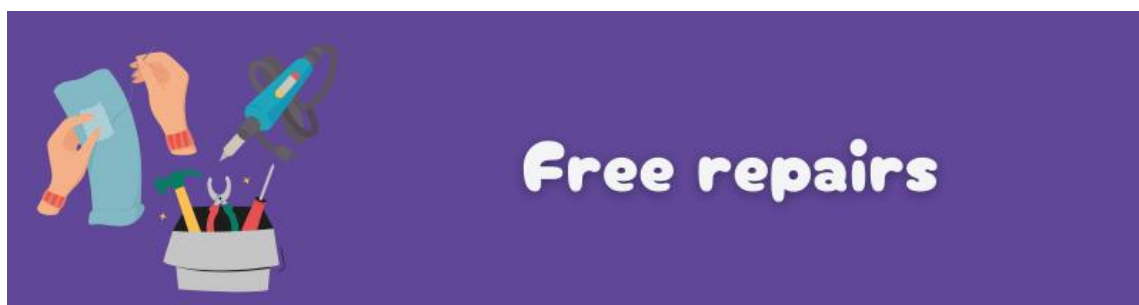
Shropshire residents can use the access code **DARWIN18** to get the courses for free. Find out more and sign up here: [Online Learning](#)

Local courses

We also have local groups running for the following courses, where you will be able to get expert advice from our Parenting Team and meet other parents.

- Understanding your child: from toddler to teenager
- Understanding your child with additional needs

Find out more about the local courses on offer here: [Local Understanding Your Child groups](#)



Repair cafes

Have you heard of repair cafes? They were originally set up in the Netherlands in 2009 with the aim of helping people fix items for free to avoid waste and to build a sense of community. Currently there are six repair cafes in Shropshire...

- [Oswestry and Borders Repair Cafe](#)
- [Shrewsbury Repair Cafe](#)
- [Ludlow Repair Cafe](#)
- [Telford Repair Cafe](#)
- [Ellesmere Repair Cafe](#)
- [Church Stretton Repair Cafe](#)

...and over 1619 across the world, in 33 countries.

The six Shropshire repair cafes are run by the community for the community. Skilled menders and talented amateurs give their time and expertise for free to help people fix items that might have otherwise been thrown away. They usually run monthly, and depending on who is there and what skills they have, they will attempt to fix everything from hairdryers to bikes to jewellery.



Free presents you actually want

The Pavilion community Hub and Library (Pontesbury, Shrewsbury SY5 0RF) are holding a Post Christmas Gift and Book Swap on

Saturday 18 January 2025, 10am-12noon.

Bring along your unwanted gifts, extra pair of socks, mugs, whatever. Books already read? Exchange them! Nothing to swap? Come along and see if there is anything you want.



POST CHRISTMAS GIFT AND BOOK SWAP!

AT THE PAVILION SATURDAY JANUARY 18TH

10.00 TO 12.00

BRING ALONG YOUR UNWANTED GIFTS, EXTRA
PAIRS OF SOCKS, MUGS, WHATEVER,
BOOKS ALREADY READ? EXCHANGE THEM!

NOTHING TO SWAP? COME ALONG AND SEE IF THERE
IS ANYTHING YOU WANT

REUSE , REDUCE, RECYCLE

COFFEE AND CAKE



Like what you see?

What do you think of our newsletter? Do you find the info in it useful? What would you like to see more, or less, of? Got any ideas to make it even better? Take our super short survey and let us know. Seriously, it's only four questions long. Thank you!

[Super short survey](#)

