

12 **Service is praised by trust managers**

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Tributes have been paid to the work of West Midlands Ambulance staff for maintaining high standards of care under growing pressures.

The praise from trust bosses comes ahead of next week's annual meeting.

Anthony Marsh, chief executive, said: "Despite the pressures our staff now work under, it is to their immense credit that they continue to operate to the highest standards and give everything in order to improve the quality of care for patients."

"I'm proud to say the trust remains one of the top performing NHS organisations in the country. This doesn't happen by accident. A huge amount of effort and planning goes into keeping WMAS at the forefront of clinical care."

He said new paramedics had been recruited and several staff had increased their qualifications. He added the West Midlands service had one of the best fleets in the UK and continued to invest heavily in the most up-to-date equipment.

Open day will be held at fire station

An open day is being held by West Midlands Fire Service in Cradley Heath over this weekend. Crews at Haden Cross community fire station in Halesowen Road will be opening their doors to the public during Saturday.

Luxury trip will be followed by financial support during last months

Terminally-ill Paul has dream holiday

Report by Jordan Harris
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AFTER giving a man with months left to live a dream holiday, staff at a funeral directors are extending their generosity to make his time left as comfortable as possible.

Paul Dyke, from Great Barr, has been given months to live after being diagnosed with cancer – and part way through chemotherapy treatment he was told the condition was getting worse.

After receiving a letter from his wife Tracey, sent to local businesses in the hope of finding support to help the couple get away, Aldridge-based William Mitchell Funeral Directors raised £1,000 to send the couple on holiday to Somerset.

Surgery

Company boss Donna Ryan said that despite granting Paul and his wife their wish, they are keen to continue helping him in his final months.

Donna said: "We initially stepped in to help Paul and Tracey with their holiday but have decided to continue doing what we can. They loved their holiday and it was a nice break for them."

"Obviously over the next few months, Paul is going to need support at home to make his last few months as comfortable as possible. He doesn't want to go to a hospice, he wants to stay at home. His family also need to consider what happens next so we want to offer financial support for that as well."

Paul, aged 55, and Tracey have one son and one daughter, as well as one granddaughter.



A light in the darkness for Paul Dyke, who is with Donna Ryan from William Mitchell Funeral Directors and his wife Tracey

Tracey spoke of her grief that Paul's cancer diagnosis has robbed the couple of their dream, which was to retire together, move near the seaside and grow old together.

She said: "Sometimes we feel as though we have always had bad luck. Paul used to work as a builder with his father and in 1987 he suffered a really bad back injury, which led to years of problems.

"He worked through them but had to have surgery four times. We decided then that when I could retire, we would move away together, somewhere nice by the seaside and spend our days just growing old together. Now that is never going to happen. The work that Donna and Alf have put in to helping us has really touched both of our hearts. Paul can't believe that someone

would care so much about him. I would like to thank them for everything they have done."

Fundraising events have included a quiz night at a local curry house in Aldridge and a car wash at the fire station. Mrs Ryan hopes to initiate similar events to help towards the cost of Paul's care at home. For details call the firm on 01922 288599.

BRIEFING

New club to talk culture

A new club is to meet this month to discuss film and theatre.

The Culture Club is to take place on September 12 at the Lock Works, Light House, The Chubb Buildings, Fryer St, Wolverhampton.

The session is to be led by Wolverhampton journalist Mary Bolland, and is to take place from 6pm till 8pm.

Participants will discuss their views on recent film releases and theatre performances.

For more information, call 01902 716055.

Bike is taken from drive

A valuable off-road motorbike has been stolen from a driveway in broad daylight.

Thieves targeted the green KX 125 dirt bike parked at a home in Rowley Close, Hednesford.

The incident took place on Monday. The bike is worth more than £1,000.

Anyone with information should contact Staffordshire Police officers on 101.

Rocker Raymond ready for Robin

Midlands rocker Raymond Froggatt and his band have been booked to appear at The Robin 2 in Wolverhampton next year.

Tickets for the gig in Bilston on February 12, have just gone on sale at £15.40 each.