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# Council may step in over declining shopping sites

by **Andy Morris**  
 andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

THE 'DECLINING' Rugby Central Shopping Centre and other key sites could be taken over by Rugby Borough Council (RBC) as part of its plan to revitalise the town centre.

The council aims to either buy the centre outright, work as part of a joint venture, or use its new rental auction powers and compulsory purchase procedures to take control of the shopping centre.

RBC aims to demolish the centre's empty Northway Mall to kickstart redevelopment plans in the area, and bring an NHS hub and new retailers to the remaining part.

RBC leader Coun Michael Moran said: "We cannot stand by and watch Rugby Central continue to decline.

"We have investment partners to work with to bring about much-needed change to this centre."

He said the council's focus was to remove empty buildings and 'give Rugby a chance to thrive again' with new attractions.

The council's Liberal Democrat Group Leader Coun Jerry Roodhouse said it was time to take back control of shopping space in the town centre.

He said: "The current owners have no interest in Rugby or in developing this site, and are running it into the ground. They have had planning permission for

years for the northern section but have chosen to do nothing with it.

"We have served notices to start using the High Street Auctions process within Rugby Central to get it occupied again. Ultimately, if the owners do not wish to work with us, we will initiate a compulsory purchase of the site in order to unlock the site and let Rugby take back control."

The council has also been working with the owners of the Brotherhood House site - a derelict building facing the Old Market Place car park off Gas Street - to come to an agreement to redevelop it into a creative hub and activity space as part of a proposed Cultural Quarter.

RBC was one of the first councils in the country to use new powers to auction leases for long-term empty shops, bringing several empty units back into use.

The council has also introduced a business rates relief scheme to help retail and hospitality businesses, and a design policy which has improved shop fronts. A second phase of council backed grants to assist business and landlords to make improvements is soon to follow.

Coun Moran added: "Our work to support the town centre is about fixing areas that put people off visiting and increasing footfall. We cannot work miracles but Rugby deserves better than this.

"I want to continue working with businesses in the town as well as make changes that help create a more pleasant place for people to visit and spend time."



Becca Stevenson, Coun. Neil Sandison, Martin Bryant, Carrie Pailthorpe and Frank Green celebrate Rugby Eco Hub's First Year Fiesta. Picture by Marcus Mings 4925003MMR1

**REACHING A LANDMARK: HAPPY birthday!** Rugby Eco Hub celebrated its first year of living up to its motto of 'reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, regenerate' with a 'First Year Fiesta' at its Clifton Road HQ.

Visitors heard a review of the hub's projects and achievements, were treated to a home-

made vegan lunch from the hub's kitchen, and took part in a fundraising auction.

The party continued into the evening with 'Earth Club in the Hub 2025' - an afternoon of live music set to the backdrop of a 'Rugby Village Fair'.

See page 12 for more.

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The Global Illuminations Procession was part of the university's 60th birthday celebrations. Performances included classical Indian dance.

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# A glittering anniversary

THE UNIVERSITY of Warwick's was lit up to celebrate its 60th anniversary.

The Global Illuminations Procession returned to campus, bringing together a record-breaking number of students to celebrate cultural diversity.

The procession, curated by Together At Warwick, was brought to life with giant sculptures, costumes, and lanterns.

In the build-up to the procession, students and staff participated in creative workshops led by artists Taiba Akhtar, Frances Yeung and Tereza Buskova. Participants created printed sashes and Eastern European-inspired folk wands, which were showcased during the evening procession.

Among the creations were giant lanterns shaped like a tiger, bear, parrot, panda, and snake, crafted collaboratively by students and societies.

Performances spanned a range of traditions, from hip hop and classical Indian dance to a Chinese dragon dance.

Event curator Becca Randle said, "Global Illuminations is all about bringing Warwick's diverse community together in the most vibrant and creative way. It was a fantastic celebration of culture, connection and joy. We were delighted to see a record-breaking number of students taking part in the parade this year."

Professor Michael Scott, pro-vice-chancellor, said: "With 9,500 international students from 147 countries, Warwick is a thriving hub of global cultures, and this event is the perfect stage to bring our diverse community together. We're honoured to host such a special celebration of connection, giving our students a chance to share their heritage and talents with the entire University community."



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See page **28** 

# Councils remain poles apart on question of how future looks

by **Philippa Mingsins**  
 philippa.mingsins@bullivantmedia.com

DIVISION remains in Warwickshire over local government reorganisation after two different proposals were officially submitted to the Government to decide the county's political future.

Warwickshire County Council has officially filed its support for a single unitary council for the whole county.

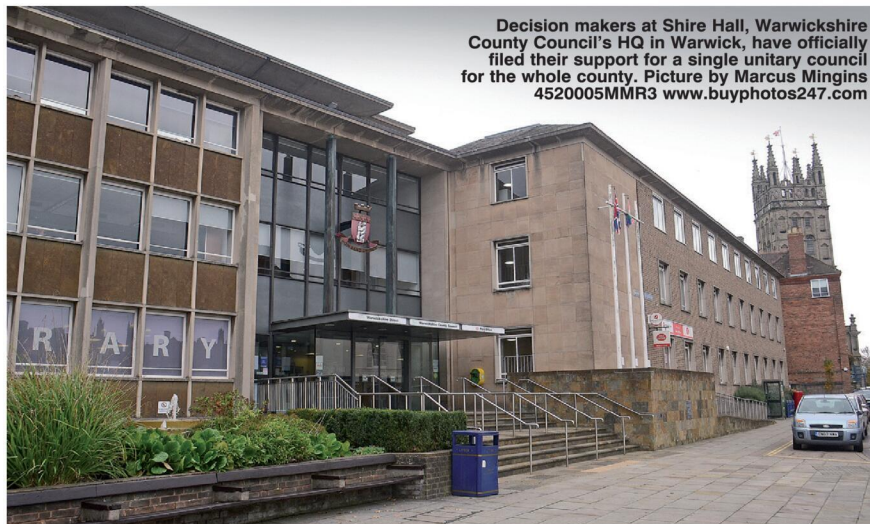
Rugby Borough Council (RBC) has also indicated its support for the single council model, with bases in all major towns.

But a two-unitary proposal - splitting Warwickshire into north and south councils - is favoured by Stratford District Council (SDC), Warwick District Council (WDC), Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council.

The submissions follow the Government's invitation to bring forward options for Local Government Reorganisation.

RBC leader Coun Michael Moran said: "A north/south split is the end of the county as we know it. A globally renowned county with a proud history would be lost in an instant."

"The single Warwickshire unitary offers the best option for long-term financial sustainability, the clearest structure for protecting essential services, and the most coherent and resilient model for the county."



Decision makers at Shire Hall, Warwickshire County Council's HQ in Warwick, have officially filed their support for a single unitary council for the whole county. Picture by Marcus Mingsins 4520005MMR3 www.buyphotos247.com

"I believe residents and businesses will see the benefit of having a single Council responsible for everything from collecting bins to managing roads, running schools and providing housing and adult social care. The links to local healthcare, public transport and the Police will also be

a lot clearer."

The WCC proposal for a single unitary authority received the support of the full council in October.

WCC leader Coun George Finch explained: "A single unitary offers the strongest financial foundation, ensures consistent and high-quality

services for all residents, and empowers local decision-making keeping us rooted in the places we serve. And we are confident that it is the only option which meets all six Government criteria for LGR."

"A single unitary council for Warwickshire provides a single,

consistent vision for the county, helping us to deliver stronger communities, better services and real value for money."

An independent survey found nearly three-quarters of residents back the creation of the two council model.

Under the proposal, the new councils would be North Warwickshire Unitary, made up of the existing North Warwickshire, Nuneaton and Bedworth and Rugby borough councils, and the South Warwickshire Unitary would include the existing Stratford and Warwick councils.

SDC leader Coun Susan Juned said: "Maintaining a local link to all our communities is extremely important. Public service and engagement must remain at the heart of local government, and this proposal ensures that principle is upheld."

"The two-unitary approach reflects the distinct identities of north and south Warwickshire while providing the scale and resilience needed for strong, sustainable services."

WDC leader Coun Ian Davison said: "The two unitary model respects the real identities between north and south Warwickshire while ensuring both areas have the scale, resilience and strategic capacity to deliver excellent services."

The Government will make the final decision which will be implemented in April 2028.

## He's coming your way

BE GOOD, for goodness sake - Santa Claus is coming to town, and he could be bringing his sleigh to spread festive cheer in your neighbourhood.

Big-hearted volunteers from the Rugby Rokeby Lions Club are accompanying Father Christmas and Rudolf on tour around Rugby Borough during December.

Santa will stop along the route to give Rugbeians a chance to take a picture with him.

Father Christmas and his helpers will be collecting cash donations for local charitable causes, or inviting residents to donate online.

Visit [www.facebook.com/rugbyrokebylions](http://www.facebook.com/rugbyrokebylions) for detailed route updates, or to track Santa on his neighbourhood routes each evening.



Thursday December 11: Long Lawford, Co-Op - 6-8pm

Friday December 12: Boughton Vale, Campion Way, Leicester Road end - 6-8pm

Saturday December 13: Asda - 10am-4pm; Woodlands, The Fighting Cocks - 5-8pm

Sunday December 14: Asda - 10am-4pm

Monday December 15: Newbold, Foster Road - 6-8pm

Tuesday December 16: Brownsover, Park End - 6-8pm

Wednesday December 17: Shakespeare Gardens, starting at Overslade Lane - 6-8pm

Thursday December 18: Clawton, Ophelia Crescent - 6-8pm

Friday December 19: Oxford Street/Eastlands - 5-8.30-8pm

Saturday December 20: Tesco - 8am-4pm; Wolston, The Half Moon - 5-8pm

Sunday December 21: Tesco - 10am-4pm

Monday December 22: Sainsburys - 8am-4pm

Tuesday December 23: Bilton Road, The Big Fish - 5-8pm

Wednesday December 24: Sainsburys - 8am-3pm; Rokeby/Hillside, The Griffin - 5-8pm

**Father Christmas and his helpers from Rugby Rokeby Lions Club are embarking on their annual tour of Rugby.**

### Santa's Sleigh Tour of Rugby 2025

Friday December 5: Admirals, The Crow Pie - 6-8pm

Saturday December 6: Fat Face, Elliott's Field Shopping Park - 10am-4pm; Watts Lane area, School Street shops - 5-8pm

Sunday December 7: Fat Face, Elliott's Field Shopping Park - 10am-4pm

Monday December 8: Wood Street, starting at Drivers Court - 6-8pm

Tuesday December 9: Bridget Street, Westlands Care Home - 6-8pm

Wednesday December 10: Paddock, St John's Avenue - 6-8pm

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# Appeal launched to help restore our waterways

by Philippa Mingsins

**WARICKSHIRE Wildlife Trust (WWT) is launching a £100,000 appeal to help restore the county's rivers.**

The Wilder Waters Appeal aims to rewind riverbanks, make homes for wading birds, protect precious amphibians, create nature-based solutions to climate change and conduct important surveys to monitor the health of the rivers.

With 1,469km of rivers and waterways in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull - greater than the distance from Lands End to John O'Groats - there is plenty of work to be done and a huge amount of support needed.

In the last 100 years, the UK has lost 90 per cent of its wetland habitats and more than ten per cent of the freshwater and wetland wildlife are at risk of extinction.

And the UK's Water Frameworks Directive states



A swan glides along the River Arrow. Picture by WWT.

that every river in the county is struggling with water quality.

WWT recently ran a series of 'Green Conversations' with communities across the county, as well as surveying its members, and the state of rivers and waterways came out on top as one of the issues people were most concerned about.

The Wilder Waters Appeal will be the biggest water-focused fundraising effort WWT has ever launched to tackle this issue, affecting both people and wildlife.

Lindsay Butler, WWT

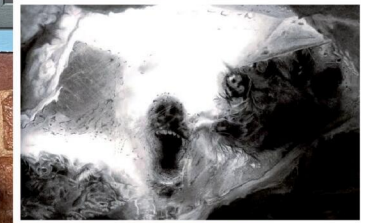
director of fundraising, said: "Our rivers are Warwickshire's wild arteries, but nature is disappearing from them at an alarming rate. Many species, including frogs, toads, water voles and wading birds, are struggling as their habitats dwindle, nesting sites are threatened, and their environment is polluted - but there is a huge opportunity to help us to change this.

This appeal is a chance for everyone who wants to walk along our rivers and canals and be surrounded by nature, to make a real, lasting difference to our waterways across Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull."

Led by science and fuelled by determination, the appeal will allow WWT to restore and revitalise these important ecosystems by working with local communities, farmers, councils and others. Visit [www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-waters-appeal](http://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk/wilder-waters-appeal) to donate.



Sarah Holmes was among the most celebrated talents of this year's competition. Inset, On Thin Ice scooped two awards.



## Wildlife artist collects two awards

A WILDLIFE artist from Southam has been awarded two national accolades.

Sarah Holmes, known for her charcoal depictions of wildlife, submitted three pieces of her work to the Wildlife Artist of the Year Competition.

And her polar bear hunting on the shrinking Arctic ice, titled On Thin Ice, was selected by Andy Parkinson, one of Europe's most awarded wildlife photographers, as his 'Luminary Choice' of the Animal Behaviour category. Only eight pieces received this award across the exhibition.

And it was also one of only 15 pieces to be awarded 'Highly Commended', with the judging panel commenting the work "captures the motion, darkness and raw intention of this powerful predator, highlighting the fragile balance of our changing world".

The internationally acclaimed competition is recognised as one of the world's leading art prizes dedicated to celebrating wildlife and raising funds for conservation projects worldwide. It attracts thousands of entries from professional and emerg-

ing artists worldwide. Winning not one, but two awards, places Sarah among the most celebrated talents of this year's event, as her work was the only piece in the exhibition to be awarded both 'Luminary Choice' and 'Highly Commended'.

Sarah said: "This recognition is quite astonishing. "As someone who creates a limited amount of art, it's amazing to see my work can stand out alongside such incredible artists and help to support vital conservation efforts."



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# PM and Chancellor hear Rugby verdict on Budget

by **Andy Morris**  
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

**PRIME Minister Sir Keir Starmer, Chancellor Rachel Reeves, and Energy Secretary Ed Miliband visited Rugby last week to discuss the government's Budget.**

The trio visited the Benn Partnership Centre to meet local residents, accompanied by the town's MP, John Slinger.

Sir Keir spoke about plans to reduce energy bills by £150, increase the minimum wage, and expand support for families through breakfast clubs, free school meals, and childcare initiatives.

The three ministers joined Mr Slinger to chat with elderly residents, local business owners and parents with young children, who provided a range of perspectives on local and national issues.

Mr Slinger said: "It was a privilege to welcome the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Energy Secretary to the Benn Partnership Centre in the heart of our town - one of their first visits following the Budget.

"This wasn't just a photo opportunity. My ministerial colleagues stayed for nearly two hours, engaging in meaningful conversations with members of the community. I am confident they will take these insights



Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer and Rugby MP John Slinger pose for a photo with residents.

back to Westminster, as will I. We were all keen to hear people's views on the Budget and discuss how we can work together to improve our community and our country. I would also like to thank the staff at the Benn Partnership Centre for being such wonderful hosts."

Mr Slinger welcomed Budget measures to scrap the two-child benefit cap, which could lift 2,020 children in Rugby out of poverty, and a minimum wage increase which could benefit 2,900 low-paid workers in the town. He also praised the Chancellor's £820million Youth Guarantee to provide every young person a place in

college, an apprenticeship, or personalised job support.

But he called for the government to go further with what he calls a 'Youth Triple Lock' - measures for young people such as free bus travel, increasing maintenance loans above inflation, or a voucher scheme for constructive activities.

Mr Slinger added: "When young people are written off, it costs all of us. Not just in benefits, but in lost potential, lost talent, and lost contribution to our communities.

"I'm delighted the Chancellor said this Labour Government is 'on the side of kids and will back their poten-

tial'. Now I'm calling for a 'Youth Triple Lock' - three measures beyond the Youth Guarantee that would give a much needed boost to young people across a range of areas.

"Ending the two-child cap isn't just anti-poverty, it's pro-prosperity. It's about life chances for all our children."

He also welcomed lower tax rates which could benefit around 1,090 retail, hospitality, and leisure properties in Rugby, an average £150 drop in energy bills from April with savings of £300 for lower-income households, and the freezing of fuel duty, rail fares, and prescription charges.

## Appeal after robbery of mobile phone

POLICE are appealing for witnesses following a robbery in a village near Rugby.

The incident happened in Boxwood Drive in Kilsby on Tuesday November 11 between 7.30pm and 8.30pm.

The victim met with the suspect to sell a mobile phone he had advertised online.

They initially met in Main Road, Kilsby, where the suspect was waiting in a red phone box. He then got into the victim's car and they drove to Boxwood Drive.

After being handed the phone to look at, the suspect ran off with it without paying.

The victim chased after him onto Main Road and towards Ashby Road and Spring Close, before stopping when the suspect shouted that he had a 'shank'.

The suspect is described as black, in his late teens to early 20s, about 5ft 7in to 5ft 8in tall, with a skinny build. He was wearing a white T-shirt and grey joggers with shiny red shorts underneath.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or who can help identify the offender is asked to call Northamptonshire Police on 101, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111, quoting incident number 25000663048.

Information can also be submitted online at [www.northants.police.uk/RO](http://www.northants.police.uk/RO) or <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information>.

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# Volunteer Tony finds himself at the heart of a fun fund-raiser

A GRATEFUL Coventry Foodbank user-turned-volunteer is the face of the charity's Christmas fundraising campaign to help tackle the rising food crisis in the city.

Tony Lee, who has devoted 15 years to the Foodbank as a volunteer and staff member, is the star of the charity's latest fundraiser, *Where's Tony?* - a play on the popular hide-and-seek picture puzzle books *Where's Wally?*

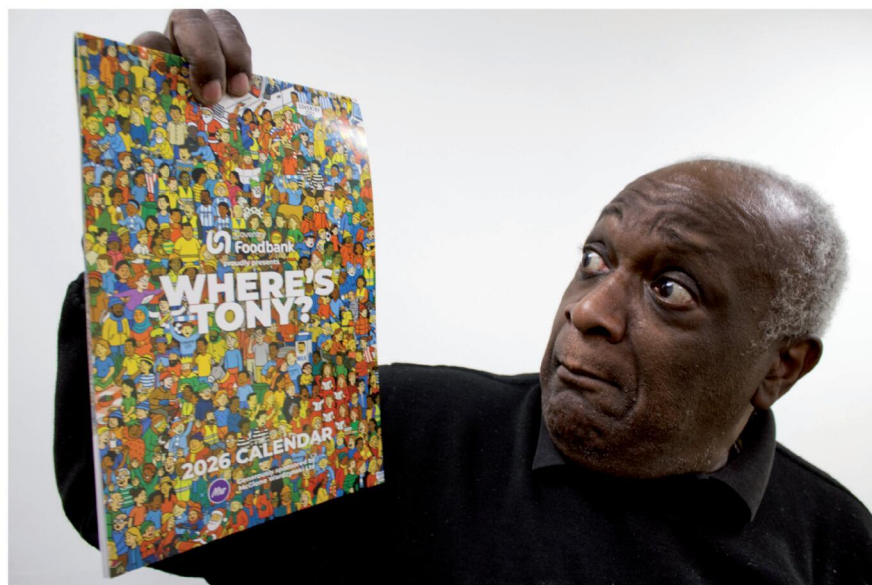
As well as a fun social media campaign running every other day throughout December, the 12 cartoon scenes - depicting locations in Coventry and the foodbank - also form the basis of a fundraising calendar, available to buy from the charity now.

The campaign aims to raise awareness as well as thousands of pounds for the under-pressure foodbank, which has 15 centres throughout the city.

Tony was first brought into contact with the foodbank in 2012 after a spell in hospital with septic arthritis, a serious condition which left him unable to work for many months while battling back to health.

He said: "I was so short of money; I had to borrow from family just to be able to have the heating on."

"The foodbank was a lifeline for me during that time. I was so grateful, and when I was well enough,



Tony Lee is the star of Coventry Foodbank's latest fundraiser, *Where's Tony?*

get the food and support they need, then being turned into a comic book character and having everyone trying to find me can't be a bad thing!"

Canon Gavin Kibble MBE, founder of Coventry Foodbank, said the Christmas calendar was more than just a fundraiser.

He said: "It's a celebration of the people and stories that make our city so special. Every day we see how a simple act of kindness can change a life."

"Tony's is a true story, and there are thousands more stories like it, told by people who have found themselves in a difficult position and needing help - people like Tony, who, many years ago, came to us for help and is now part of the team helping others."

"It's an honour to recognise his contribution to the work of the city's foodbank over the last 15 years, as well as highlighting the dedication of over 300 volunteers and staff who ensure that thousands of people are regularly supported with emergency food."

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/32vy6jrj> to buy a copy of the calendar for £5 plus postage.

Donors who start a regular monthly donation to Coventry foodbank in December will receive a free *Where's Tony?* 2026 Calendar.

I started volunteering at the foodbank. And a couple of years after that, I was employed as a member of staff.

"I enjoy working for the charity

and get satisfaction from helping people, and I get to see that every day. Working with the charity has given me confidence; it's given me purpose."

Tony says he is getting used to seeing his face as part of the campaign.

He added: "I don't mind - if it's helping more people in Coventry to

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Morgan Davies, managing director of Prime Accountants Group, said the research revealed how polarised views can be on AI usage at such an early point in the technology's development.

# Too many firms wary of using AI when it could help, says study

**BUSINESS owners in Warwickshire fear implementing AI technology due to a lack of knowledge about how they should use it, a new survey has revealed.**

Insights gathered from a survey of 126 county firms give a view of the appetite for using AI and, crucially, some of the main barriers which are preventing businesses from using it.

The study, commissioned by West Midlands accountancy firm Prime Accountants Group and Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, revealed 54 per cent of respondents – all of which are Chamber members – had introduced AI in some aspect of their day-to-day operations.

## Businesses

But 70 businesses – 56 per cent – said one of the main barriers to using AI was a lack of understanding of how best to use it, while 44 businesses – 35 per cent – cited a lack of available training.

For 29 per cent of respondents – 37 businesses – data security was a key reason for not using the technology.

Morgan Davies, managing director of Prime Accountants Group, said the research revealed how polarised views can be on AI usage at such an early point in the technology's development.

He said: "What this research shows us is there's not a one-size-fits-all approach. There's some who see this as the way to get a competitive edge in

by Ian Hughes  
ian.hughes@bullivantmedia.com

their businesses, then there's a middle ground who are fearful that if they don't do something, they'll get overtaken.

"Then there's the extreme final view, which is 'over my dead body' – they won't get near the technology at all.

"However, the facts of life are that businesses must always change, and that change needs to be in the right direction and future-focused. We haven't got a crystal ball, but I feel that those who reject AI entirely will end up being less successful in the long run."

The study also revealed automation was a strong pull factor among Warwickshire businesses, with 63 per cent of business owners surveyed saying that automating repetitive tasks to free up staff time was one of the main opportunities AI presented.

In addition, 53 per cent said one of the main opportunities it presented was speeding up research and collation of information.

Morgan added training staff effectively was the biggest improvement businesses could make to take advantage of this opportunity.

He said: "If you can take a job that's inefficient or repetitive and automate it, then it can be extremely valuable – but unless you know how to use AI effectively, you're not going to get the best from it.

"You're going to sleepwalk into some potential risks. For

example, with some of the free AI software, your private data could go off outside of the country and you could be breaching GDPR rules.

"The biggest barrier to learning is, where do you find this information from?"

"When you think about learnings we have in our careers, we tend to have been taught them with books, lectures and training courses.

"With AI, the technology can immediately do a percentage of my job overnight – but we're not taught how to use it in a safe, effective way and therefore we don't know what the risks are."

## Attitudes

The survey also revealed attitudes towards automating tasks which have historically been trusted to professionals, including payroll, HR, operations and accounting.

One in five respondents said they would consider using AI for payroll and one in four for accounting. However, 28 per cent said they wouldn't use it in any of these areas.

A total of 37 per cent said they would consider it for operations, 25 per cent for accounting, 20 per cent for payroll and 16 per cent for HR.

Morgan said: "If businesses are considering these changes, most that I speak to have to start with their infrastructure. There's a transition with most software – moving your IT infrastructure to the cloud makes it easier for AI tools to access the data you want it to."

# It's Christmas Time

at the garden loves' garden centre



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# Festive tradition set to bring fun back to the city



Cast members from Father Christmas and Friends at the former JJ's venue at Coventry Skydome on Croft Road.

A FESTIVE favourite is set to return after nine years away as an inclusive Coventry theatre company brings back its popular Father Christmas experience.

A cast of local actors will star as elves, snowmen and magic fairies in an immersive, walk-through theatre production, as city-centre based EGO Arts breathes new life into a vacant venue.

Father Christmas and Friends takes children and adults on a trail which includes a cosy cottage, a snowy forest and a Christmas cracker factory, as audiences help the characters carry a message to Father Christmas's grotto.

The new performance from the Coventry charity, which has championed inclusivity in the arts for almost 20 years, will open at the former JJ's venue at Coventry Skydome on Saturday (December 6) and run every weekend until December 22.

Francis Stojisavljevic at EGO Arts said parents would be 'smiling all the way round', with funding from Arts Council England helping to elevate the show's production values through set design, costume,

lighting and sound.

The show, which promises plenty of comedic moments and interactive elements, aims to provide a personalised experience for children of all ages.

EGO's Co-Artistic Director Georgina Egan said: "We want to give families everything they could wish for from a traditional 'meet Father Christmas' experience - it's important to us that every child gets a gift and the chance to speak to Father Christmas one-to-one."

"At the end of the trail, the children will have the opportunity to make a quick craft before they see Father Christmas, so there won't be any waiting around. We cannot wait to share this exciting adventure with families all over Coventry and beyond."

The performance, which includes music, movement and a moral message, has been devised by cast members from EGO's weekly theatre workshops.

The company, which also offers vocational theatre training to learning disabled and neurodivergent adults and tours nationally, last performed its Christmas experience in 2016.

EGO's Co-Artistic Director Corinne Robinson said: "We were overwhelmed by the positive feedback we received from families last time, so when we were awarded National Portfolio status by Arts Council England in 2023, we made it a priority to bring back Father Christmas on a bigger budget."

The show begins with audiences meeting Ivy the pixie fairy, whose job is to guide young explorers safely through the Christmas trail, all the way to Father Christmas's grotto.

Other characters encountered by

audiences include Poinsettia the snowman, Figgy Fancypants the cracker maker, and a mouse called Widow Winterberry.

EGO has worked closely with its members, many of whom are learning disabled or neurodivergent, to ensure the shows are accessible for both performers and audiences.

The show will feature integrated British Sign Language (BSL) on December 14 as a signing fairy joins Ivy on the trail.

On December 21, live Audio Description will be available to assist people who are visually impaired.

Liz Johnson, Midlands Area Director at Arts Council England, said: "Arts and culture allows us to share our stories in new and engaging ways, and EGO's festive production 'Father Christmas and Friends' will bring the Christmas spirit to Warwickshire this winter."

"EGO's performances are not only high quality but emphasise accessibility, and we are delighted that they are bringing arts and culture to families in Coventry and beyond."

Visit [www.egoarts.co.uk](http://www.egoarts.co.uk) for tickets to Father Christmas and Friends.

## THE JONES FAMILY JEWELLERS

Important Announcement from The Jones Family Jewellers

We're holding our prices until the 5th of January across all our stock in Kenilworth & our two stores in Leamington Spa.

With the recent sharp increases in gold and silver prices, along with upcoming government tax rises, we will unfortunately need to adjust our prices from January 5th onwards.

Although prices have risen significantly, and we realistically should have made this change already - we've chosen to keep our prices steady through Christmas to help our valued customers during the festive season.

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**Mammoth new range of  
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Born out of healthcare and based on the pressure relieving materials used in medical beds on spinal injury units, Mammoth's secret ingredient is Medical Grade™ foam – a naturally cooling, pressure-relieving but supportive material that's shown to be far superior to standard memory foam.

Unlike memory foam, Medical Grade™ foam doesn't require heat to become pliable, nor does it lock sleepers in place where they may seize up with aches and pains. Instead, Medical Grade™ foam instantly contours to the body and provides a supportive yet flexible surface that aids natural spinal alignment.

This is complemented by Mammoth's innovative PostureCells® – independently moving castellations in the foam that provide even support but reduce partner disturbance. Importantly, the air channels between each PostureCell® also serve to wick away the moisture and allergens that typically build up through the night.

### Testing excellence

Under laboratory conditions, Medical Grade™ foam mattresses have been found to provide **46% greater pressure relief** and **69% faster cooling** than standard 50kg memory foam. For sleepers that means:

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- Reduced perspiration
- Improved hygiene

Determined to go further, Mammoth also put its mattresses through testing at Northumbria University's Centre for Sleep Research. In clinical trials it was shown that Mammoth's mattresses helped sleepers **fall asleep 29% quicker**, experience a **7% increase in sleep efficiency** and report a **21% increase in sleep enjoyment**.

### Award wins

Mammoth's unique technologies helped the brand to win a Bright Ideas in Health award for pressure relief and temperature regulation – awards usually reserved for teams working within the NHS.

These impressive results are among the reasons why Mammoth has become the go-to name for elite athletes and professional sports stars – as can be seen through partnerships with the Rugby Players' Association, British Athletes Commission and Professional Cricketers' Association over the years, as well as relationships with Premier League football teams and Olympians.

### Combatting back pain

The unique properties of Mammoth's sleep and comfort technologies have made it the go-to mattress range for health professionals. By improving pressure relief, enhancing postural support and increasing circulation, physiotherapists in particular love the positive patient outcomes offered by Mammoth. With over 50% of adults now estimated to suffer from back pain in their lives, it's never been more important to invest in the very best sleep surface to ease pain and discomfort.

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LEFT: Frank Green and Coun. Neil Sandison. Picture by Marcus Mingins 4925003MMR4. MIDDLE: Live music from Cunnash. Picture by Marcus Mingins 4925003MMR2. RIGHT: Mark Hammond has some bright ideas. Picture by Marcus Mingins 4925003MMR3

# Birthday celebration for project bringing together green thinkers

A BIRTHDAY celebration marked the first anniversary of an environmentally friendly initiative in Rugby. Rugby Eco Hub – which lives by the slogan ‘reduce, reuse, repair, recycle, regenerate’ – held a ‘First Year Fiesta’ at its Clifton Road HQ.

Following an inaugural annual review of the hub’s projects and achievements, visitors – including Mayor Barbara Brown – were treated to a celebratory home-made vegan lunch from the hub’s kitchen. A fundraising auction was held, followed by ‘Earth Club in the Hub

2025’ - an afternoon of live music set to the backdrop of a ‘Rugby Village Fair’. The hub hosts a Repair Cafe and a Library of Things, and runs a Community Garden and Kitchen in the town. Rugby MP John Slinger described the Eco Hub as a ‘great initiative

which showed the town’s community spirit in action. He added: ‘It’s people with a shared passion for the environment who have decided to do something about it by bringing the community together and offering them something tangible and useful. ‘They’re showing an alternative

approach to our modern modus operandi of buying products that are often not very well made, and then dumping them rather than repairing them, which is bad for the environment and ultimately wasteful. ‘Thank you to the EcoHub and Repair Cafe for all you do.’



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# A festive flavour to fund-raiser



A CRACKER has started the Christmas season with a bang in Rugby.

The charity fund-raising Crackerteria cafe is now open in Rugby Central Shopping Centre, serving lunch, home made cake, coffee, tea, and hot and cold snacks.

The cafe is being run by volunteers from the Rugby Christmas Cracker charity to raise money for Fashion With a Heart Creations, which supports training in tailoring skills to the poorest people in India and Nepal.

The venue is hosting a sale of clothes from Fashion With a Heart, and a fund-raising sale of paintings by local artist Joe Douse.

Rugby Christmas Cracker organiser Katie Thomas said: "Since

1991, Rugby Christmas Cracker has been raising funds to help improve the lives of disadvantaged people in some of the poorest places in the world.

"The charity puts all the money raised by their sales towards helping the poorest and most marginalised women in India and Nepal to learn tailoring skills so they can earn a living and support their families.

"Last year we raised a fantastic £15,700 for Fashion With a Heart Creations, and it would brilliant if we could beat that in 2025."

The Crackerteria is also hosting a tool store run by Rugby-based charity Tools with a Mission (TWAM), which sends refurbished tools to communities in need in Africa to create livelihoods and change lives.

The charity is selling tools which cannot be sent to Africa to raise funds for the expensive process of shipping overseas.

This year, the charity plans to send 23 boxes – filled with refurbished tools such as sewing machines, donated computers, and power tools – to Africa.

Crackerteria is open Mondays to Saturdays until Christmas eve in the old Boots store in Rugby Central, and is also taking orders for 'Cracker A La Carte' evening meals. Contact katiethomas@ntl-world.com or visit www.rugby-cracker.org.uk for more information.

TWAM's tool store will be open Wednesdays to Saturdays at 10am-2pm until December 20. Visit www.twam.uk for more information.

**ABOVE LEFT: Serving up cakes in the Crackerteria. Picture by Marcus Mingins 4925002MMR1**

**ABOVE RIGHT: Volunteers from the Tools With a Mission charity are selling refurbished tools at the Crackerteria. Picture by Marcus Mingins 4925002MMR3**

**LEFT: Working hard serving food and drinks. Picture by Marcus Mingins 4925002MMR2**



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Warwickshire motorcyclists can brush up on their skills with Back to Biking training.

## Bikers boost skills

BIKERS in Warwickshire are being encouraged to refresh their skills this winter.

As the colder months make road conditions more challenging, Warwickshire Road Safety Education is urging motorcyclists to take part in a training course.

In partnership with Phoenix Motorcycle Training Leamington, Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service are offering riders access to discounted 'Back to Biking' training, designed specifically for those returning to motorcycling after a break or looking to boost their confidence and safety on the road.

WCC's transport spokesperson Coun Jennifer Warren said: "In the winter months, conditions on our

roads can quickly become more challenging for all road users - and especially for motorcyclists. Riding in winter presents unique challenges, from slippery roads to reduced visibility.

"The 'Back to Biking' training is a fantastic opportunity for riders to refresh their skills, rebuild confidence, and make sure they're fully prepared for whatever the season brings. By taking part in this training and the free Biker Down workshop, riders are not only investing in their own safety but also helping to make Warwickshire's roads safer for everyone."

Visit [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/road-safety-education/ready-ride-starting-motorcycle-journey/7](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/road-safety-education/ready-ride-starting-motorcycle-journey/7) for more details.

# A45 work aims at reducing flooding

THE MAIN road linking Rugby and Coventry is set for a mixture of single lane and full closures from next week through to March.

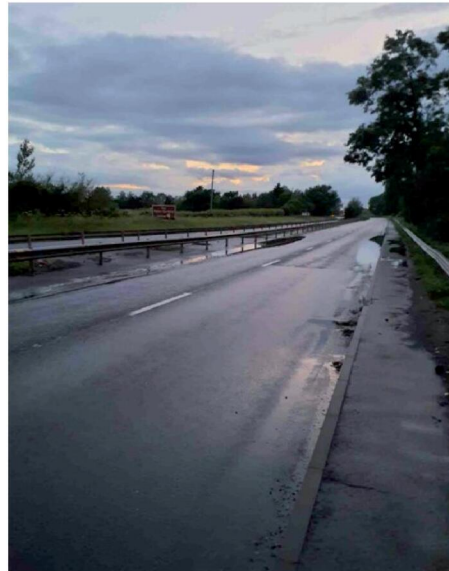
Essential maintenance on the A45 between Memorial Island and Thurlaston is being undertaken to improve safety and reduce the risk of carriageway flooding.

The drainage work, which starts on Monday (December 1), is scheduled to take place overnight between 8pm and 6am when traffic flows are at their lowest to reduce disruption to drivers.

Westbound lane closures will be in place from Monday December 8 to Fri December 19, followed by three months of on-and-off full closures.

A full programme - including cleaning and repairs of pipework, removal of stone and soil build up, ditch maintenance and removal of sediment from drains - will continue until March 2026.

The scheme is designed to help drainage along the carriageway and reduce flooding risk.



The schedule for the works is as follows:

- December 1 to December 7 - preliminary works; no traffic management
- December 8 to December 19 - westbound lane closures
- December 20 to January 5 - Christmas embargo; no traffic management
- January 6 to January 19 - westbound full closures with eastbound lane 2 closure
- January 20 to February 18 - eastbound full closure with westbound lane 2 closure
- February 19 to March 4 - full westbound closure with eastbound lane 2 closure
- March 5 to March 12 - full eastbound closure with westbound lane 2 closure

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/4y69u4v4> or email [noreplya45wmids@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:noreplya45wmids@nationalhighways.co.uk) for updates.

During road closures, a fully signed diversion will be in place and residents will be escorted through the works. Access for emergency service vehicles will also be maintained throughout.

The work is being carried out to reduce the risk of carriageway flooding.

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# Rugby Antiques & Jewellery Valuation Day

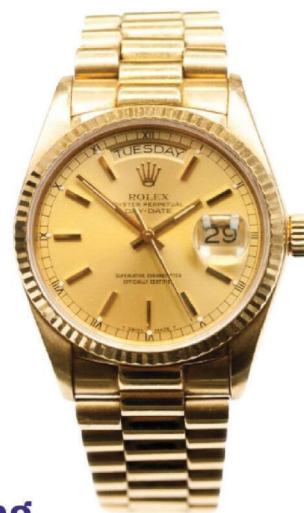
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## WM mayor welcomes budget cash

THE WEST Midlands Mayor has welcomed a £2.5billion settlement and plans to reignite the region's economy and raise living standards for tens of thousands of local people.

The four-year funding package announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves in the Budget on November 26.

It is the region's first ever multi-year settlement and is the latest step in an unprecedented shift in power, money and responsibility from Westminster to the West Midlands.

The long-term funding gives the Mayor and other political leaders the ability to better plan and deliver major projects that can drive growth and tackle poverty.

The Mayor, Richard Parker, said: "The Chancellor has backed the West Midlands with a £2.5billion settlement to drive growth in every part of our region - and it puts fairness at the centre of that plan. It will lift children out of poverty, strengthen our public services and support working people with a proper living wage.

"This is a Budget that helps to rebuild our region from the ground up. It gives us the tools to get homes built, improve our buses and trains, boost skills and bring new investment into our towns and cities.

"After years without meaningful growth, this Budget makes responsible choices for a fairer economy and better opportunities for the people of the West Midlands."

The four-year funding package announced in today's budget includes £530m for skills and job support, £177m for new homes, £232m for economic regeneration,

£129m to support the environment and fight climate change and £2.43m for health and wellbeing.

# Employers pledge help to get more into work

EMPLOYERS across the West Midlands have pledged more than 16,000 work experience, training and apprenticeship opportunities as part of a drive to get young people into good careers.

Plans to create 20,000 opportunities were set out in the West Midlands Mayor's Youth Plan last summer and, by working with partners, he is well on course to meet his target.

The Mayor, Richard Parker, said: "We're backing young people with the skills and opportunities they need to get started in an exciting career and set themselves up for life.

"This is a win-win as we're also helping local firms secure the vital talent they need to grow.

"By connecting people to good jobs, we're not just changing individual lives - we're strengthening our communities and securing our region's future prosperity."

A partnership with Movement to Work (MtW) is one of the ways in which the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is helping to tackle youth unemployment in the region.

The YouthPath scheme connects employers with young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), and the Mayor is encouraging businesses in the region to sign



up. The Mayor joined employers Mitchells and Butlers and Diageo at a unique work experience event held at All Bar One in Brindleyplace, Birmingham, to celebrate a growing collaboration that is helping young people kick-start careers in hospitality.

The Diageo Learning for Life programme, delivered in partnership with the UK's leading hospitality charity, Springboard, helps individuals over the age of 18 who face barriers to education or employment, to build meaningful careers in the hospitality industry.

Brought together by Movement

to Work, the Diageo Learning for Life programme and Mitchells & Butlers (M&B), the collaboration enables young people to gain industry recognised qualifications, skills, personalised mentoring, and hands-on work experience in M&B venues across the region.

The Mayor launched his West Midlands Works Plan, which sets out a vision to create 93,000 good quality job opportunities for people over the next ten years.

West Midlands Works is the Mayor's response to the government's Get Britain Working initiative, to support people with health conditions and barriers

who want to work, into good jobs and fulfilling careers.

Over the next three years the Mayor will also deliver a guarantee for all young people across the region to be able to access training, education, careers guidance and other forms of support so they can take their first step towards work. This includes work readiness programmes and work preparation lessons at school.

Tamara Pinnock (left) and Shane Masters (right), showing the Mayor Richard Parker (centre), the art of cocktail making at All Bar One.



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# Keeping us all safer on winter roads - and you can play your part to help



AS THE winter takes hold and temperatures drop, National Highways is preparing a nationwide operation to help keep England's motorways and major A-roads safe - whatever the weather.

Last winter alone, National Highways' fleet of 530 gritters covered more than 1.5million miles, the equivalent of driving around the Earth over 60 times.

Each gritter can weigh anything from 18 - 26 tonnes fully loaded, with the largest able to carry 11 tonnes of rock salt. In total, teams carried out more than 23,000 gritting runs during the winter to keep

traffic flowing safely.

Darren Clark, Severe Weather Resilience Adviser at National Highways, said: "Our work through the colder months is about more than just keeping traffic moving - it's about keeping the country connected.

"Our network of 4,500 miles of motorways and A roads are the backbone of the nation's supply chains, ensuring life-saving medical equipment, pharmaceuticals, fuel, chemicals, and food reach every corner of England, even in severe weather.

"For example, hospital oxygen supplies often travel from Scotland via the M6 and A1, so it's vital these

routes remain open to keep critical deliveries moving.

"This preparation is a huge undertaking and begins months in advance to keep commuters moving, help millions visit friends and family, and help carry two-thirds of all freight that supports trade and investment across the UK. And none of that stops in winter."

Just as teams and equipment are ready for whatever winter brings, drivers are being urged to check their vehicles, plan their journeys and make sensible choices when conditions turn challenging.

Between December 2024 and February 2025, there were 67,768 recorded breakdowns, highlight-

ing the importance of preparation, such as checking your vehicle and the weather forecast, during the colder months.

As winter begins and road conditions become more unpredictable, National Highways is launching its annual winter T.R.I.P. campaign to encourage drivers to prepare for journeys properly, as colder weather sets in and road conditions become more challenging with the likes of snow, ice, and rain.

The acronym T.R.I.P. promotes four simple steps to prepare drivers using motorways and major A roads this winter:

**Top-up:** Fuel, oil, and screen wash

**Rest:** Plan regular stops every two

hours to avoid driver fatigue

**Inspect:** Check tyre pressure and tread






**Prepare:** Have a plan for severe weather conditions

Colin Stevenson, Road Safety Information Lead at National Highways, added: "Winter can throw all sorts at us, but together we can help to make journeys safe and smooth as possible. Our dedicated teams will be out day and night to keep our roads clear and reliable. Simple steps like checking your vehicle, packing a winter emergency kit can all help drivers to be safe when faced with snow, ice, or heavy rain

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<p><b>Peterborough</b></p>  <p>Thur 19 Feb 2026 <b>£32pp</b></p>	<p><b>London Covent Garden</b></p>  <p>Fri 20 Feb 2026 <b>£32pp</b></p>	<p><b>Liverpool</b></p>  <p>Sun 22 Feb 2026 <b>£32pp</b></p>

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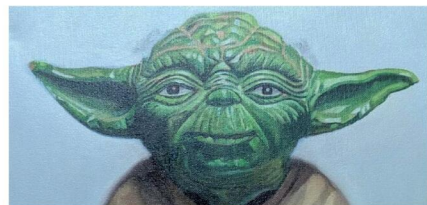


**Hansons Auctioneers, Etwall, Derbyshire, DE65 6LS**

# Under the hammer to help the hospice



Nigel Higgins was a well-known and much-loved Leamingtonian.



Yoda will be among the lots at the charity auction on December 9. Admission is free (ticket registration required). Guests are encouraged to reserve in advance via the Eventbrite listing. Search nigel-higgins-charity-art-auction-tickets at www.eventbrite.co.uk.

ART collected by a Leamington businessman will be raising vital funds for the Myton Hospices.

Nigel Higgins, whose short battle with prostate cancer came to an end in April, grew up in Leamington and became a well-known and much-loved figure in the community.

He ran John Atkins Cycle Shop, which became a hub for cyclists across Warwickshire. Nigel supported riders of all ages and abilities, helping to grow a thriving community around the sport he loved.

Beyond cycling, Nigel was a man of many passions - including art, of which he amassed a diverse collection by British and international artists.

And his personal art collection will form the heart of the Nigel Higgins Charity Art Auction taking place at The Fold on Spencer Street on December 9.

A donation from the sale of each work will go to Myton Hospice, which provided compassionate care to Nigel in his final days.

Auction organiser Kate Livingston said: "This isn't just an art auction, it's a celebration of Nigel Higgins' legacy, a testament to the power of community, and an opportunity to support Myton Hospice's outstanding work."

# Showing the art of raising funds

A FORMER physiotherapist at the Myton Hospices is returning to support the charity through her art.

When Nikki Woolvine worked at The Myton Hospices, her patients gave her advice she'll never forget "follow your dreams, don't waste a minute of your life".

And she will bring those dreams full circle when she showcases her hand-painted glassware business, Sweetpea & Bumble, at the Small Business Saturday Christmas Fun Day at The Court House in Warwick tomorrow (Saturday), an event supporting the Myton Hospices.

Nikki told The Observer: "My patients were incredibly wise and kind. They'd tell me not to waste a minute, to pursue what mattered to me. This business is my way of honouring that advice while giving back to the place that shaped how I see what really matters."

After 29 years in physiotherapy, including five years at The Myton Hospices, Nikki, from Coventry, launched Sweetpea & Bumble, transforming charity-shop glassware into one-of-a-kind painted pieces.

Each gin glass, vase, and tea light holder begins as a forgotten item on a Warwickshire charity shop shelf before being hand-painted with intricate designs.

"I love that I'm supporting local charities when I buy the glassware, keeping items out of landfill, and then giving back," explained Nikki. "It's creativity with a conscience - everything connects back to community and sustainability."

Warwick's Christmas Lights organises the



Small Business Saturday Christmas Fun Day in partnership with The Myton Hospices. The event brings together local makers and families for festive celebrations at The Court House.

The event represents more than just another craft fair for Nikki, it's a chance to directly support her former colleagues and the cause she cares deeply about, while showing what her patients' guidance inspired her to create.

She said: "I listened to what they told me, and now I get to use what I've built to support the care they received and that others will receive. That feels like the right way to honour their memory."

Former physiotherapist at the Myton Hospices, Nikki Woolvine, will be supporting the charity through her art.

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Holidays



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Reader Travel

The Observer



## LIVERPOOL & SOUTHPORT

Departing Mon 23 Mar '26

Join us for a wonderful short break to the vibrant city of Liverpool where there's plenty to explore - from its glorious maritime history and rejuvenated dockside to its bustling city centre, The Beatles connections and much more.

### SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel from Rugby
- ✓ 4 nights at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ 2 for 1 bar (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✓ Free time in Liverpool
- ✓ Excursion to Southport

Optional excursion to Chester (£15pp)

5 Days by Coach only £299

Single Supplement £100



## HISTORIC DURHAM, BEAMISH & CAPTAIN COOK'S WHITBY

Departing Thu 30 Apr '26

We enjoy a host of historically-themed excursions on this wonderful exploration of the North East. From Whitby to the fascinating open-air living museum of Beamish and the beautiful city of Durham, this break offers the perfect chance to journey into the past.

### SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel from Rugby
- ✓ 4 nights at the Leonardo Hotel, Middlesbrough (JG3 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Excursions to Durham, Beamish Living Museum & Whitby

5 Days by Coach only £389

Single Supplement £120



## THE CORONATION STREET EXPERIENCE

Departing Sat 2 May '26

Immerse yourself in the world of Corrie on our two-day break to visit Coronation Street: The Tour! The new exhibition hall features original costumes and iconic props, along with replica interiors of the Rovers Return, The Dobbs' and Roy's Rolls.

### SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel from Rugby, Coventry
- ✓ Overnight stay at a selected hotel in the North West area (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ Admission to The Coronation Street Experience at MediaCityUK, Manchester
- ✓ En-route visit to Liverpool

2 Days by Coach only £159

Single Supplement £30



For more information, or to book, please call

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033 numbers are free within inclusive minutes packages otherwise standard rates apply.

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# Special event turns the spotlight on our 'wonderful foster carers'

'WONDERFUL' foster carers in Warwickshire have been honoured.

Warwickshire Fostering hosted its annual Celebration Event to recognise the contributions of the county's foster carers.

The celebrations at Old Shire Hall in Warwick brought together fostering families, new applicants, and council officials to highlight successes, share inspiring stories, and appeal for more foster carers.

New awards were handed out to 14 Children of Foster Carers from the Charity 'Evelyn's Gift', acknowledging the vital role they play in welcoming children into their homes.

Three sibling groups were awarded prizes for their incredible kindness and understanding, welcoming children into their family and helping them feel a sense of belonging.

The honour of 'Foster Carer of the Year' was awarded to Jayne and Craig for their 11 years of commitment, offering a safe, secure, and permanent home to three young people who will stay with them into adulthood and beyond.

The couple said: "For us, fostering is extremely rewarding; being able to watch a young child, who is often broken, go from strength to strength in all aspects of their life. Yes, there are challenges that present themselves along the way, but the rewards far out way these.

"The advice, support and training that is offered to us enables us to be the best version of ourselves, which in turn gives our foster children the best opportunities in life.

"We would encourage anybody who is curious about fostering, to seek advice

and make those first steps by contacting Warwickshire County Council Fostering."

Other accolades included the 'Award for Working with the team around the child' given to Elinor and April, the 'Award for providing Support for other foster carers' to Joy, and the 'Advocating for a child' award for Alida and Ryan.

Other highlights included long-service awards recognising commitment from ten to 30 years.

A central theme of the evening was the need to recruit more foster carers – particularly for teenagers and siblings – across the county, where there are currently 797 children in care.

Speaking at the event, Rebecca Clifford, Manager of the Warwickshire Fostering Recruitment Team, said: "There are lots of myths around who can be a foster carer. People assume they need to be superheroes or a perfect 2.4 children family. I can honestly say we have the most wonderful, diverse bunch of foster carers in Warwickshire.

"We are looking for people with love to give, with understanding that children who have been through tough experiences may find life tricky – and a spare room certainly helps.

"To anyone thinking of taking the leap, my team are available to talk you through the different options available to suit every lifestyle."

Those considering fostering in Warwickshire are invited to Warwickshire Fostering's final online information event for this year on December 10 at 7pm.

Visit [fostering.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://fostering.warwickshire.gov.uk) for more information.



Left to right: Supervision and Support Fostering Social Worker Alex, with Foster Carer of the Year award winners Jayne and Craig.

## Questions about care? We can help



We know moving into residential care is an emotional and difficult decision with lots to think about.

With over 30 years' experience, we can help you navigate the process of finding the right care home, so that you feel confident about the decision you make – whether that's choosing a WCS Care home, or one outside our group that's more suited to your needs.

If you've got questions about care, or one of our care homes, our Trusted Advisors can help.



Phillip Rainsford

Woodside Care Village, Warwick Castle Brook, Kenilworth

07802 728447  
p.rainsford@wcs-care.co.uk



Four Ways, Leamington Spa Sycamores, Leamington Spa

07802 728443  
j.rugg@wcs-care.co.uk



Josephine Rugg

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# Why it might help to unwrap a more realistic Christmas

A WELLBEING expert has advised Brits to keep their plans for the festive season 'realistic' to avoid pre-Christmas anxiety.

With statistics showing over two in five Brits have felt stressed during the festive season, Lynn Crilly (<https://lynnarily.com>), the author of *Hope with Depression*, has put together a plan to help people cope with the additional pressures the season brings.

She said: "One in four of us have said we struggle with anxiety or depression at this time of year."

"These feelings are especially common amongst those who are unemployed, divorced or widowed, which is most likely to be linked to the marketing images of the 'perfect Christmas'."

"So it may be the most wonderful time of year for some people, but it may be the worst time of year for others as they find Christmas and the holiday season extremely stressful and difficult."

"The festive period comes with many pressures: having more social commitments than usual, apprehension over family get-togethers or the temptation to overindulge in food and or drink, let alone the added anxiety of how you are going to pay for all of this."

"We are constantly bombarded with the picture-perfect Christmas, but for many of us, this is far from reality."

"It is important not to get taken in by too many of these unrealistic images, which can

leave you with feelings of inadequacy and low self-esteem.

"Christmas, whatever you're doing and whoever you are with, is meant to be a time of peace, rest and relaxation for everyone including you."

"If you are experiencing high levels of anxiety from worrying about the weeks ahead, you may find that planning ahead to help to try and reduce some added pressures on you."

## Keep your expectations realistic

Try not to get too caught up in what you think the Christmas holidays are meant to look and feel like. If you are constantly comparing your festivities to a perfect shop picture, you will more than likely come short. Don't worry about what everyone else is doing, do what is right for you and at a realistic level for your financial pocket to.

## Do Something Different

If you are fed up at the prospect of doing the same thing that you did last year, the year before that and the year before that, try something new.

Last year, we had a barbecue on Christmas Day and it was great fun and we all enjoyed mixing the day and the food up a bit, so much so we



Brits have been advised to keep their plans for the festive season 'realistic' to avoid pre-Christmas anxiety.

have decided to do it again this year.

## Forget what is not important

Don't run yourself ragged making sure all the decorations are up, everyone has a thought out gift, exciting food or trying to meet up with people just because it is Christmas. None of this is important. What really matters is you and the people you love. Focus on time, by which I mean good quality time including time set out for you.

## Volunteer

While we all may be feeling overwhelmed with our to do list, it may be worth just thinking about doing something nice for someone less fortunate than you. Whether it is taking someone shopping, keeping an older person

company for an hour or even volunteering at a soup kitchen, it is a well-known fact that we always feel better when we have done something positive for someone else and made their life a bit better.

## Ask for help

Asking for help is a sign of strength not weakness. We all need help at some point in our lives, whether it be from family, friends or a professional. Please don't hesitate to reach out. Don't think that because it's Christmas you shouldn't feel anxious – and the data shows that you are not alone.

The Charity Sane have a helpline that is open 365 days a year from 4pm -10pm 0300 304 7000



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Join us on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10am to 4pm at Royal Star and Garter, Tudor Coppice, Monkspath Hall Road, Solihull B91 3DE.

**We're looking forward to welcoming you soon - don't forget to book the free taster session\*.**



#### Get in touch:

Call 0808 281 5068, or email [enquiries@starandgarter.org](mailto:enquiries@starandgarter.org) or fill in the form on [www.starandgarter.org](http://www.starandgarter.org)

\*One FREE taster session per person. Offer applies to veterans and partners, subject to availability.

Registered Charity No. 210119



# Making some real gains when it comes to choosing artificial trees

THERE'S something special about the moment the Christmas tree goes up, as it marks the start of the festive season and transforms a home with instant warmth and sparkle.

For many households, an artificial tree is the ideal choice, offering all the beauty of a real fir without the need for ongoing care, but remaining the focal point of the home. The team at British Garden Centres has put together some expert advice on how to select the best artificial Christmas tree for your home this year.

### Measure your space first

Before you even begin browsing, measure both the height and width of the area in the room where your tree will stand. Leave enough clearance from the ceiling for your tree topper and ensure there's room to move around the base comfortably.

### Plain Trees

A timeless choice, these trees provide the perfect blank canvas for your creativity. Whether you prefer a minimalist Nordic look or a traditional palette of gold and red, a plain artificial tree allows you to create a design that reflects your own festive style.

### Pre-Lit LED Trees

For those who want to skip the time-consuming task of untangling fairy lights, pre-lit LED trees make decorating easy. The built-in lights are evenly spaced for a professional finish and include energy-efficient LED bulbs that stay cool and last for years.

### Frosted & Snowy Trees

Frosted and snowy artificial trees have become a firm favourite because they instantly create a stunning, romantic "winter wonderland" aesthetic right in the home, capturing the beauty of a fresh snowfall without any mess. The white snow effect branches serve as a neutral yet effective backdrop that makes both colourful and metallic decorations pop brilliantly.

### Quality makes a difference

A high-quality artificial Christmas tree should look realistic and last for many years. Pay attention to details such as branch texture, needle type, and the number of tips, as these features contribute to a fuller, more natural shape.

### Add the finishing touches

Once your tree is up, start by taking the time to fluff out each branch for an even, full appearance, which is crucial for the wow factor this Christmas. Then you can choose a decoration theme

that ties in beautifully with your home's interior. Finally, don't forget the finishing touch of a tree skirt or base cover to seamlessly complete the display.

### Storage and reuse

One of the biggest advantages of choosing an artificial tree is that it can be used year after year. To keep it looking its best, store it in a cool, dry place away from sunlight when Christmas comes to an end, like a loft or garage. Many trees come with boxes, or you can opt for a purpose-made bag to protect them from dust and moisture.

Amy Stubbs, Managing Director at British Garden Centres, said: "Choosing the right Christmas tree is about more than just looks, it's about creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere for your home.

"Our Fern Christmas range offers something for every space and style, from classic plain trees to stunning pre-lit and pre-decorated options. We pride ourselves on helping customers find a tree that will bring joy and festive spirit for many seasons to come."

**Garden Centres has put together some expert advice on how to select the best artificial Christmas tree for your home this year.**



## A Long Walk With Fate

The exciting new novel from Solihull native Liz Torlée (formerly Liz Green)

# LOVE, BETRAYAL, SUSPENSE, FATE, KARMA

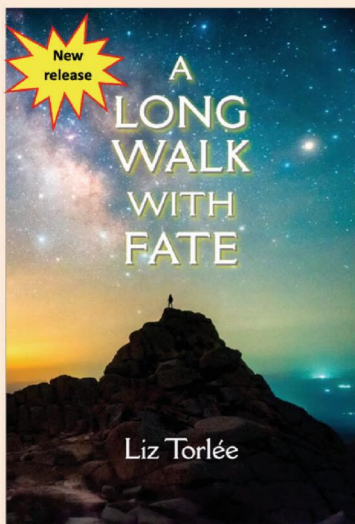
### ... the perfect gift for the holidays!

"A novel that weaves universal themes of love, forgiveness, and belonging into a fast-paced narrative."

*Author Janet Trull, The End of the Line*

"An engrossing story that crisscrosses the globe with three closely linked but disparate families, and their relationships, travails and treacheries."

*Author Michelle Alfano, The Unfinished Dollhouse*

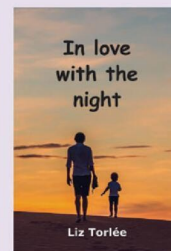


Check out this and Liz's other novels at:

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## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**  
Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

**D20160 COALPIT LANE, WOLVEY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from B41120 Wilbybrook Road.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching & associated works, 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.  
Order Commences: 10 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 10 December 2025.  
Access & Diversion: No diversion available.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**FOXONS BARN ROAD, BROWNSOVER, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To enable duct laying works.  
Order Commences: 8 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 9 December 2025.  
Access & Diversion: Foxons Barn Road, Howlands and vice versa.  
Contractor: Omnis Highways Solutions, Tel: 01724 786 286.

Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:  
**CHAPEL STREET, LONG LAWFORD**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To enable new water connection works.  
Order Commences: 22 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 24 December 2025.  
Access & Diversion: Chapel Street, Cross Street, Main Street, West Street and vice versa.  
Contractor: Network Plus, Tel: 01332 820 920.

For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.  
To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website [warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap) or call us 01926 412515.

**WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**  
**THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (BOROUGH OF RUGBY) (CIVIL ENFORCEMENT AREA) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS, ON-STREET PARKING PLACES & RESIDENTS' PARKING) (CONSOLIDATION) (VARIATION NO. 8) ORDER 2025**  
Warwickshire County Council has made the above-named Order, pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which is to vary the existing Warwickshire County Council (Borough of Rugby) (Civil Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions, On-Street Parking Places & Residents' Parking) (Consolidation) Order 2017 (as varied) as described in the Schedule below. The Order commences on Tuesday 9 December 2025.

A copy of the Order, together with a copy of the Order being varied, and a statement of the Council's reasons for proposing to make the Order, are available to view at Shire Hall, Market Place, Warwick, and online on the Council's website at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/20208/rugby-borough>  
Any enquiries relating to the Order may be sent by email to [pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk) Any person who desires to question the validity of the Order or of any provision contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or on the grounds that any requirement of that Act or of any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order may within six weeks from the date of the making of the Order apply to the High Court for this purpose.

**SCHEDULE**  
(No Waiting at any time restrictions along the public highway)  
No Waiting At Any Time (Double Yellow Lines)  
Barter Place, Rugby – both sides, for its entire length  
Drover Close, Rugby – both sides, for its entire length  
No Waiting At Any Time (Restricted Parking Zone Signage)  
Gavel Drive, Rugby – Both sides, for its entire length  
S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4R

**THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (BOROUGH OF RUGBY) (CIVIL ENFORCEMENT AREA) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS, ON-STREET PARKING PLACES AND RESIDENTS' PARKING) (CONSOLIDATION) (VARIATION NO. 8) ORDER 2025**  
Warwickshire County Council has made the above-named Order, pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which is to vary the existing Warwickshire County Council (Borough of Rugby) (Civil Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions, On-Street Parking Places And Residents' Parking) (Consolidation) Order 2017, as described (by approximate measurements) in the Schedule below. The Order commences on Monday 8 December 2025.

A copy of the Order, together with a copy of an Order being varied, plans showing the lengths of road affected and a statement of the Council's reasons for making the Order are available to view at Shire Hall, Market Place, Warwick, and online on the Council's website at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/20208/rugby-borough>  
Any enquiries relating to the Order may be sent by email to [pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk) Any person who desires to question the validity of the Order or of any provision contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or on the grounds that any requirement of that Act or of any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order may within six weeks from the date of the making of the Order apply to the High Court for this purpose.

**SCHEDULE 1**  
**Additional Residents parking zone R2 eligibility**  
Cambridge Street (even numbers 2 to 102 inclusive, including numbers 1 to 6 Cambridge Court)  
**SCHEDULE 2**  
**Withdrawn Proposals**  
**Proposed Limited Waiting**  
(Mon to Sat between 8am and 8pm –  
Waiting Limited to 2 hours, no return within 4 hours)  
(Except for Zone R2 Permit Holders)

**Cambridge Street, Rugby**  
East side, from a point 22 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 18 metres  
East side, from a point 51 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 25 metres  
East side, from a point 88 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 19 metres  
East side, from a point 118 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 135 metres  
East side, from a point 260 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 60 metres  
West side, from a point 24 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 38 metres  
West side from a point 72 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 55 metres  
West side from a point 136 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 195 metres  
West side from a point 326 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 13 metres

**S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 04 Dec 2025**

**Balcombe Road, Rugby – No Waiting at any Time**  
South side, from its junction with Fareham Avenue, westwards for 13 metres  
South side, from a point 65 metres west of its junction with Fareham Avenue, westwards for 35 metres  
South side, from a point 173 metres west of its junction with Balcombe Road, westwards for 38 metres  
**Charter Road, Rugby – No Waiting at any Time**  
Both sides, from its junction with Balcombe Road, southwards for 16 metres

**Fareham Avenue, Rugby – No Waiting at any Time**  
West side, from a point 13 metres south of its junction with Balcombe Road, northwards for 38 metres  
**Heath Way, Rugby – No Waiting at any Time**  
Both sides, from its junction with Balcombe Road, southwards for 16 metres

**King Edward Road, Rugby – Partial Footway Parking – Limited Waiting 1 Hour No Return 2 Hours Mon-Sat 8am-8pm Except Permit Holders (R1)**  
East side, from a point 30 metres north of its junction with Albert Street, northwards for 84 metres  
East side, from a point 8 metres south of its junction with Manor Road, southwards for 39 metres  
**King Edward Road, Rugby – Disabled Badge Holders Only**  
East side, from a point 47 metres south of its junction with Manor Road, southwards for 6.6 metres

**Lime Tree Avenue, Rugby – No Waiting at any Time**  
North side, from a point 40 metres west of its junction with Alwyn Road westwards for 24 metres  
South side, from a point 40 metres west of its junction with Alwyn Road westwards for 34 metres  
**Oliver Street, Rugby – No Waiting at any Time**  
North side, from its junction with Dale Street, westwards for 12 metres

**Worcester Street – Limited Waiting 2 Hours No Return 4 Hours Mon-Sat 8am-8pm Except Permit Holders (R1)**  
Both sides, from point 10 metres west of its junction with Newbold Road, westwards for 102 metres.  
**Worcester Street – R1 Additional Permit Eligibility**  
Worcester Street – All properties  
S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL

**THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (BOROUGH OF RUGBY) (CIVIL ENFORCEMENT AREA) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS, ON-STREET PARKING PLACES AND RESIDENTS' PARKING) (CONSOLIDATION) (VARIATION NO. 9) (PART) ORDER 2025**  
Warwickshire County Council has made the above named Order, pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which will be to vary the existing Warwickshire County Council (Borough of Rugby) (Civil Enforcement Area) (Waiting Restrictions, On-Street Parking Places And Residents' Parking) (Consolidation) Order 2017, as described (by approximate measurements) in the Schedule 1 below. The proposals described in Schedule 2 below have been withdrawn. The Order will commence on 10th December 2025.

Exceptions to any waiting restrictions described in the Schedule below will permit waiting for the purposes of picking up and setting down passengers, loading and unloading goods, for vehicles displaying a disabled person's badge and in connection with the maintenance of the road and the supply of gas, water or electricity. A copy of the Order, together with a copy of an Order to be varied and a statement of the Council's reasons for making the Order are available to view at Shire Hall, Market Place, Warwick, and online on the Council's website at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/news/20208/rugby-borough>

Any enquiries can be sent by email to [pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:pmc@warwickshire.gov.uk) Any person who desires to question the validity of the Order or of any provision contained in it on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, or on the grounds that any requirement of that Act or of any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the Order may within six weeks from the date of the making of the Order apply to the High Court for this purpose.

**SCHEDULE 1**  
**Additional Residents parking zone R2 eligibility**  
Cambridge Street (even numbers 2 to 102 inclusive, including numbers 1 to 6 Cambridge Court)  
**SCHEDULE 2**  
**Withdrawn Proposals**  
**Proposed Limited Waiting**  
(Mon to Sat between 8am and 8pm –  
Waiting Limited to 2 hours, no return within 4 hours)  
(Except for Zone R2 Permit Holders)

**Cambridge Street, Rugby**  
East side, from a point 22 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 18 metres  
East side, from a point 51 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 25 metres  
East side, from a point 88 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 19 metres  
East side, from a point 118 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 135 metres  
East side, from a point 260 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 60 metres  
West side, from a point 24 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 38 metres  
West side from a point 72 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 55 metres  
West side from a point 136 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 195 metres  
West side from a point 326 metres north of its junction with Clifton Road, northwards for 13 metres

**S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 04 Dec 2025**

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**  
Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

**A425 LEAMINGTON ROAD & BANBURY ROAD, SOUTHAM**  
Order Effect: Traffic will be prohibited from making a Right Turn from A425 Leamington Road onto Banbury Road and also from Banbury Road onto A425 Leamington Road.  
Reason for Order: For public safety while works on the new Aldi development are in progress.  
Order Commences: 1 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 23 January 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Leamington Road, Warwick Road, Warwick Street, Oxford Street, Banbury Road and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** Fitzgerald Contractors Ltd, Tel: 01213 260 402.

**CROWN STREET, HARBURY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable replacement of a decayed telegraph pole.  
Order Commences: 12 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 12 December 2025.

**Access & Diversion:** Crown Street, Hall Lane, Upton Road, Bush Heath Road, Vicarage Lane and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** Core Highways, Tel: 03300 169 688.

For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.  
To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website [warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap) or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 04 Dec 2025

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Warwickshire County Council

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984**  
Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

**D478 GEORGE STREET, NEW ARLEY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Gun Hill to island at Ransome Road.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway/structural patching and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.  
Order Commences: 8 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 8 December 2025.

**Access & Diversion:** Ransome Road, Gunhill and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**D20980 CRAVEN AVENUE & D21010 FERNDALE ROAD, BINLEY WOODS**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Court Leet to Daneswood Road.  
Reason for Order: Structural patching and associated works, 08.00hrs - 16.00hrs.  
Order Commences: 9 December 2025 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 9 December 2025.

**Access & Diversion:** Craven Avenue, Woodlands Road, Heather Road, Ferndale Road and vice versa.  
**Contractor:** Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.  
To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website [warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap) or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 04 Dec 2025

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Department for Transport

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990**

The secretary of state hereby gives notice of the proposal to make an Order under section 247 of the above Act to authorise the stopping up of an irregular shaped area of highway to the east of Castle Mound Way comprising a length of Castle Mound Way at Rugby in the Borough of Rugby.

If the order is made, the stopping up will be authorised only to enable development as permitted by Rugby Borough Council under reference R22/0551.

Copies of the draft order and relevant plan will be available for inspection during normal opening hours at Rugby Borough Council, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR in the 28 days commencing on 5 December 2025, and may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State (quoting NATTRAN/WMS247/6110) at the address stated below.

Any person may object to the making of the proposed order by stating their reasons in writing to the Secretary of State at [nationalcasework@dtf.gov.uk](mailto:nationalcasework@dtf.gov.uk) or National Transport Casework Team, PO Box 1393, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 5FO, quoting the above reference. Objections should be received by midnight on 2 January 2026. You are advised that your personal data and correspondence will be passed to the applicant/agent to enable your objection to be considered. If you do not wish your personal data to be forwarded, please state your reasons when submitting your objection.

N Crass, Casework Manager

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### Rugby Borough Council

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)**

Application Number R25/0757  
**ST ANDREWS PARISH CHURCH, CHURCH STREET, RUGBY, CV21 3PT**  
Installation of ground based lighting in churchyard  
**This development may affect a Listed Building. This development may affect a Conservation Area**

Members of the public may inspect copies of the application, the plans and documents submitted with it online at: [www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk) or in an electronic form at Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby CV21 2RR between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday until 28 December 2025. Please note a planning officer would not be present.

If you wish to make an appointment to discuss the application, please contact the case officer. Any person who wishes to make representation to the above mentioned Council about the applications should make them online - [www.planningportal.rugby.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.rugby.co.uk) (search for application number and select comment) - or in writing by that date to The Chief Officer Growth and Investment, Town Hall, Rugby, CV21 2RR.

If an application is determined by the Planning Committee, members of the public may have the opportunity to speak at the meeting. More details about public speaking are available from the Council or on-line at: [www.rugby.gov.uk/speakingatplanning](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/speakingatplanning)

For household or minor commercial applications, in the event of an appeal against a refusal of planning permission, deal with on the basis of representations in writing, any representations made will be sent to the Secretary of State, and there will be no further opportunity to comment at the appeal stage.

Nicola Smith  
Chief Officer – Growth and Investment  
MRPT1

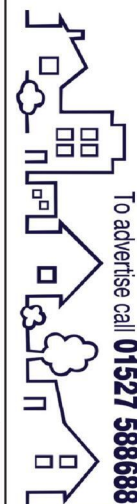
## PUBLIC NOTICES

### MARGARET PEARL RUSSELL

(otherwise Pearl Russell) (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 41 Norton Lays, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV22 5SL, who died on 11/07/2025, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 16/12/2025, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

BRETHERTONS LLP  
Montague House, 2 Clifton Road, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV21 3PX



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# Public Notices

# PUBLIC NOTICES

Keeping you up to date with all the latest information on Planning Proposals, Traffic Notices, Goods Vehicle Operator Licences, Licences To Sell Alcohol, Probate Notices.....

# Classified

TELEPHONE 01527 588688 FACSIMILE 01527 584371

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENSE UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003**

Notice is hereby given that EARLSDON CARNEGIE COMMUNITY LIBRARY has applied to Coventry City Council for a NEW PREMISES LICENSE for EARLSDON CARNEGIE COMMUNITY LIBRARY, Earlsdon Avenue North, Earlsdon, Coventry, CV5 6FZ.

To provide: The supply and sales of alcohol on the premises, Monday 19:00-22:30, Tuesday 18:30-22:30, Wednesday 18:30-22:30, Thursday 18:30-22:30, Friday 18:30-22:30, Saturday 13:00- 22:30, Sunday 13:00- 22:30

Any person wishing to lodge a representation concerning this application may write to: Licensing Authority, The council House, Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR

Or send an e mail to: [licensing@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@coventry.gov.uk)

The application may be viewed during office hours at the above address and further information may be available at [www.coventry.gov.uk](http://www.coventry.gov.uk) on the public register.

Any representation relating to this application must be made in writing to the Licensing Authority by: MIDNIGHT 22nd DECEMBER 2025

Please note it is an offence to knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine on summary conviction is unlimited.

**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence**

Wayne and Tiah Solutions LTD of 26 Kimberley Road, Rugby, England, CV21 2SU is applying for a Hgv operators licence to use Zone B B21 Mitchell Potatoes Ltd Boots farm Bourton on Dunsmore Rugby CV23 90Q as an operating centre for 2 HGV vehicles and 1 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice.

A Guide to Making Representations is available at [www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licence](http://www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licence).

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**MAMAS & Papas**, large rocking horse on wooden frame. Very good condition (collection only) £60.00. Tel: 07934132759

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- MINI car. MAX charm.
- SMALL size. BIG Personality.
- Tiny footprint. Huge fun.
- 1598 cc of "heck yes."
- Best car ever? Yep.

### The Juicy Facts

- Mileage: 84,329 miles of joyful adventuring
- Fuel type: Petrol (the classic, the original, the vibe)
- Engine size: 1598 cc of eager oomph
- Body type: Hatchback (the most practical of the cuties)
- Colour: Black — slimming, stylish, never goes out of fashion
- Transmission: Manual — for people who actually enjoy driving
- First registered: March 2013, a vintage of distinction

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# Double award for the KIA PV5

**THE Kia PV5 Cargo has been named both the 'Van of the Year' and 'Compact Van of the Year' at the 2026 What Van? Awards.**

The What Van? Awards celebrate the best brands, products and businesses in the LCV industry, with a glamorous awards event hosted at the London Hilton Bankside hotel. Awards are evaluated by a distinguished panel of independent experts from across the UK LCV sector.

The PV5 Cargo was praised for its sophisticated design and strong single-charge driving range, while also earning high marks for comfort, precise steering, cabin quietness and overall drivability. It also received a perfect 10/10 score in a separate review published by What Van?, the only electric LCV to achieve this year-to-date.

Paul Philpott, President & CEO of Kia UK said: "Winning 'Van of the Year' at the What Van? Awards is a tremendous endorsement for the PV5 that arrives just as the very first units arrive in the UK.

"We believe PV5 sets new benchmarks for the industry, thanks to its flexible platform, advanced electrified powertrain, and great value for customers.

"We are immensely proud of this new product, and our new UK network of dedicated PBV dealerships will lead the way in demonstrating its strengths to customers as we seek to lead electrification efforts in the light commercial vehicle sector." From winning the 'One to Watch' accolade at the 2025 What Van? Awards to 'Van of the Year' at this year's event shows the progression and immediate impact the PV5 has had on the LCV industry. These latest awards join the Kia PV5's fast-

growing collection, having this year already picked up the '2026 International Van of the Year' trophy; 'Best Electric Van' and outright 'Van of the Year' at the 2026 Parkers Van and Pickup Awards; and 'The Sun Van of the Year' at the News UK Awards. The PV5 Passenger has also been named 'Family Car of the Year' at the BBC TopGear.com Awards 2026.

The Kia PV5 Cargo is initially available in L2/H1 form with a choice of two battery packs to prioritise range and payload. The PV5 Cargo Long Range delivers up to 258 miles on a single charge (WLTP Combined), and has a payload capacity of 690kg. The PV5 Cargo Standard Range offers up to 184 miles of range (WLTP Combined) and offers a payload up to 790kg. Future variants will include L1/H1 and L2/H2 formats, as well as Chassis Cab and Crew variants joining the line-up in 2026.

In October 2025, the PV5 Cargo officially entered the Guinness World Records, achieving 'the greatest distance travelled by a light-duty battery-powered electric van with maximum payload on a single charge', travelling 430.84 miles (693.38km).

Kia's PBV strategy is designed to meet evolving commercial needs. The PV5 Cargo delivers a practical, electric solution for fleets and operators seeking efficiency and reliability, backed by an industry leading seven-year/100,000-mile warranty as standard.

The Kia PV5 Cargo and Passenger are available to order now from Kia's brand-new PBV Centre network, with first customer deliveries expected before year-end.

Kia plans to introduce the larger PV7 in 2027 and the PV9 in 2029.

# CEO cites 'barriers to promotion' as reason for exit call

by Aaron Sutcliffe  
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

**RUGBY UNION:** COVENTRY Rugby have confirmed CEO Nick Johnston will step down from his role at the end of the year.

Johnston cited the 'barriers to promotion' as the main reason for his decision to step down from his role as CEO.

Coventry failed to meet the Rugby Football Union's (RFU's) minimum standards criteria for promotion to the Premiership last season.

The Butts Park Arena club submitted their formal application for promotion to the Premiership in December last year when top of the Championship table.

However, the RFU found Coventry failed to meet the ground requirements necessary to compete in the Premiership.

The club will reveal a new structure following Johnston's departure as soon as possible.

Johnston said: "I am very grateful to Jon Sharp for giving me the opportunity at Coventry and I am very proud of how much we have achieved together.

"The support of fans and staff has been magnificent and such an important part in transforming the club into what is now one of the best clubs in the country.

"However, the barriers to promotion have made investment much harder to come by and has meant that both the club and I have to rethink how we best satisfy our respective ambitions.

"Once again, I would like to thank all at Coventry Rugby Club for their support on what has been a great journey."

Coventry's executive chairman, Jon Sharp added: "Both the club

and myself, personally, are grateful for all that Nick has done.

"Under his guidance, this club has been transformed into one that is a significant force both on and off the pitch.

"The combination of both his high performance and commercial expertise has been an invaluable asset and we wish him all the very best for the future."

Johnston joined Coventry as head of strategic development in 2018 and later became the club's managing director.

He took up the CEO role in 2021 as Coventry secured successive third-place finishes in the Championship in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

## COV SLAIN BY KNIGHTS

On the pitch, Coventry conceded a try on the last play of the game as Alex Rae's side suffered a cruel 24-21 defeat against Doncaster Knights.

With the visitors closing in on back-to-back wins for the first time this season, Russell Bennett crossed for a try with seconds remaining at Castle Park.

That came after Peter Roberts and Bennett touched down before the half-hour mark to put Doncaster into a 14-point lead.

However, tries from Morgan Strong and David Opoku-Fordjour saw Coventry level the game at the break.

Bennett kicked a penalty to put the Knights back in front only for Jordon Poole's try to put the visitors ahead for the first time.

However, Bennett's second try of the game at the death saw Coventry come away from the fixture with a single losing bonus point.

The result means Coventry sit ninth in the Champ Rugby table with three wins and five defeats from eight matches.

Doncaster scored the game's first try after just five minutes when Roberts dotted down following a powerful driving maul close to the Coventry line.

Rae's men looked to respond only for Opoku-Fordjour to lose the ball close to the line in torrential and greasy conditions.

And Coventry spurned another scoring chance when Morgan Addeley-Jones lost the ball as he reached for the line following a fine dummy and step.

Doncaster made Coventry pay for those missed chances on 27 minutes as Bennett slipped through two tackles to run in unopposed.

However, the visitors responded on the half-hour mark when Strong emerged with the ball from a powerful driving maul.

And Coventry levelled the game five minutes later as Opoku-Fordjour dotted down from Tommy Mathews' pass to send the teams in all square at the break.

The home side reclaimed the lead four minutes into the second half when Bennett kicked a penalty from distance.

However, Coventry took the lead for the first time on 47 minutes as captain Poole forced his way over from the back of a driving maul.

The visitors lost Aristot Benz-Salomon to a yellow card soon after for persistent infringements as Coventry withstood heavy Doncaster pressure.

However, Doncaster eventually scored the game-winning try in the final few seconds as Bennett juggled a pass before scoring under the posts.

Bennett converted his own try to finish the game with a 19-point individual haul.

Coventry are next in action against London Scottish on Saturday, December 6 with kick-off at 3pm at Butts Park Arena.



Coventry suffered a home defeat against Sheffield. Picture by Scott Wiggins.

## Blaze no match for Steelers after overtime Storm defeat

**ICE HOCKEY:** COVENTRY Blaze saw their losing run stretch to six matches following defeats against Manchester Storm and Sheffield Steelers respectively.

Blaze suffered a 3-2 overtime defeat against Manchester at Planet Ice Altrincham as Coventry twice surrendered the lead.

And Coventry then lost 5-1 against league leaders Sheffield at the Skydome Arena on another difficult weekend for the club.

A depleted Coventry claimed a point on the road in Manchester despite Blaze missing Mat Robson, Connor Russell, Grayson Constable and Artie Buzoverya.

Blaze almost broke the deadlock when Jere Vertanen rattled the crossbar before Blaze goalie Dershahn Stewart produced a sharp stop at the other end to deny Storm on a two-on-one breakaway.

Coventry scored the game's opening goal at 8:52 as Grant Mismash and Colton Saucerman combined to tee up American forward Adam Robbins who scored his first goal for the club.

Manchester thought they had drawn level later in the first period only for Brandon Cutler to see his effort ruled out via video review which confirmed his shot hit the post and rebounded out.

Storm eventually levelled the game at 26:41 when Bradley Jenion fired home after Blaze killed a powerplay at the end of the first period.

However, Coventry reclaimed the lead short-handed at 33:43 as Matthew Gleason produced a clinical finish on a Manchester powerplay.

The home side tied the game on their next powerplay chance at 45:25 when Stephen Johnson squeezed a shot through Stewart.

And the game went to overtime with

Coventry unable to capitalise on a powerplay chance of their own late on in third period.

Storm netminder Drew DeRidder denied Mismash on a breakaway early in the extra period.

And Manchester's recent signing Dante Hannoun won the game for the home side at 61:10 when he broke free and found the net.

Coventry then suffered a sixth straight defeat at the hands of leaders Sheffield despite the return of goaltender Robson.

After both teams spurned early powerplay opportunities, Sheffield broke the deadlock at 17:26 when Mikko Jusola scored on the man advantage.

Sheffield struck again just 16 seconds into the middle period as Dominic Cormier fired past Robson after progressing down the left wing.

And the Steelers extended their lead at 24:45 when Mitchell Heard cut in from the right and drove a shot into the net from close range.

Coventry reduced the deficit at 39:38 as Vertanen floated a shot over the shoulder of Steelers netminder Eamon McAdam on the powerplay.

The goal acted as a trigger for fans to throw teddy bears onto the ice as part of Blaze's 'Air the Bear' charity collection for Cash for Kids: Mission Christmas.

Sheffield all but sealed the points at 50:21 when Sam Tremblay scored with the Steelers short-handed.

And Tremblay struck again at 58:02 to complete the scoring with a length-of-the-ice empty net goal after Blaze pulled Robson for an extra skater.

Coventry are next in action against Sheffield on Saturday, December 6 with the face-off at 7pm at the Utilita Arena.

Blaze then host Guildford Flames on Sunday, December 7 with the face-off at 5:30pm at the Skydome.

## City target century of goals after milestone hit in come-from-behind Charlton victory

**FOOTBALL:** EPHRON Mason-Clark insists Coventry City want to score '50 more goals' after the Sky Blues reached a milestone in victory against Charlton Athletic.

Mason-Clark provided the assist for Josh Eccles' equaliser before Ellis Simms scored a brace to complete the turnaround after Harvey Knibbs put the visitors ahead at the Coventry Building Society Arena.

The Sky Blues have now scored 50 goals in just 18 league matches and remain 10 points clear at the top of the Championship table.

And Mason-Clark insists Coventry want to continue their scoring exploits and have already set their sights on reaching a century of goals.

Mason-Clark said: "It showed a lot of character, bouncing back [from one-nil down]. With the help of the fans as well, it



was an all-round good performance.

"It's an amazing stat [to score 50 goals]. But we want 50 more and more and more.

"For our objective, nothing is ever good enough until the end of the season.

"We just focus on each game

and make sure we learn from our mistakes in previous games and rectify it.

"Having a week of preparation [for the next game] will definitely help us as a team.

"Someone stepped on my Achilles, it was just knock but I'm all good."

## Sphinx stun Villa in Senior Cup

COVENTRY Sphinx came from two goals down to beat a young Aston Villa side 4-3 and advance in the Birmingham Senior Cup.

Villa led by two goals at the break as Rodrigo Fortes netted a brace while Omar Khedr also found the net for the visitors with Finlay Shorrocks on target for Sphinx at the Cameron Slater Arena.

However, Coventry staged a stirring comeback after the break as the home side scored three goals in the space of 13 minutes to stun the visitors.

Goals from Jamal Adams, Patrick Zito and Ryley Nicholson completed a remarkable turnaround to send Sphinx into the third round of the competition.

Villa raced into a two-goal lead after just seven minutes before the game was stopped due to a

power outage on the 20-minute mark.

Sphinx halved the deficit when play resumed as Shorrocks found the net on 35 minutes.

However, Villa restored their two-goal advantage five minutes before half time to leave the home side with work to do after the break.

And Coventry eventually reduced the deficit on 70 minutes when Adams struck before Zito levelled the game seven minutes later.

The home side completed the comeback on 83 minutes as Nicholson scored to stun Villa and send Sphinx through.

Coventry are next in action against Lichfield City on Saturday, December 6 with kick-off at 3pm at the Cameron Slater Arena.

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# Bragging rights for Borough in first-ever Rugby derby clash

by **Aaron Sutcliffe**  
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**FOOTBALL:** LINDON Meikle's late goal earned Rugby Borough a 1-0 win against local rivals Rugby Town in the first-ever derby clash between the two teams.

Meikle headed home on 76 minutes to put Borough ahead with Valley unable to find a leveller in the remaining minutes in front of 1,169 spectators at Butlin Road.

The result leaves Borough eighth in the Northern Premier League Midlands table with Valley down in 15th.

More than 1,000 supporters packed into Butlin Road for the



historic derby clash as Valley and Borough locked horns in a competitive match for the first time.

The occasion proved a cagey affair as Valley spurned the game's first chance when Harrison Nee's close-

range volley flew over the crossbar.

Chances remained at a premium throughout as Rivel Mardenborough saw his effort deflected behind by Borough's Oran Jackson.

Borough also saw a penalty appeal turned away by the referee after Aaron Nuttall went to ground in the box under a challenge from Nathan Kabeya.

After the break, Borough goalkeeper Sam Lomax tipped Jack Concannon's rising effort from the edge of the penalty area over the crossbar.

However, Borough broke the deadlock late on with their only attempt on goal as Meikle headed in Ellis Myles' cross from the right from six-yards out.

Valley searched for an equaliser at the death but could not find a level-

ler as Kabeya blazed the home side's best opening over the bar.

Borough took the local bragging rights and ended their five-game winless run in the process.

Valley are now winless in their last five league matches, losing three games in a row for the first time since August.

Borough are next in action against Carlton Town on Saturday, December 6 with kick-off at 3pm at Kilsby Lane.

Valley face another local derby against Racing Club Warwick on Saturday, December 6 with kick-off at 3pm at Butlin Road.

**Rugby Borough edged out Rugby Town in the first-ever league meeting between the two clubs. Picture by Marcus Mings 4925004MMR5**

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