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Council bids to get empty homes in use

'HOUSES should be lived in' - that is the thinking behind new council tax premiums which will be charged on hundreds of empty homes in Rugby.

Rugby Borough Council will increase council tax on properties which have been empty for a year, to incentivise owners to bring them back into use.

New government legislation allows councils to increase the premium the longer a property stands empty.

From next April, council tax will increase by 100 per cent on properties which have been empty for one to five years, with the premium doubling after five and ten years.

A property must be unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of a year or more to qualify as a long-term empty property.

Properties excluded from the council tax premium include homes being actively marketed for sale or rent, and homes which have recent or ongoing major structural repairs

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

for a maximum period of 12 months.

Coun Ish Mistry, the council's deputy leader and spokesperson for finance and performance, legal and governance, said the council was determined to use all the powers at its disposal to bring long-term empty properties back into use.

He said: "Our latest data suggests we have 324 properties in the borough classified as long-term empty homes and we want the council tax premium to incentivise property owners to bring these much-needed homes back to the housing market. We plan to introduce the new premiums from April 1, but the message goes out today - owners of empty homes in the borough must prepare now for the new premium charges or, ideally, start the process of bringing the empty homes back into use."

His Liberal Democrat counterpart Coun Bill Lewis said:

"Houses should be lived in and empty properties are a disgrace when so many people are desperate to rent or buy a home.

"By increasing council tax rates on empty homes, we are incentivising these homeowners to either sell or rent their properties and bring them back into use."

The council also plans to introduce a single council tax premium on 'second' homes - defined as furnished properties which are not the sole or main residence of any person.

A premium of 100 per cent (double the standard council tax charge) looks set to be introduced from April 1 for properties which have met the definition of a second home for a minimum of one year.

Current data suggests the borough has 187 properties which meet the 'second home' definition.

The plans were set to be confirmed at a full council meeting on Wednesday evening (December 10), after the Observer went to press.



Left to right: Emma Roodhouse, Sue Roodhouse, Roodhouse Prize winner Jo McChesney and Tom Jennings, who made the Roodhouse Prize trophy.

Artists draw praise in exhibition

THE WINNERS of an annual Rugby-based art competition have been crowned.

Artists from across Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Coventry were invited to submit pieces for this year's Rugby Open, with a panel of judges selecting the works to go on display and awarding prizes in a number of categories.

Jo McChesney won the Roodhouse Prize -

recognising significant achievement in local art - for her work A Place to Roost, alongside members of the Roodhouse Family and woodcarver Tom Jennings, who carved the trophy out of local ash wood to symbolise the preciousness of the planet.

Coun Maggie O'Rourke, a member of the judging panel, said: "We received hundreds of submissions for this year's Open and I know how difficult the

judges found it to select the pieces for the exhibition, let alone the winners of this year's awards.

"The Rugby Open gives visitors a glimpse of the fantastic artistic talent we have in the borough and beyond, and artists the opportunity to showcase work in a professional gallery setting."

Turn to pages 12 and 13 for more, including details of the other winners.



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Ed gets in the zone at the Coventry Building Society Arena. Picture by Mark Surridge.



A sell-out crowd of 10,000 lapped up the performance. Picture by Mark Surridge.

Star Ed loves the shape of Cov

by Andy Morris
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

SUPERSTAR Ed Sheeran played a 'landmark' show to 10,000 fans at the Coventry Building Society Arena on Friday (December 5).

Ed took to the stage at the Coventry venue in one of only two UK dates as part of a small European arena tour.

He took fans on a journey through his vast catalogue of hits, as well as new tracks from his recently released album *Play*, such as *Azizam*, *Sapphire* and *Symmetry*.

From *Galway Girl*, *The A Team* and *Castle on the Hill*, to *Thinking Out Loud*, *Perfect* and *Shape of You*, the set gave Coventry fans the chance to hear some of the biggest hits of the last



15 years live. Warwickshire folk duo *Nizlopi*, famed for their number one hit *JCB Song*, were one of two sup-

port acts on the evening, with Irish supergroup *Biird* also playing a set.

The show kicked off

Ed's five-date European tour following the release of his new album *Play* in September before he kicks

Ed and bandmates lap up the applause. Picture by Mark Surridge.

off his all-new *Loop* stadium tour in Australia in January.

Paul Michael, managing director at Coventry Building Society Arena, said: "This was a landmark moment for the venue and one of the greatest nights of entertainment we have ever seen in the Indoor Arena."

"Ed Sheeran is an artist that could sell out our stadium bowl, so to be one of the two UK venues to welcome him for an arena show proves how our reputation continues to grow in the industry."

"We are committed to bringing the biggest national and international artists to Coventry Building Society Arena and continuing to create even more

special nights for the city." The show was the latest of a number of appearances Ed Sheeran has made in Coventry in recent years.

In 2021 - Coventry's City of Culture year - Ed performed a free concert to launch the HMV Empire Coventry as part of HMV's centenary celebrations.

In January this year, Ed stunned aspiring young musicians in the city with surprise visits to Coventry Academy, Barr's Hill School and The TIN Music and Arts.

And ahead of his show last Friday, Ed spent the afternoon meeting pupils, headteachers, and representatives from Coventry Alternative Provision Academy, Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School, Coventry Music and St Giles Trust. See page 6 for the full story.

Countdown to Christmas

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Countdown to Christmas
 and all will be revealed

Get into the spirit by checking out **EVERYTHING CHRISTMASSY!!** on our Festive Pages!

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PUBLIC NOTICES

For all your latest information on Planning Proposals, Traffic Notices, Goods Vehicle Operator Licences, Licences To Sell Alcohol and Probate Notices...

See page **29**

Small Business campaign can make a big difference

INDEPENDENT businesses in Rugby took centre stage last weekend as the town joined the national Small Business Saturday campaign.

Mayor Barbara Brown, Rugby MP John Slinger and Rugby First Business Director Linda Lowne visited small businesses in the town centre on Saturday (December 6).

Businesses visited on the day included Curtains By Design, The Annex Studios, Hokey Poke Games, Mala Beds, The Brownie Addict, Hunt's Bookstore, Saray Restaurant, Optical People, Jean's Flowers, Wild and Free, and Terracotta.

Small Business Saturday is a grassroots campaign which highlights small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local'.

The day itself takes place on the first shopping Saturday in December each year, but the campaign – now in its 13th year – aims to have a lasting impact on small businesses.

Ms Lowne said: "We had a

great day on Saturday and met so many small business owners. They are an amazing bunch of people and so passionate and enthusiastic about their business and Rugby town centre.

"Each business is very different and unique offering a variety of excellent gifts and services.

"We are extremely lucky to have them based here in the town centre and it would be great if you can support them not only over the next few weeks but throughout the year."

Coun Brown said: "Small local businesses are the backbone of our economy, helping to create jobs and keep spending local which is particularly important at this time of year.

"Rugby has a wonderfully diverse retail offer, with so many fantastic small and independent businesses and initiatives such as Small Business Saturday help raise awareness of what we have on offer locally."

Mr Slinger said: "I always enjoy talking to local business owners, shopkeepers, stallholders and entrepreneurs. I want to hear about the great work they're doing and anything that I can do to support them.

"They care so much about our town and community and the word that I heard repeatedly was the importance of partnership in achieving an even more thriving economy locally which contributes to and is influenced by everything else that is going on in the town centre.

"We have 4,245 small and medium businesses in the constituency. They provide vital jobs, but they are also community institutions we can all be proud of."

Visit www.smallbusinessaturday.com for more information on Small Business Saturday.

Mayor Barbara Brown, Rugby MP John Slinger and Lucy from Hokey Poke Games.



Council looks to help hard-hit households in council tax plans

by Andy Morris
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

THE POOREST households in Rugby are set to pay less council tax under plans to increase financial support for low-income residents.

Rugby Borough Council (RBC) has drawn up a new 'streamlined' council tax reduction scheme to simplify the application process and increase discounts for the borough's lowest income households to up to 100 per cent.

The council's cabinet has backed the move after a report recommended introducing the new reduction scheme for the 2026-27 financial year – the first change to the scheme since its introduction 12 years ago.

Reduction schemes were introduced by the government to support low-income pensioners and working age applicants struggling to pay council tax.

While the government sets the rules of the scheme for pensioners, councils set the criteria for working age applicants.

RBC deputy leader and finance spokesman Coun Ish Mistry said the council was determined to focus support on the borough's lowest income households.

Modelling of the new reduction scheme indicated 92 per cent of households currently receiving council



Coun Ish Mistry, deputy leader of Rugby Borough Council.

tax reduction would receive more financial support, while 7.7 per cent would receive the same support.

The new scheme introduces discount 'bands' which take into account a household's weekly net income, size and number of dependents.

When calculating net income, the council disregards disability and carers benefits, war pensions, child benefit, child maintenance and a number of elements of Universal Credit.

Coun Mistry said the new scheme would be easier to understand and administer, ending a complex application and administration process.

He said: "We know the cost of living presents a significant challenge for households across the borough,

but it's only right we target our resources on the lowest incomes.

"By simplifying the scheme, we can give households greater clarity on the amount of financial support likely to be received, streamline the application process and speed up the time it takes to process applications.

"This promises to make our most vulnerable households better off and deliver significant efficiency savings for the council."

Efficiency savings of around £75,000 are set to cover the additional cost of the scheme for the council in 2026-27, with proposed increases to council tax on empty properties in the borough set to fund the scheme thereafter.

Under the new scheme, struggling residents who do not meet the criteria for council tax reduction can apply for an exceptional hardship payment.

Coun Bill Lewis, RBC's Liberal Democrat group finance spokesperson, said: "The new council tax reduction scheme benefits those in our community who most need financial assistance, further moving us towards a fairer society."

The plans were set to be confirmed at a full council meeting on Wednesday evening (December 10), after the Observer went to press.



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22nd Pub Lunch & Stratford	£30.00	£24.00
January		
17th Pub Lunch	£30.00	£24.00
21st Telford	£25.00	£20.00
March		
3rd Melton Mowbray	£29.00	£22.00
7th York	£27.00	£22.00
17th Cotswold Market & Broadway	£27.00	£22.00
21st Afternoon Tea & Litchfield	£33.00	£28.00
31st Liverpool	£29.00	£22.00
April		
8th Cheddar Gorge & Clarkes Shopping Village	£30.00	£24.00
11th London	£30.00	£24.00
14th Cotswolds & Broadway	£29.00	£24.00
May		
5th Pub Lunch	£31.00	£25.00
16th Black Country Museum	£27.00	£24.00
Eastbourne - The Haddon Hall Hotel 29th March- 2nd April 26. 5 Days/4 Nights £320 Per Person		
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Price includes- All coach hire, 4 Nights accommodation, Evening Meal & Breakfast, Day Excursions, Admission to Falkirk Wheel, and Admission to Ainwick Castle		
Llandudno - The Chatsworth House Hotel 10th-14th August 26 5 Days/4 Nights £295 Per Person.		
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Boxer Lewis is a real knockout in fundraising £20k for Myton

BOXER Lewis Williams has smashed his fundraising target for The Myton Hospices that cared for his dad.

Leamington-born Lewis exceeded the £20,000 target set for his '20 in 25' fundraising campaign, raising £20,823 to support the charity's vital services.

Lewis joined #TeamMyton earlier this year as a volunteer ambassador following the care his dad, Bob, received from the hospice's Myton at Home team before he died in January 2024.

Inspired by the support his family received, Lewis pledged to raise £1 million for Myton throughout his boxing career, beginning with his '20 in 25' campaign, which set out to raise £20,000 in his first year as ambassador.

Lewis said: "I am absolutely blown away by the support. To think we've smashed the

by Philippa Mings

target within eight months is incredible. It's down to all the amazing support from so many people.

"We've had a lot of fun raising the cash, and we know Myton and the team deserve every penny that can be raised. Thanks to all the sponsors, Cleary's Gym and my supporters - I am incredibly grateful for everyone getting behind the campaign."

Ruth Freeman, CEO at The Myton Hospices, added: "We'd like to give a huge thank you to Lewis and everyone who has supported his campaign. We rely on the generosity of our community to provide our vital services to people who desperately need our care, and we couldn't do it without people like Lewis. We can't thank him enough for all of his support."

The fundraiser that took

Lewis over the £20,000 target was the 'Together We Dance' event, an evening of disco, family games and an auction organised by his sister, Sophie, and his mum.

The event attracted more than 80 guests and raised £6,075. Highlights of the night included the sale of Lewis' boxing gloves from his 2022 Commonwealth Games gold medal fight for £350, and a "guess the total" competition with tickets to Lewis' next fight.

Other funds that contributed to the £20,000 target were raised through an auction at the NEC raising more than £3,000 where a pair of signed Frank Bruno boxing gloves sold for £350. Lexus also made a generous contribution of £1,750 through the Toyota Community Fund. Lewis rallied support for Walk for Myton, entering a team that raised £5,150. He was joined on the day by



Paying it back - Boxer Lewis Williams with Myton nurses.

young members of Cleary's Gym and their families.

Lewis remains determined to raise as much as possi-

ble in the remaining months of his '20 in 25' campaign, ensuring even more people can access the care and sup-

port they need. Visit the website at www.mytonhospice.org/Lewis to find out more and donate.

Royal Leamington Spa

Join Our Christmassy Trails This December!

Explore our festive trails across town throughout December for your chance to win up to £200 to spend in the New Year!

There are three trails to enjoy—simply pick up your entry form from participating retailers, the Upper Mall in Royal Priors, or the Visitor Information Centre.

Collect **ALL** the clues to enter the Grand Prize Draw for a chance to win £200 to spend in Leamington Town Centre in the New Year. Or complete any single trail to be entered into a draw to win £50.

Look out for clues displayed in shop windows.

Post your completed entry in Santa's Postbox in Regent Court.

Competition closes Wednesday 24 December. Ts & Cs apply.

For more information, visit: www.royal-leamington-spa.co.uk

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Jaguar's bold rebrand. Picture by YouTube:@Jaguar



Gerry McGovern, Jaguar Land Rover's high-profile design chief, has been dramatically removed from his post. Picture by Land Rover MENA Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

JLR design chief leaves company

JAGUAR Land Rover's high-profile design chief has been dramatically removed from his post after a turbulent backlash to the company's recent rebrand, with insiders claiming he was "escorted from the office".

Gerry McGovern, the influential creative head credited with shaping the modern Range Rover line-up, is said to have been dismissed suddenly last Monday. Staff were report-

edly left stunned as he was asked to leave the company's Gaydon headquarters under supervision.

According to internal sources, the departure followed months of unrest surrounding JLR's decision to relaunch Jaguar with a bold new visual identity, including a bright pink logo that sparked widespread criticism from long-standing customers, dealers and employees. The redesign was part of an attempt to reposition Jaguar as a purely electric luxury brand.

The move, which aimed to present a more progressive image, prompted a fierce backlash. One source is quoted as saying: "People hated it." Another described the atmosphere inside the company as increasingly fraught, saying: "It has been utterly toxic."

Coventry-born Mr McGovern, 69, has long been one of the most powerful figures at the carmaker and is widely regarded as the architect of its modern design language. He oversaw the creation of the current

Range Rover, Range Rover Sport, Velar and Evoque, alongside leading the resurrection of the Defender.

His sudden removal comes just weeks after the appointment of new chief executive, PB Balaji, who officially took charge from Adrian Mardell last month. Insiders said the leadership change accelerated scrutiny of recent strategic decisions, with the controversial rebrand becoming a flashpoint.

The company has not commented publicly on Mr McGovern's exit or

the circumstances surrounding it. However, JLR is now expected to reassess the direction of its Jaguar relaunch as dealers continue to report confusion and customer dissatisfaction over the branding shift.

One employee said the departure marked "the end of an era", adding: "Gerry shaped everything we did. For him to go like this shows how serious things have become."

Mr McGovern has not yet made a public statement.

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Energy suppliers have contacted customers with RTS electricity meters. If you've been contacted, book your appointment now to avoid any disruption.

The RTS signal has started to be switched off because the system is outdated and increasingly at risk of failure. If your meter isn't replaced in time, your heating or hot water could stop working.

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Over 250,000 homes and businesses across Great Britain have already had their RTS meters replaced this year.

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Technical solutions are also now available for every home.

Your supplier will aim to keep you on a similar tariff and will explain the options available to you.



Peter, East Renfrewshire

Peter is a retired prison officer and lives in a 3-bedroom house in East Renfrewshire with his wife, son and two tortoises. The family recently had their Radio Teleswitch meter replaced.

"Early last year I started to see TV adverts explaining that the RTS signal was going to be switched off, and that we could potentially be left without heating or hot water. My electricity supplier then got in touch with me about organising a replacement meter, and I immediately booked my installation.

"On the day of the installation the engineer turned up on time, explained what he was going to do, and got straight to work - it was all done within 40 minutes. There were no issues and it was a really good experience.

"I've now had the new meter since January 2025, and we haven't noticed any impact

-everything is just working as it did before.

"Before this happened, I wasn't in a rush to get a smart meter. Now that it's been installed, I've found that I actually really like it. It's even saved me some money, by enabling me to take part in my supplier's flexible energy use reward scheme.

"If anyone still has an RTS meter, I'd recommend getting it replaced sooner rather than later. It's understandable that people might be apprehensive, but it's definitely a change for the better."

If you think you have an RTS meter, act now.

You might have an RTS meter if:

- You've been contacted by your electricity supplier
- You have a switch box near your meter labelled "Radio Teleswitch"
- You use electric or storage heaters
- There's no gas supply to your home
- You get cheaper energy at different times of day

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Ed's visit gives city youngsters Shivers to set up new initiatives



Young music students were speechless when Ed paid them a visit.

A SURPRISE visit from pop megastar Ed Sheeran delighted students as he launched two new music projects for young people in the city.

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

Ahead of his show at the Coventry Building Society Arena on Friday (December 5 – see page 2), Ed spent the afternoon meeting pupils, headteachers, and representatives from Coventry Alternative Provision Academy, Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School, Coventry Music and St Giles Trust.

He introduced two new initiatives, Access to Music Industry and Your Voice, which he launched through his Ed Sheeran Foundation (ESF) in partnership with Coventry Music, part of Coventry City Council, and St Giles Trust.

Access to Music Industry

is a new partnership between Coventry Music and ESF to offer guidance to young people interested in creative careers. It will bring industry professionals to Coventry throughout 2026 and 2027 to provide students with valuable insights, mentoring and pathways into the music industry.

ESF will fund one young person from each of the secondary schools he met with across the city. The selected students will have access to a dedicated day per week of bespoke provision focused on developing the skills needed to access the music industry. In return, participating schools have committed to fund the future two years of the programme.

Faye Parklen, head of education entitlement and enrichment at Coventry City Council, said: "We are so grateful to Ed and his Foundation for giving Coventry young people an incredible opportunity to take part in a funded programme which will give them a genuine route into the music industry."

"We know that this programme which is being delivered through the Coventry Alternative Provision Pathway will open up opportunities for young people to access different industries. This new programme really shows how working in partnership can make a difference to the lives of young people."

Your Voice is an ESF-funded music programme for vulnerable 11 to 17-year-olds who are at risk of violence and exclusion from education, delivered in partnership with St Giles and Coventry

Music. Launching in Cardinal Wiseman School, where it will operate, the programme combines Coventry Music's tuition with St Giles' lived-experience mentoring model.

Over the next 12 months, 40 young people will access weekly music sessions, trauma-informed mentoring and industry masterclasses to gain accredited music qualifications.

St Giles will offer one-to-one lived-experience mentoring, while Coventry Music will deliver specialist tuition, accredited learning pathways, and facilitate visits from industry professionals including producers, songwriters and behind-the-scenes creatives.

Tracey Burley, chief executive at St Giles Trust, said: "For the young people we support, music is more than creativity – it is a safe outlet, a source of motivation, and a

bridge into education, wellbeing and the creative industries. This partnership will help young people be heard, heal, and build new futures."

Laura Burtonwood, principal of Cardinal Wiseman School, said: "Ed's warmth, humility, and genuine interest in our young people made a lasting impact, and we are incredibly grateful for the encouragement he has given our school community and the wider Coventry community."

Ed Sheeran previously visited the city in January, when he met with Barrs Hill School, the TIN Music and Arts, and Coventry Alternative Provision Academy – which received new studio equipment funded by ESF.

Dr Renuka Fernando, CEO at the Ed Sheeran Foundation, said: "When Ed and ESF visited Coventry earlier this year, we were inspired by the

young talent on the ground.

"After meeting several students, teachers and music staff, it became clear that there was both a real desire and a real need to shine a spotlight on music, not only to ensure young people have the right equipment and opportunities to pursue their passions, but also to strengthen the life skills that music education helps develop."

"As a foundation, we are partnering with organisations at all levels - schools, councils and charities - to give the young people of Coventry the right access to music, which we hope will raise aspiration across the city."

"Music is a transformative, powerful subject that offers invaluable life skills, and it's important to us that it's not seen as a luxury but as a pathway all young people can pursue, no matter their background."

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Participants lit up the town centre in last year's lantern parade.

Lantern laughs

by Andy Morris
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

ALL ABOARD for Christmas – a novelty train ride and lantern procession in Rugby will help the town into the festive spirit this weekend.

Free Santa Express rides will run on Saturday and Sunday, departing from the top of Sheep Street.

A lantern procession led by a dancing Chinese dragon and colourful samba band will leave St Andrew's Church at 5.30pm on Saturday, taking a short, circular route around the town centre before returning to the church for

hot chocolate and Christmas carols.

All are welcome to join the procession and people can make lanterns at a free afternoon craft session at the church. Arrive for 5.15pm, at the latest, to join the procession.

On Sunday, from 11am to 5pm, Rugby's first Christmas independent market takes place in Market Place, with stalls offering Christmas gifts and festive treats accompanied by music, family entertainment and a visit from Father Christmas.

Linda Lowne, Rugby First business director, said: "This promises to be a really lovely event with the Santa Express, lantern procession, music and independent market."

"The lantern procession is really magical, and we would like as many families, individuals, businesses, communities or groups as possible to join the procession, as well as support the independent market."

"The event is a great opportunity for the community to come together and celebrate Christmas as well as support their town centre by shopping locally. A special thank you to Rugby Borough Council, St Andrew's Church, the Warwickshire Chinese Ass-ociation and the Indian Community Association for their support."

Email linda@rugbyfirst.org or visit www.rugbyfirst.org for information, or to obtain a free lantern-making kit.

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www.farnboroughgardencentre.co.uk

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Stay safe when you use a taxi, urges council

REVELLERS have been urged to stay safe and check whether taxis have a licence before travelling this Christmas season.

Rugby Borough Council's licensing team has advice to help residents travel by taxi with confidence over Christmas - starting with checking both the cab and its driver have licences.

Licensed taxis have a licence plate attached to the rear of the vehicle, detailing which council has licensed the cab, the licence number, vehicle registration and the licence's expiry date. A badge on the taxi's dashboard or front windscreen should also display the information.

Private hire taxis must be booked in advance and cannot pick up fares on the street.

Private hire taxi drivers who pick up passengers on the street risk prosecution, while passengers have no insurance in the event of an accident.

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

Rugby's white Hackney carriage taxis pick up passengers from one of the town centre's taxi ranks - outside the North Street entrance to Rugby Central, at the Clock Tower in Market Place and outside the railway station in Railway Terrace - while passengers can also hail Hackney carriages on the street.

Drivers of both private hire and Hackney carriage cabs must also be licensed, and should wear a photo ID badge. Passengers should ask to see the ID before travelling to make sure the driver has a taxi licence.

Coun Claire Edwards, Rugby Borough Council's spokesperson for communities and homes, regulation and safety, said: "With increased demand for taxis over the festive period, it's important passengers know how to identify a licensed cab and driver before travelling.

"It's always worth checking your taxi and its driver

have a licence, and make a note of which council has licensed the cab or driver, as some taxis operating in Rugby have licences issued by other councils.

"Should you wish to make a complaint about a driver who has been licensed by another council, you'll need to tell us which council in order for us to investigate.

"We want all our residents to enjoy the festive party season and stay safe this Christmas. This includes our taxi drivers, who provide a vital service and deserve respect and politeness from passengers."

Her Liberal Democrat counterpart Coun Noreen New added: "It's reassuring to know there's a quick and easy way to check whether a taxi and its driver are licensed. We want all our residents to arrive home safely after an enjoyable night out in Rugby."

Visit www.rugby.gov.uk/taxicomplaints to make a complaint about a taxi or driver.



M6 services gets a special visitor

FATHER Christmas made an unscheduled stop at Rugby Services.

Santa Claus and his reindeer took a break at Moto Rugby Services, off junction one of the M6, to greet children, pose for photos and hand out early gifts.

It was part of a publicity stunt to promote motorway rewards app

Pitstop, as motorway travel becomes more stressful and unpredictable during the festive season.

Pitstop director Phil Diamond said: "We wanted to have a little festive fun this year - but the message behind it is real.

"Motorway journeys are getting busier

and more unpredictable, especially around Christmas, and motorway service areas are a key way to lighten the load."

Pitstop predicts Friday December 19 will be the busiest day on the roads, and that services across the Midlands will see heavy footfall throughout December 20 to 23.



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Coombe has perfect recipe for TV show



Celebrity MasterChef contestants came to Coombe Abbey for the semi-finals, shown on BBC1 on Monday. Picture by Shine TV/BBC.

A LANDMARK 12th century hotel near Coventry and Rugby took centre stage in a hit BBC cookery show this week.

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

Contestants in the Celebrity MasterChef semi-finals embarked on a medieval cooking challenge at Coombe Abbey Hotel, in an episode screened on Monday (December 8).

The celebrities were challenged to prepare a feast for 80 medieval enthusiasts at the former Cistercian monastery – which itself has been hosting Medieval banquets for more than 50 years.

Working in teams, they were given three hours to impress judges

Grace Dent and John Torode by creating a lavish spread featuring meat, fish and vegetarian mains, plus a dessert, using traditional ingredients such as venison, pork, trout, cod, root vegetables, pearl barley and dark ales.

Ron Terry, group operations director at No Ordinary Hospitality, which operates Coombe Abbey Hotel, said: "It was great fun hosting Celebrity MasterChef at Coombe Abbey and even better that the episode shines a spotlight on one of our best-loved dining traditions at the hotel.

"We're excited for people who know and love Coombe to see it on one of the nation's favourite shows and for new audiences to get a glimpse of the magic of the venue."

Coombe Abbey dates back to 1150 when it was founded as a Cistercian monastery.

It would later become the home of royalty when Princess Elizabeth – daughter of James I – stayed at Coombe in the 17th century.

One of the hotel's Grand Feature bedrooms is named after the princess, who was also linked to the gunpowder plot of 1605 when conspirators planned to kidnap her and place her on the throne as a

'puppet' queen before they were foiled.

The property was acquired by the Craven family in 1622 and it remained in their hands for around 300 years, during which time the gardens were transformed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown into

the stunning grounds that remain today. It is celebrating 30 years since it was converted to a hotel in 1995.

The episode of Celebrity MasterChef which was shot at Coombe Abbey is available on BBC iPlayer.



Santa & elves help Guildhall prepare for Christmas

FATHER Christmas and his elves have been spotted giving a beloved Coventry heritage attraction a seasonal makeover as its season of festive events gets under way.

Santa and his helpers decorated St Mary's Guildhall with trees, garlands, wreaths and lights to provide a fitting backdrop to the events.

He will return to the venue to host Storytelling with Father Christmas – complete

with gingerbread decorating, a selection box for each child, and plenty of photo opportunities on Saturday (December 13) and on December 20 and 22.

Mulled Wine Christmas Tours will take place on Sunday, December 14, where visitors will be able to enjoy a glass of mulled wine before taking a guided tour of the venue and learn about Christmas traditions spanning

the ages. Standard entry days take place on December 12, 17 and 19.

Visitors can also book festive lunches and afternoon tea in the venue's Tales of Tea restaurant, which is open from 11am to 5pm from Wednesdays to Sundays.

Abi Moore, heritage and venue manager at St Mary's Guildhall said: "Christmas time at St Mary's Guildhall is always incredibly special,

with our spectacular decorations and a host of events and experiences for all of the family. We look forward to welcoming everyone to come along and celebrate the festive season with us."

Visit www.stmarysguildhall.co.uk for more information.

Santa and his elves have been spotted giving St Mary's Guildhall a festive makeover. Picture by Lucy Swain.

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Trust starts appeal to raise £500k to conserve historic home

Grade I building damaged after car accidentally reverses into it



The restoration of Hall's Croft is set to cost millions of pounds. Picture by Marcus Mingins

A FUNDRAISING campaign has been launched to conserve Hall's Croft in Stratford after it was seriously damaged by a car accidentally reversing into it.

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT) – the charity that cares for Shakespeare's family homes – is seeking to raise £500,000 immediately as part of a conservation programme to safeguard the 400-year-old timber-framed house for future generations.

by Philippa Mingins

Hall's Croft, the former home of William Shakespeare's daughter Susanna Hall and her husband Dr John Hall, was struck by a vehicle on the morning of October 17 when a driver accidentally reversed into the side of the building. The impact shattered several oak beams and left a gaping hole in the roadside wall, exposing the building's interior to the elements.

While no one was injured,

the structural damage to the Grade I listed building was considerable. Emergency scaffolding and supports were put in place within hours by the trust's conservation team to stabilise it. Immediate repairs will be funded by the driver's insurance, but the trust now needs to move quickly into an unfunded £2.5million conservation programme.

SBT chief executive Rachael North said: "Incidents like this are a stark reminder of how vulnerable our heritage is, and how vital it is to invest

in its protection. We're asking for everyone's support – whether you're a local resident or simply someone who loves Stratford's history – to help us save Hall's Croft.

"Every donation will bring us one step closer to ensuring this wonderful place remains part of Stratford's story for generations to come."

The campaign, 'A House for All Time', will fund critical work not only to fix the recent damage but also to tackle underlying structural issues at Hall's Croft. The trust had already begun con-

servation on the property's aging timber frame earlier this year but the accident has accelerated the need for a much larger second phase of work.

The immediate fundraising target is £500,000. The overall project is expected to cost around £2.5 million to complete Phase 2 of the full conservation of Hall's Croft. Subsequent phases are expected to cost up to \$5million.

The trust cannot fund such an extensive project on its own and is turning to

the public, supporters, and grant-makers for help.

It has also launched an 'Adopt-a-beam' initiative where donors may symbolically fund individual timbers in the ancient house. Donors at different levels will receive a sealed certificate of adoption for the timber. The highest tier of donation in the Adopt-a-Beam programme will receive an actual piece of salvaged Hall's Croft timber.

Visit www.shakespeare.org.uk/support for more details and to donate.

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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.

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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.

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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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Gifted artists are picture perfect for exhibition



The Rugby Open exhibition gives visitors a glimpse of artistic talent from the borough and beyond.

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

TALENTED contemporary artists from across the Midlands are showcasing their work at the Rugby Open 25 exhibition, which is now running at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum.

Artists from across Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Coventry were invited to submit pieces for this year's Open, with a panel of judges selecting the works to go on display.

Judges for Rugby Open 25 included Arts Council Collection director Alona Pardo, Coventry-based Art Riot Collective creative director Kyla Craig, Rugby Borough Council portfolio holder for partnerships and wellbeing Coun Maggie O'Rourke, and Mayor Barbara Brown.



The 25 x 25 exhibition in the Balcony Gallery celebrates 25 years of the Rugby Open.

The overall winner of Rugby Open 25 – announced at a special exhibition preview and award ceremony at the Little Elborow Street venue ahead of the exhibition's official opening – was Paul Anthony Goalby for his painting The Placeholder. He received a \$1,000 prize – an increased amount this year to celebrate

Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's 25th anniversary – with an additional \$500 to stage a solo exhibition at the venue's Floor One Gallery.

The overall winner of the Rugby Youth Open was Dexter Rudkin for his work Boo!, for which he received a \$250 prize.

The Mayor's Award went to Ella Black for The Leather Jacket, Victoria Wyton-Mills won the Brendan O'Rourke Award for After School, and The Roodhouse Award went to Jo McChesney for A Place to Roost.

Carmen Tilley won the Art at the Alex 2D award for Henry, while the 3D award went to Jane Tilley for DNA the Man.

James Tallon collected the Arts Society Trophy for Red Run Retribution, and the McCready Theatre Prize went to Katherine Taylor for Sirens II.

The Rugby and District Arts Society gave their main award to Sandra Jenkins for Submerged Flora, and the youth award to Hannah Venkatasamy for Highland Cow.

The exhibition includes dozens of pieces from across the arts, from textiles and ceramics to paintings and prints.

Coun O'Rourke said: "We received hundreds of submissions for this year's Open and I know how difficult the judges found it to select the pieces for the exhibition, let alone the winners of this year's awards."

"The Rugby Open gives visitors a glimpse of the fantastic artistic talent we have in the borough and beyond, and artists the opportunity to showcase work in a professional gallery setting."

To mark Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's 25th anniversary,

Open 25 has a supporting exhibition running alongside called 25 for 25.

The exhibition celebrates 25 years of the Rugby Open and features pieces from past Open exhibitors.

Rugby Open 24 winner Anya Kalsi has also opened her solo exhibition at the venue's Floor One Gallery.

Coun Neil Sandison, Rugby Borough Council's Liberal Democrat group spokesperson for partnerships and wellbeing, said: "We're so lucky to have this exhibition of Midlands talent, offering such a wide range of unique art works."

"We hope visitors to the exhibition enjoy the diversity of the art on display."

Rugby Open 25 runs at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum until Saturday February 7.

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Sandra Jenkins (right) receives the Rugby and District Fine Art Society's adult prize from the society's Sarais Crawshaw.



James Tallon won the Arts Society Rugby prize for his piece Red Run Retribution.



Joanna Bryan, winner of the EMERGE Prize from Warwickshire Open Studios, with the studios' Eric Klein Velderman.



The judges named Paul Anthony Goalby the overall winner of Rugby Open 25 for his painting, The Placeholder (right).



Ella Black receives the Mayor's Award from Mayor Barbara Brown.



Coun Maggie O'Rourke with the Brendan O'Rourke Memorial Prize winning painting (top left), After School by Victoria Wyton-Mills.



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John and Enzo set for piano marathon

by **Philippa Mingins**
 philippa.mingins@
 bullivantmedia.com

A BLIND musician from Warwick is taking on a 12-hour piano marathon for Guide Dogs.

John Garrett is undertaking the notable challenge in memory of close friend and colleague Elaine Hooton, who died in March.

He will perform everything from Christmas songs to well-known favourites to keep spirits high throughout the marathon session, which will take place at Asda in Leamington today, between 8am and 8pm. People are welcome to drop by and request a song.

John said: "As long as someone asks for it, I'll give it a go - I know a lot of songs. It's going to be a long day but thinking of Elaine will keep me going."

Elaine worked as John's access assistant at Guide Dogs

for more than 11 years and was also a dedicated volunteer for the charity, fostering 21 puppies.

John continued: "Elaine was more than a colleague; she was a fiercely loyal friend who always went the extra mile. A gift in so many ways, an inspiration, a great laugh and pure fun to be around."

A lifelong musician, John first learned to play the piano more than 50 years ago, before he completely lost his sight aged 23.

As John learnt how to live without his sight, his relationship with music changed, and it took a while for playing and listening to regain their importance. After studying music at college, John went on to play in his local church, form his own jazz band in Warwickshire, record an album, and work on other musical collaborations.

He plays piano most days, with his fifth guide dog Enzo never too far away, and says



Blind pianist John takes to the keys with his guide dog Enzo by his side.

that losing his vision never stopped - or even slowed - his passion for performing. He learns new songs by ear.

Miles Northwood, community fundraising manager for Guide Dogs, added: "We're

incredibly proud of John for taking on such an inspirational challenge. His fundraising will help us continue providing life-changing support for people living with sight loss. Acts like his make a real difference."



Flying the flag: Martin Reid and Selfie won a silver medal at the Agility World Championship.

Silver award for pair

ONE man and his dog from Leamington have narrowly missed out on becoming world champions. Martin Reid and his Shetland sheepdog, Ag Ch Get It With Eager To Work - known simply as Selfie - won a silver medal in the small individual competition at the Agility World Championship held in Sweden.

Martin, the most medalled Team GB handler of all time, and Selfie, were among three agility team GB medal winners. In total, the team collected two silvers and a bronze.







The trip marked a hugely successful 12 months for the duo, who also took silver at last year's world championships. They won at the European Open Championships, at Crufts, and in The Kennel Club Small Dog Agility Stakes final.

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Help the NHS fight the 'flu by getting your free jab

The vaccination is offered free to certain citizens

by **Ashleigh Osborne**
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

WITH more than three million 'flu vaccinations given to people in the Midlands so far this year, the NHS is thanking those involved in making the flu programme a success.

The health service has thanked those who have taken up the free offer of a 'flu vaccine and, with the countdown to Christmas now on, NHS teams across the Midlands, GP surgeries and pharmacies are providing a huge range of clinics to make it easier for you to get protected.

The 'flu vaccine helps protect against influenza, which can be a

serious, and even life-threatening illness.

The vaccine is offered on the NHS every year, in autumn or early winter, to people at higher risk of getting seriously ill from 'flu. More and more people who are eligible for the vaccine are coming forwards although there is always more to do.

Julia Grace, deputy director for vaccinations for NHS England in the Midlands said: "I'm delighted at passing three million 'flu vaccinations given to people in the Midlands.

"I want to take the opportunity to say thank you to everyone who has taken up the offer of protection with the 'flu vaccine this winter, and to our vaccination teams working hard across the region, for their time,

effort and resource spent helping us to achieve this.

"Our hospitals across the Midlands are reporting an earlier start to 'flu with some patients in intensive care

"We want to make it as easy as possible for people to get their vaccination."

Julia Grace

as well as on wards, so the protection that the 'flu vaccine offers is particularly important this early in

the 'flu season. There is an incredible amount of work that goes into the delivery of the 'flu vaccination programme each year and we very much appreciate the support our teams give to promoting the vaccine and its availability to some of the most vulnerable people in our communities as well as to those who care for them.

"We know there are many more people aged 65 and over who have not been reached, as well as schools that have not been visited. With less than a month to go until Christmas, we want to make it as easy as possible for people to get their vaccination and be protected."

If you are over 65; have a long-term health condition; have a child at school; are pregnant; or are parent to a two- or three-year-old child,

visit at www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/vaccination-and-booking-services/book-flu-vaccination to find out how to get a 'flu vaccination.

Pharmacies are offering vaccinations and immunisation teams are visiting schools to vaccinate children with parental consent.

Mums-to-be should protect themselves and their babies by asking their GP or maternity service for the vaccination or by visiting a pharmacy offering NHS 'flu vaccinations.

Visit www.nhs.uk/vaccinations/flu-vaccine/ for more information about the 'flu vaccine.

Visit www.england.nhs.uk/midlands/nhs-england-and-nhs-improvement-midlands-work/winter-vaccination-2025/ for information about clinics in your area.

The NHS is thanking those who have taken up the free offer of a flu vaccine. s



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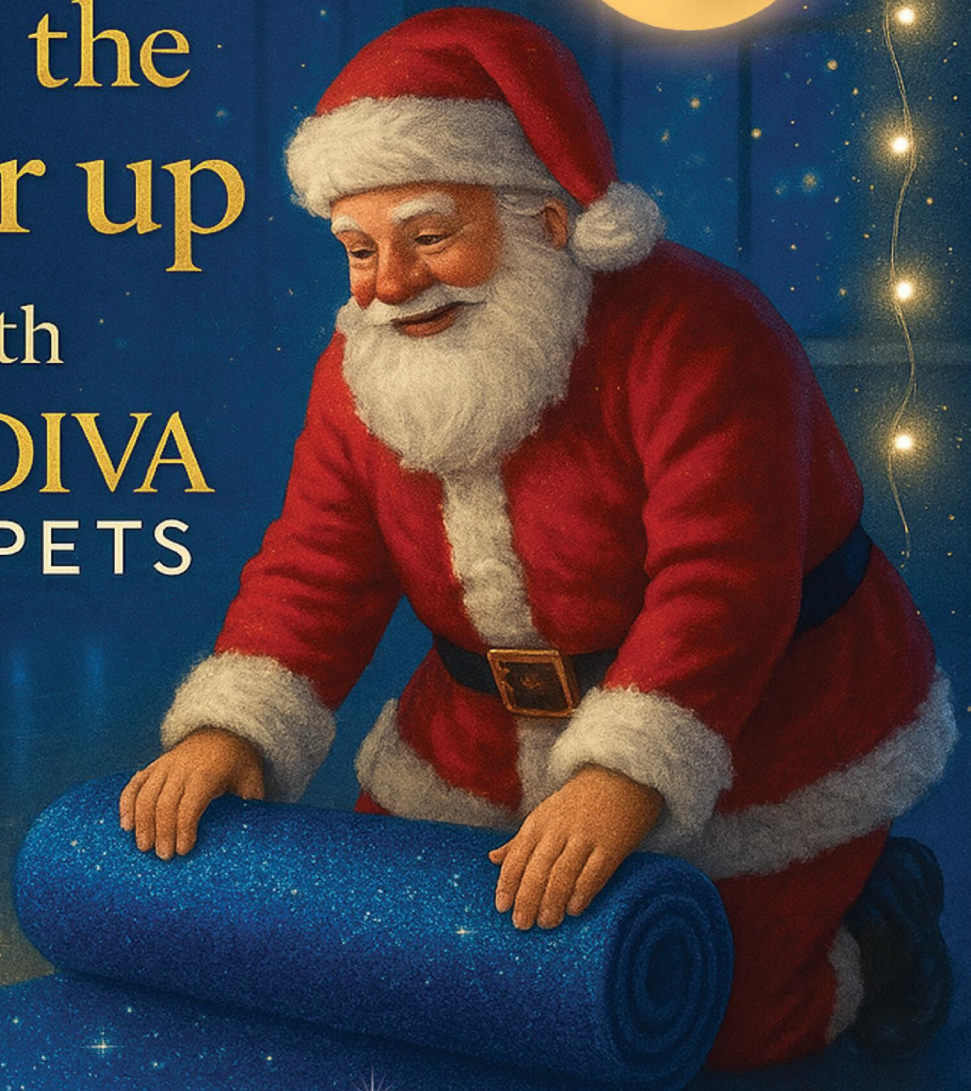


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Review

The Forsyte Saga Parts 1 and 2
RSC - Swan Theatre

THE STIFLING rigidity of Victorian society reserve contrasts tellingly with the emerging female freedoms of the 1920s in a double helping of Galsworthy's evergreen charting of the Forsyte family.

And what a fine feast it provides. Brilliantly scripted, wonderfully staged and blessed with wonderful acting throughout it's hard to know where to begin.

Minimal set and rarely more than just a handful of unremarkable chairs forces the burden of engagement firmly on the actors.

Full costumes help round out characters and extensive cast doubling coupled with a rolling choreographed progression from scene to scene means the total five-hour running time races along and never drags.

That Galsworthy's novels have habitually translated so well to the stage and screen could have a lot to do with their very conflicting humanity. No character is entirely evil, nobody utterly free of faults. All, particularly the trio made central in this production, are likeable and questionable in varying parts.

Irene, so much the focus for the first part of this production, comes the closest to a spotless character but, in an excellent performance from Fiona Hampton, retains enough drive, resolve and, in later moments, intransigence to steer clear of being a mere victim.

Fleur, from the younger generation but superbly employed as a constant but unnoticed narrator throughout the action preceding her birth, also has more than one



Family favourite - The Forsyte Saga. Picture by Cam Harle (RSC).

level. Flora Spencer-Longhurst's chipper 1920s precociousness stands out against those whose lives she's observing but, when love, indeed lust, begins to twist her own life, there's a steeliness and obsession to contend with.

Soames provides the greatest test for an actor. His appalling rape of Irene and his selfishly businesslike justification should make him purely hateful. In Joseph Millson's hands he certainly exudes the emotionally barren, disconnection of the Victorian Englishman but retains a sense that he'd like

to see a little of the life he robustly shuts out. Adding some remorse and a softening through age this is a terrific performance, easily among the best seen at this theatre for a long while.

The tonal changes between the two halves of the play are beautifully handled. In a clear nod to the nascent concept of feminism the constricts of Irene's time are swept aside by the confidence and buoyancy of Fleur's. Josh Roche's is a production with points to make about both individuals and the world in which they live.

Over the course of its full five hours there are too many highlights to list - heartbreaking sadness, poignant loss, love and anger, and episodes of sparkling comedy. There are no weak links and nothing that one might wish to be tightened.

Theatre as good as this only comes about when all the elements, perfect in themselves, come together harmoniously. It's a massive production but one which cannot be recommended too much.

Matthew Salisbury

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Warning over avian 'flu risks in parkland

People have been urged not to touch sick or dead wild birds at Kingsbury Water Park or the surrounding area. Picture by Warwickshire County Council.

Tree-mendous news for your green spaces

WARWICKSHIRE is set to get leafier.

New trees and hedgerows will be planted across the county after Warwickshire County Council (WCC) secured a £36,400 grant from The Tree Council's Trees Outside Woodland Fund (TOW).

The council will focus on planting trees in communities, including urban street trees requested by residents and carefully selected young trees for green spaces.

Working with rangers from Warwickshire Country Parks, WCC will also plant new hedgerows and enhance existing ones to boost biodiversity.

Residents will be invited to help with hedgerow planting at Ryton Pools Country Park, and can nominate green-space tree sites.

WCC environment spokesman Councillor Darren Cheshire said: "Trees and hedgerows make our towns and villages more attractive places to live, support local wildlife and provide peaceful, calming environments that are proven to support people's wellbeing."

"This investment will help to ensure that future generations continue to enjoy the leafy, thriving Warwickshire we're so proud of."

The TOW Fund, financed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, offers grants of up to £40,000 for local authorities and larger charities to grow trees on land that is publicly accessible or of benefit to the public.

Visit www.wcslnp.co.uk to find out how to help wildlife in Warwickshire.

PEOPLE are being urged not to touch sick or dead birds after avian influenza was found in north Warwickshire

The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) have confirmed there is 'bird 'flu' in wild bird populations at Kingsbury Water Park.

The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) is now urging people visiting the park and surrounding area not to touch any sick or dead wild birds. The UKHSA, Warwickshire County Council and North Warwickshire Borough Council is working with APHA to manage the

situation and protect public health and the risk to other birds.

No evidence has yet been found of the A(H5N1) strain of avian influenza in south Warwickshire.

While highly contagious among birds, the risk to human health is considered very low.

It is vital, however, people do not touch sick live birds or bird carcasses. Infection control measures may be necessary if they do.

Park-users, are also being urged to stick to footpaths and keep dogs on leads, not to handle feathers or any surfaces that may be contaminated by droppings, and to thoroughly wash hands after park visits.

Dr Shade Agboola, director of

public health at Warwickshire County Council said: "The incidence of avian 'flu in the wild bird population is something that we are taking very seriously. The UKHSA has made it clear that the risk of the disease transferring from birds to humans is considered to be very low. To ensure this situation remains, the advice we have received is that members of the public should not touch or go near sick or dying birds and any dead birds should be reported to the park rangers to assist with disposal.

"Posters have also been put up in the area to ask people not to feed the birds and to remind people to keep to footpaths and to keep dogs on leads."

Sarah Smith, consultant in health protection leading on avian influenza for UKHSA West Midlands, advised anyone who had come into contact with sick or dead birds or their droppings, in an area where the infection has been confirmed, to follow the measures above and then notify the UKHSA's West Midlands Health Protection Team on 0344 225 3560.

Public health experts can then determine if antiviral medication and active surveillance of people's condition is necessary.

Anyone who sees sick or dead birds by waterways or on private land in north Warwickshire is urged to call the Defra helpline on 03459 33 55 77.

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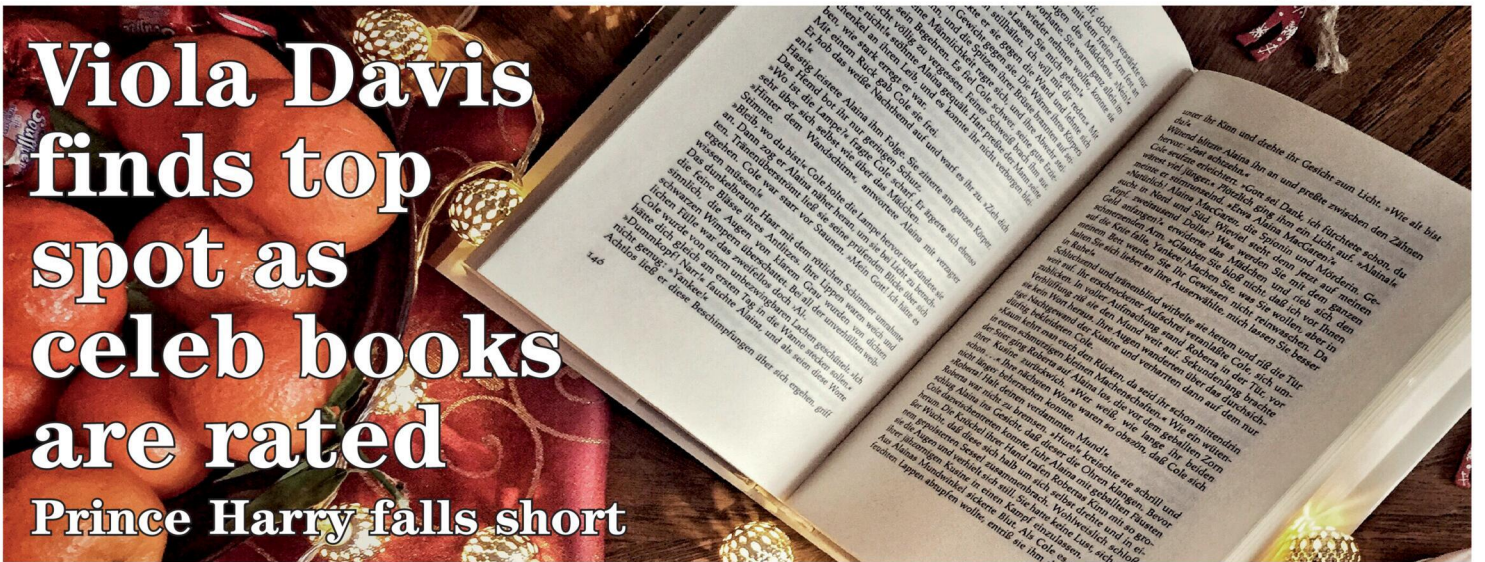
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Viola Davis finds top spot as celeb books are rated

Prince Harry falls short

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

WITH Christmas approaching, a celebrity memoir may be the perfect thing to complete your Christmas list. That's why a study has revealed the highest-rated celebrity memoirs, with Viola Davis's *Finding Me* crowned top.

The research, conducted by Awesome Books (www.awesomebooks.com), analysed titles' Goodreads and Amazon ratings to

see which celebs' top-selling memoirs were best-received. The ratings give an average, with five the highest.

The highest-rated is *Finding Me*, with 4.67 out of five. That score is nearly eight per cent above the average celebrity title rating of 4.3.

I'm Glad My Mom Died, by Jennette McCurdy, placed joint second with a rating of 4.62. McCurdy shares stories of her journey as a child star and her difficult relationship with her mother through raw and honest storytelling. The memoir is being turned into a series with Jennifer Aniston set to star.

Foo Fighters frontman Dave

Grohl's *The Storyteller* tied for second, along with Michelle Obama's *Becoming*.

Two memoirs ranked joint third with an average 4.6. They are singer Liz Phair's *Horror Stories* and TV presenter and comedian Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories From a South African Childhood*.

Kathleen Hanna's memoir, titled *Rebel Girl: My Life as a Feminist Punk*, received an average rating of 4.55 out of five, ranking as the fourth best celebrity memoir.

Viewfinder: A Memoir of Seeing and Being Seen, by Jon M. Chu and Jeremy McCarter, came in at fifth place.

Elton John's *Me*, and *Open*, by Andre Agassi, came joint sixth, with *One Life*, by Megan Rapinoe, in seventh place.

The rest of the top ten rankings comprised *Down the Drain*, by Julia Fox; *The Third Gilmore Girl*, by Kelly Bishop; and *The Office BFFs*, by Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey.

Some of the most talked-about memoirs in recent years barely made the top 20, however. The memoirs of Britney Spears, Prince Harry and Matthew Perry all missed out on top-20 spots.

A spokesperson for Awesome Books said: "The reason people

love reading memoirs about celebrity authors, either as fans or just out of curiosity, is because they offer an insight into their lives that may be otherwise incredibly private, or incredibly salacious, and they're hearing about what's really behind all the tabloid titles.

"What is interesting is that despite making headlines around the world, memoirs like *Spare*, by Prince Harry, are not actually as well received by readers. The same goes for Britney Spears' memoir. It goes to show it's not just the content but also the way it's presented that factors into whether or not a memoir is enjoyable to read."



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SUDOKU

Complete the grid so that every row, every column and every 3 x 3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9.

EASY

5			8	4				6	
	6				2			8	
8			1	9	6			3	
	4			8				6	
1			6		9			3	5
	7	3		2				1	
2			7	6	3				8
	5			1		3	9		
3			9						2

HARD

6				4	1	3			
	9	5			7				
			8					5	
5								8	
7	8							1	9
	4								3
	5				3				
			9			2	3		
		3	7	1					6

PATHFINDER

Beginning with the top highlighted letter, follow a continuous path of words associated with the given subject. The trail goes through each letter once, twisting up, down and sideways, but never diagonally.

Winter stories

M E R A C T O H I E E R G T H
 O T N C O D R Z V R S I A D E
 O M I H I D L G A T R A W N G
 N I W D L D I O E F I I N A R
 L A N I C S W T H H G I N E E
 L E D M H R E H T T T N K T H
 I H E L A I S O F E H A N E A
 O T S N W M T L L S W M R F N
 N E W I S A E C A N O M O E C
 T H I T S T H L N W E E O L H
 D R A C T H G I R I H T T I R
 R O W H A R T H E N T H S S T
 E B E H N O N L S R E C R G M
 A R I T D S C O T E H N I E A
 C H S T M A A R A L O W T H S

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
					8							
9												
10							11					
	12		13			14						
15					16						17	
18					19		20					
21												
22						23						

ACROSS

- Asylum (6)
- Recommend (6)
- Letter-writer (13)
- Obliquely (7)
- Upper air (5)
- Ethical (5)
- Thick sweet liquid (5)
- Guide (5)
- Fascinate (7)
- Necessary (13)
- Cricket team (6)
- Guard (6)

DOWN

- Ethnic (6)
- Prescience (13)
- Inexperienced (5)
- Thickly (7)
- Unfailing (13)
- Wring out (6)
- Rapidity (5)
- Public performer (7)
- Elf (6)
- Monastic church (5)
- Sagacious (6)
- Unproductive (5)

Scribble pad

LADDER

Using the clues provided, fill in each step of the ladder with a new word, changing one letter at a time.

- Waistband
- Crooked
- Outdoor shelter
- Shade
- Cans



NINER

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

- 92486 gives a seaside feature;
- 1567 gives a second seaside feature;
- 623183 gives a third seaside feature.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

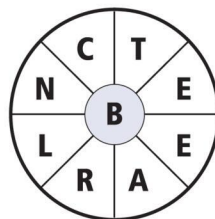
CODEWORD

This puzzle has no clues. Instead, every number printed in the grid represents a letter, with the same number always representing the same letter. For example, if 8 turns out to be a V, you can write in V wherever a square contains 8. Using your knowledge of words, complete the puzzle.

A	25	18	23	4		25	7	8	16	14	12	19	23	
B														
C	6		10			1			14		19		9	
D	14		7	23	1	20	16	23	11		1		23	
E														
F	16	25	1				8			13	6	14	26	
G														
H	4		17			25	18	26	13		11		17	
I														
J		24	23	23	6		1			20	14	22	22	8
K														
L							1		13		1			
M														
N	21	18	16	16	8		18		5	18	17	3		
O														
P	19		7				1	13	14	26		18		15
Q														
R	16	5	1	11			19				1	16	7	
S														
T	11		20		5	23	23	2	23	26	20		1	
U	23		23		23		14				23		16	
V	20	14	16	1	21	17	23	20		25	6	14	4	
W														
X	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Y	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		21	22	23	24	25	26
Z	I								D					

WORDWHEEL

You have 10 mins to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each must use the hub letter and at least 3 others. Letters may be used only once. You cannot use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. There is at least one 9-letter word to be found.

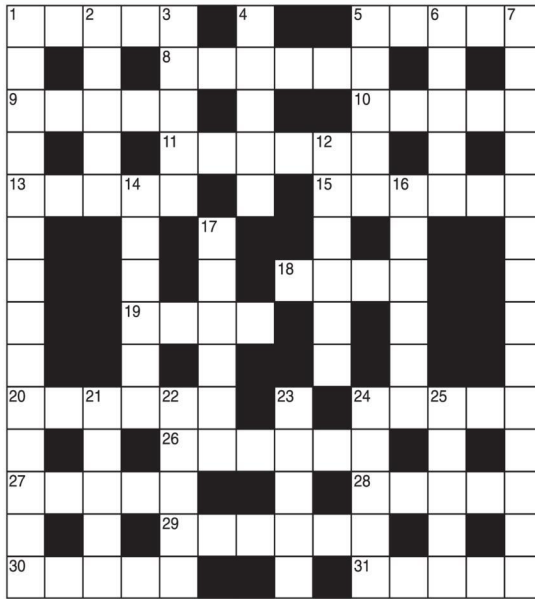


How you rate
 15 words: average 35 words: very good
 25 words: good 40 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- 1 and 4 Down Writer famous for Ulysses (5,5)
- 5 Showy long-tailed, tropical American parrot (5)
- 8 A morbid and irrational fear or aversion to something (6)
- 9 Native dog of Australia (5)
- 10 North American hickory nut (5)
- 11 The mother of Joseph and Benjamin (6)
- 13 Name given to a famous quintet by Schubert (5)
- 15 Seaport and capital of Pernambuco state, Brazil (6)
- 18 and 7 Down Well-known comedy by Oscar Wilde (4,11,3)
- 19 See 2 Down
- 20 Greek who travelled widely for material for his Geography (6)
- 24 Marsh bird with a long, straight bill (5)
- 26 Goat whose long, silky wool is called mohair (6)
- 27 The mountain system separating Europe from Asia (5)
- 28 Summary of a client's case, for counsel (5)
- 29 On a weather map, a line running through places of equal atmospheric pressure (6)
- 30 Fluid used as an anti-knock compound in motor fuel (5)
- 31 Port at the mouth of the Ems river, Germany (5)



DOWN

- 1 Thomas Hardy's tragic, last novel (4,3,7)
- 2 and 19 Scottish surgeon who explored the river Niger, 1795-7 (5,4)
- 3 Plant differing from its parent stock or type (5)
- 4 See 1 Across
- 5 A acer tree, which can be the source of a kind of syrup (5)
- 6 Plants with fleshy stems armed with prickles (5)
- 7 See 18 Across
- 12 Artificial, a substitute (6)
- 14 A fictional place with perfect social and political systems (6)
- 16 A South American alligator (6)
- 17 One of religions sect, with headquarters in Salt Lake City (6)

- 21 Freshwater fish related to carp (5)
- 22 Kind of aromatic herb (5)
- 23 Surname of a famous cricketer, knighted in 1953 (5)
- 24 Cavalry sword with a curved blade (5)
- 25 Greek epic poem attributed to Homer (5)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 James; 5 Macaw; 8 Phobias; 9 Dingo; 10 Pecan; 11 Rachel; 13 Trout; 15 Rachel; 18 Lady; 19 Park; 20 Strabo; 24 Snape; 26 Angora; 27 Urals; 28 Brief; 29 Isobar; 30 Ethyl; 31 Emden. DOWN: 1 Jude the Obscure; 2 Mungo; 3 Sport; 4 Joyce; 5 Maple; 6 Cacti; 7 Windermere's Fan; 12 Ersatz; 14 Utopia; 16 Cayman; 17 Mormon; 21 Roach; 22 Basil; 23 Hobbs; 24 Sabre; 25 Iliad.

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Refugee; 4 Advice; 9 Correspondent; 10 Askance; 11 Ether; 12 Mora; 14 Syrup; 18 Pilot; 19 Bewitch; 21 Indispensable; 22 Eleven; 23 Defend. DOWN: 1 Rachel; 2 Foreknowledge; 3 Green; 5 Densely; 6 Inexhaustible; 7 Extort; 8 Speed; 13 Artists; 15 Spire; 16 Abbey; 17 Shrewd; 20 Waste.

Crossword

CELEBRANT: Moominland Midwinter, A Child's Christmas in Wales, The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe, A Christmas Carol, Northern Lights, The Call of the Wild, Doctor Zhivago, The Fir-Tree, Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, The Snowman, Ethan Frome, The Winter's Tale, FURNISHED: How The Grinch Stole Christmas.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

1=A, 2=K, 3=F, 4=M, 5=W, 6=R, 7=H, 8=Y, 9=V, 10=X, 11=I, 12=Q, 13=G, 14=L, 15=C, 16=S, 17=L, 18=O, 19=U, 20=D, 21=B, 22=Z, 23=E, 24=J, 25=P, 26=N.

6	7	2	5	4	1	3	9	8
8	9	5	6	3	7	1	2	4
8	9	5	6	3	7	1	2	4
3	1	4	8	2	9	6	5	7
7	8	6	3	5	2	4	1	9
2	4	9	1	7	8	5	6	3
4	5	8	2	6	3	9	7	1
1	6	7	9	8	4	2	3	5
9	2	3	7	1	5	8	4	6

Hard

5	3	1	8	4	7	9	2	6
4	6	9	5	3	2	7	8	1
8	2	7	1	9	6	5	4	3
9	4	5	3	8	1	2	6	7
1	8	2	6	7	9	4	3	5
6	7	3	4	2	5	8	1	9
2	9	4	7	6	3	1	5	8
7	5	6	2	1	8	3	9	4
3	1	8	9	5	4	6	7	2

Easy
Sudoku



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BREAKING NEWS WHAT'S ON SPORT INTERVIEWS

There's no reason the festive season has to leave you bankrupt

Plan ahead to save cash

It is possible to pick up freebies for stocking fillers if you know the right places to look.

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

A CONSUMER expert has shared her top tips for Brits to save money this Christmas.

Jane Hawkes, founder of the consumer advice website www.ladyjaney.co.uk, says it is possible to pick up freebies for stocking fillers and get Christmas dinner bargains if you know the right places to look.

She said: "The average person will spend over £1,100 this Christmas

on gifts, food, drink and going out – a significant chunk of most people's monthly pay at a time when we're all feeling the pinch from the cost of living.

"And of course, treating loved ones to a special gift, watching children unwrap gifts and having fun at parties is part of what makes this time of year so special. But it doesn't have to come at the cost of additional credit card debt and definitely should not mean taking out loans.

"Last year, over 1.5 million families took out loans to pay for

presents, according to research from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. This will probably increase anxiety, rather than enjoyment, and should definitely be avoided.

"There are lots of smart ways to cut the cost of Christmas without cutting down on the joy of the season.

"Some of them require planning in advance and some, like the Christmas Eve scrum at the supermarket, might require some bravery! But the deals and freebies are definitely out there if you're prepared to put in the time."

Jane's top freebie tips

Freebie Christmas Gifts

You can pick up freebies or seriously reduced prices for stocking fillers from websites like <https://www.latestfreestuff.co.uk>, <https://www.magicfreebiesuk.co.uk> or <https://wowfreebies.co.uk/christmas-freebies>

Enter competitions

It's a competition, so there's no guarantee but spend some time entering competitions to see what you can win in time for Christmas. Try websites like <https://superlucky.me> or <https://www.theprizefinder.com>.

Sign up for newsletters from your favourite brands and retailers to receive notifications about free samples or promotional deals in the run up to Christmas for loyalty card members such as <https://www.johnlewis.com/content/treats-of-christmas> or the Sparks Card from Marks and Spencer.

Skill swap with friends and family

Whether it's a talent for cards, crafts, cakes or chocolate, play with friends and family to spread the cost and get unique gifts and treats without the price tag from stores.

Freecycle

Check out local recycling and sharing sites such as <https://www.freecycle.org> and re-gift unwanted or pre-loved gifts of your own. It's also a great way to reduce our environmental footprint by reducing what gets thrown away.

Freebie Christmas dinners

If you're prepared to take a risk, you would not believe the dis-

counts which you will find in supermarkets on Christmas Eve. You'll have to join the crowds but, from about 4pm the supermarkets will all be slashing the prices on their Christmas food range in particular – and sometimes you'll be able to walk away with a freebie!

The best deals will be found at the stores which are closed both Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

You can also use supermarket reward points to stock up on Christmas goodies and food sharing apps such as Olio (<https://olioex.com>) to source free food and drink locally (it also has non-food items).

Freebie cards

Send free Christmas e-cards using free trials on sites such as <https://www.123cards.com/christmas-e-cards>

Jane added: "If you've not already done so, then get started with your freebie hunt asap as opportunities and offers tend to be limited.

"The balance between supporting the retail sector at a time when they need us most whilst also keeping costs down in the 'year of the squeeze' is a tricky one. If you can afford to splash the cash then please do so but if you do need to save money then I hope my tips help.

"These are just the tip of the iceberg. There are so many ways you can still treat your loved ones this Christmas but spend less doing so. After all, is it not the thought that counts?"

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES



ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTIONS 4(1), 14(1)(a) AND (c), (4) AND (7)
THE A45 TRUNK ROAD (BAGINTON TO THURLASTON), THE A423 TRUNK ROAD AND CONNECTING ROADS (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that National Highways Limited (Company No. 09346363) has made an Order on the A45 Trunk Road and the A423 Trunk Road, in the City of Coventry and the County of Warwickshire, to enable maintenance and improvement works, to be carried out in safety.

The works are expected to take place overnight between 19:00 and 06:00 (07:00 on Saturday and Sunday mornings) during a period starting on Friday 2nd January 2026 and ending on Wednesday 23rd December 2026.

The effect of the Order will be to impose prohibitions on -

- (1) the eastbound carriageway of the A45 from its junction with the exit slip road leading to the roundabout junction with Leaf Lane, the A444 slip roads and the A46 slip roads (Stivichall Interchange), at Baginton, to its roundabout junction with the B4429 and the M45 (Thurlaston Interchange), at Thurlaston;
- (2) the westbound carriageway of the A45 from Thurlaston Interchange to its junction with the entry slip road leading from Stivichall Interchange;
- (3) the slip road leading from the A45 eastbound to the roundabout junction with the A423 and Hillman Way at Ryton-on-Dunsmore;
- (4) the slip road leading from the roundabout junction with the A423 and Hillman Way at Ryton-on-Dunsmore, to its junction with the westbound carriageway of the A45;
- (5) any slip road, link road or dedicated lane leading to or from the lengths of carriageway described in (1) and (2) above;
- (6) any lay-by, bus stop area or service road adjacent to the lengths of carriageway described in (1) and (2) above.

During any road closures traffic will be diverted via alternative junctions of the A45 Trunk Road, the A423 Trunk Road and local roads. These diversions will be clearly indicated by traffic signs throughout the area.

If you require any further information, please contact the National Highways Customer Contact centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@nationalhighways.co.uk.

The duration of each prohibition will vary depending upon the nature of the work being undertaken on each occasion.

The prohibitions will not apply to emergency services, works, or winter maintenance vehicles. The prohibitions will only apply during such times and to such extent as shall be indicated by traffic signs.

The Order comes into force on 29 December 2025 and will expire on 23 December 2026.

Karen Eustace, an official of National Highways Limited, Three Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6GA. National Highways Limited, Three Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6GA. Registered in England & Wales number 09346363.

PUBLIC NOTICES



ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTION 4(1), 14(1)(a) AND (c), 14(4) AND 14(7)
THE M69 MOTORWAY AND CONNECTING ROADS (ANSTY TO LEICESTER) (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that National Highways Limited (Company No. 09346363) has made an Order on the M69 Motorway, in the Counties of Warwickshire and Leicestershire, to enable maintenance and improvement works to be carried out in safety.

The works are expected to take place overnight between 19:00 and 06:00 (07:00 on Saturday and Sunday mornings) during a period starting on Friday 2nd January 2026 and ending on Wednesday 23rd December 2026.

The effect of the Order will be to impose prohibitions on -

- (i) the northbound carriageway of the M69 between its junction with the A46, at Ansty, and its roundabout junction with the A5460 and the M1 Junction 21 slip roads, at Leicester;
- (ii) the southbound carriageway of the M69 between its roundabout junction with the A5460 and the M1 Junction 21 slip roads, at Leicester, and its junction with the A46, at Ansty;
- (iii) any slip road or link road leading to or from the lengths of the M69 described in (i) and (ii) above.

During any road closures traffic will be diverted via alternative junctions of the M69 and local roads. These diversions will be clearly indicated by traffic signs throughout the area.

If you require any further information, please contact the National Highways Customer Contact centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@nationalhighways.co.uk.

The duration of each prohibition will vary depending upon the nature of the work being undertaken on each occasion.

The prohibitions will not apply to emergency services, works, or winter maintenance vehicles. The prohibitions will only apply during such times and to such extent as shall be indicated by traffic signs.

The Order comes into force on 29 December 2025 and will expire on 23 December 2026.

Karen Eustace, an official of National Highways Limited, Three Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6GA.

National Highways Limited, Three Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6GA. Registered in England & Wales number 09346363.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

THE SPINNEY, LONG LAWFORD

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Works to clear blockage in the carriageway.

Order Commences: 15 December 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 17 December 2025.

Access & Diversion: No diversion available.

Contractor: Core Highways, Tel: 07979 296 733.

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 or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 11 Dec 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES



ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 - SECTIONS 4(1) AND 14(1)(a) AND (c), (4) AND (7)
THE M6 MOTORWAY (JUNCTION WITH THE A14 TO JUNCTION 16), A449 AND A34 TRUNK ROADS AND CONNECTING ROADS (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that National Highways Limited (Company No. 09346363) has made an Order on the M6 Motorway and the A449 and A34 Trunk Roads, in the Metropolitan Boroughs of Solihull, Sandwell and Walsall, the City of Birmingham and in the Counties of Warwickshire, Staffordshire and Leicestershire, to enable maintenance and improvement works, to be carried out in safety.

The works are expected to take place overnight between 19:00 and 06:00 (07:00 on Saturday and Sunday mornings) during a period starting on Friday 2 January 2026 and ending on Wednesday 23 December 2026.

The effect of the Order will be to impose prohibitions on the following lengths of carriageway:

- (a) the northbound carriageway of the M6 from its junction with the A14, near Cathorpe, to its junction with the exit slip road at Junction 16;
- (b) the southbound carriageway of the M6 from its junction with the entry slip road at Junction 16, to its junction with the A14, near Cathorpe;
- (c) the circular carriageway of the A449 at its roundabout junction with the M6 Junction 13 slip roads;
- (d) the circular carriageway of the A34 at its roundabout junction with the A5013 and the M6 Junction 14 slip roads;
- (e) any slip road or link road leading to and from the lengths of carriageway described in (a) and (b) above; and
- (f) any emergency refuge area adjacent to the lengths of carriageway described in (a) and (b) above.

During any road closures traffic will be diverted via alternative junctions of the M6 Motorway and local roads. These diversions will be clearly indicated by traffic signs throughout the area.

If you require any further information, please contact the National Highways Customer Contact centre on 0300 123 5000 or info@nationalhighways.co.uk.

The duration of each prohibition will vary depending upon the nature of the work being undertaken on each occasion.

The prohibitions will not apply to emergency services, works, winter maintenance, or traffic officer vehicles. The prohibitions will only apply during such times and to such extent as shall be indicated by traffic signs.

The Order comes into force on 29 December 2025 and will expire on 23 December 2026.

Karen Eustace, an official of National Highways Limited, 3 Snowhill, Snow Hill Queensway, Birmingham, B4 6GA.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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PUBLIC NOTICES



Rugby Borough Council
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

Application Number R25/0985
RUGBY THEATRE, HENRY STREET, RUGBY, CV21 2QA

Removal of existing covering to north light roof over Central Hall. Replacement with modern insulated panels.

This development may affect a Conservation Area

Application Number R25/1001
WALNUT TREE COTTAGE, CHURCH STREET, CHURCHOVER, RUGBY, CV23 0EW

Conversion of existing outbuilding to 1 no. 3 bedroom dwelling and new detached 3 bedroom dwelling.

This development may affect a Conservation Area

Application Number R25/1041
LAND ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ASHLAWN ROAD, RUGBY

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for the erection of up to 90 residential dwellings (Use Class C3)

(including up to; 28 affordable homes, 9 self-build/custom build homes, 9 accessible homes to M4(3) standards and 6 specialist homes), up to 2.28ha of public open space (including natural and seminatural green space, amenity green space and a child's play area), a pedestrian refuge island crossing and associated development

This is a major development

Members of the public may inspect copies of the application, the plans and documents submitted with it online at: 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 **06 January 2026**. 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 (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

For householder or minor commercial applications, in the event of an appeal against a refusal of planning permission, dealt 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

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

TOP ROAD, BARNACLE

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Works to lay approx 233 metres of duct in the verge and carriageway.

Order Commences: 16 December 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 19 December 2025.

Access & Diversion: Top Road, Mile Tree Lane, Parrotts Grove, Lenton Lane, Shilton Lane, Lower Road and vice versa.

Contractor: Callan Connect, Tel: 01213 275 167.

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 or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 11 Dec 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence
Euroline Commercial

Limited of Unit 12 Calder Vale Mills, Healey Road, Ossett WF5 8NF is applying for a licence to use NTS Coventry Plot 5 Stoneacre, Oxford Road, Coventry, CV8 3EJ as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 2 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, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors 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/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operatorlicensing.

The Owen Kenny Partnership Limited
 Chichester Fields Business Park, Unit 3 City Fields Way, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 2RT

HELEN JAYNE BALLANTYNE
 Deceased

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone with a claim against an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of 36 Portland Place, Warwickshire, CV32 3ET, who died on 26/06/2025, must send written details to the address below by 13/02/2026, after which the Estate will be distributed with regard only to claims and interests notified.

Sharon Eyre
 c/o Moore and Tibbits, 3rd Floor Westgate House, Market Street, Warwick, CV34 4DH. Ref: SL/EBALZ/2021

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

WORMLEIGHTON ROAD, PRIORS HARDWICK

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Works to install new water connection.

Order Commences: 15 December 2025 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 17 December 2025.

Access & Diversion: Wormleighton Road, Welsh Road, Church End and vice versa.

Contractor: Go Traffic Management Limited, Tel: 01158 965 832.

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 or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 11 Dec 2025

PUBLIC NOTICES

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

Name of applicant: Alagarajah Anumagum
 Notice is hereby given that Alagarajah Anumagum has applied to Coventry City Council for a Variation to Premises Licence for Choice 4 U, 194 - 196 Holbrook Lane, Coventry CV6 4BY
 Details of Application: To extend the supply of alcohol hours by one hour - 4.00 am - 5.00 am 7 Days a week to enable 24 hours supply of alcohol and to up-date the existing Conditions.

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 email to: licensing@coventry.gov.uk.

The application may be viewed during normal office hours at the above address and further information may be available at www.coventry.gov.uk on the public register. Any Representation relating to this application must be made in writing to the Licensing Authority by 18th 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 for this offence is Unlimited.

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Sky Blues to face old boss Robins in FA Cup at Stoke

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: COVENTRY City face a reunion with former boss Mark Robins after drawing Stoke City in the third round of the FA Cup.

The Sky Blues travel to the bet365 Stadium on the weekend of Saturday, January 10.

Frank Lampard's side claimed a 1-0 win at Stoke in the Championship earlier this season as Ephron Mason-Clark scored a late acrobatic winner.

Coventry reached the fourth round of the competition last season where they lost to then Premier League side Ipswich Town.

Former Sky Blues boss Robins took the club to the semi-finals



Mark Robins took Coventry to the semi-finals of the FA Cup when in charge of the club.

in 2023/24 as City suffered a cruel penalty shootout defeat against Manchester United.

Cov thrash London Scottish in nine-try rout to return to winning ways at home

RUGBY UNION: COVENTRY Rugby ran in nine tries to claim a dominant 61-10 bonus point victory against London Scottish.

Prolific winger Peter Sullivan crossed twice while Jack Shine, Morgan Strong, Dan Green, Onisivoro Sukani Nayagi, Morgan Adderly-Jones and Api Bavandra also dotted down at Butts Park Arena.

The result means Coventry sit eighth in the Champ Rugby table with four wins and five defeats from nine matches.

Despite the final scoreline, London took an early three-point lead when Fraser Honey successfully kicked a penalty.

However, the home side scored the game's first try on 10 minutes as Shine touched down after Josh Thomas's clever chip over the top.

And Coventry crossed again

two minutes later when Strong finished under the posts from Senitiki Nayalo's offload.

The hosts blitzed London with a third try in the space of four minutes as Sam Maunder and Thomas combined to feed Green who ran in unopposed.

And Coventry scored their bonus point try two minutes before half time when Sullivan stroled over out wide from Maunder's pass.

The home side led by 23 points at the break with Thomas converting three of Coventry's four first-half tries.

The referee awarded Alex Rae's side a penalty try after the interval on 50 minutes following a scrum five-metres from the Scottish line with Vaughan Bentley sent to the sin-bin for the visitors.

Coventry made the most of the extra man five minutes later

as Sullivan crossed for his second try of the game from Tom Bacon's pass following a well-worked lineout routine.

The scoring continued on 65 minutes when Nayagi charged over to finish off a flowing move after good interplay between Thomas and Aristot Benz-Salomon.

London scored their only try two minutes later as Noah Ferdinand dotted down and Honey added the extras.

Coventry touched down again on 73 minutes when Adderly-Jones stretched out to score.

And the home side completed the scoring in the final minute as Bavandra collected Thomas's cross-field kick and beat two defenders to dot down.

Coventry are next in action against Caldy on Saturday, December 13 with kick-off at 2pm at Paton Field.

Blaze stun Steelers before Flames defeat

Coventry Blaze lost on home ice against Guildford. Picture by Scott Stevens.



ICE HOCKEY: COVENTRY Blaze ended their six-game losing run in the Elite League with a 3-1 victory away at high-flying Sheffield Steelers.

Blaze exacted revenge on the Steelers following defeat against the same opponents on home ice the previous weekend.

Goals from Colton Saucerman, Elijah Barriga and Matthew Gleason earned Blaze a much-needed victory at the Utilita Arena.

However, Coventry then suffered a 4-3 defeat against Guildford Flames at the Skydome Arena as the visitors staged a third-period comeback.

The results mean Blaze sit eighth in the Elite League table.

Coventry took to the ice against title challengers Sheffield boosted by the return of defenceman Connor Russell.

Blaze dominated the opening exchanges as Steelers netminder Matt Greenfield kept the visitors at bay despite sustained pressure from Coventry.

Both teams also spurned power-play opportunities with neither team able to break the deadlock in a goal-less first period.

A physical affair ensued in the second period as Blaze forward Alessio Luciani and Sheffield's Joonas Huttula both received two-minute penalties early in the frame.

Former Sheffield blue-liner Saucerman eventually opened the scoring for Blaze at 26.23 when he finished on the rebound after good

work from Adam Robbins and Grant Mismash.

However, the Steelers drew level just 31 seconds later as Mikko Juusola drove out wide and cut to the net before finishing smartly past Mat Robson.

A fiery affair became livelier in the third period as Blaze's Jere Vertanen and Sheffield captain Robert Dowd dropped the gloves in the game's most notable flashpoint.

Coventry reclaimed the lead at 50.58 when Barriga beat Greenfield with a quick wrist shot as Robbins provided another assist.

Sheffield piled on the pressure in the closing stages as Robson produced 48 saves throughout the game to keep Coventry's lead intact.

The home side pulled Greenfield for an extra skater in the final two minutes only for Blaze to seal the points at 59.46 when Gleason finished into an empty net with 14 seconds left to play.

However, Coventry surrendered an early two-goal lead in defeat against Guildford on home ice as the visitors stunned Blaze with a late comeback.

Kevin Moore's side made a blistering start and took the lead at 5.10 when William Boysen finished off a well-worked passing move which involved Vertanen and Gleason.

And Blaze doubled their lead at 6.59 as defenceman Ivan Chukarov caused chaos in the Guildford zone and saw his effort evade Justin Fazio in the Flames net to score his

first goal for the club.

Guildford responded just 51 seconds into the second period when Jack Jacome converted on a three-on-zero break.

Coventry restored their two-goal lead at 22.28 as Vertanen's backhand finish on the powerplay put the home side in command.

The Flames squandered two powerplay opportunities late in the second period only to flip the game on its head with three unanswered goals in the third period.

Jacome grabbed his second of the game at 41.07 as he chopped at the puck with his back to the net and somehow beat Robson in the Blaze goal.

And Guildford drew level at 53.52 when Mathieu Gosselin finished on the rebound after Cole Uly's initial effort bounced off the backboards and into the scorer's path.

Flames completed a remarkable turnaround at 58.43 as Uly scrambled the puck into the net with the goal awarded following a lengthy discussion between the officials and the Blaze bench.

Blaze pulled Robson for an extra skater in the final minute but could not find an equaliser to suffer a fourth straight home defeat.

Coventry are next in action against Fife Flyers on Saturday, December 13 with the face-off at 7pm at Fife Ice Arena.

Blaze then host Manchester Storm on Sunday, December 14 with the face-off at 5.30pm at the Skydome.

Preston draw 'tough to take'

KAINE Kesler-Hayden admits Preston North End's equaliser 'took the wind' out of Coventry City as the Sky Blues failed to break their Deepdale curse.

Kesler-Hayden played the full 90 minutes against his former club as Coventry drew 1-1 against 10-man Preston in midweek.

After Liam Lindsay saw red for Preston late in the first half, a Charlie Hughes own goal put the Sky Blues ahead only for Daniel Jebbison to draw the home side level.

And Kesler-Hayden admits the Sky Blues struggled to respond to Preston's equaliser despite dominating the game for large periods.

Kesler-Hayden said: "It's a tough one to take. We were in control of the game and then we get the goal

but they scored on the counter and it took the wind out of us.

"We should have come away with all three points. The way we conceded was frustrating. It shouldn't happen and we'll look to fix it and analyse it.

"We had our chances. Their keeper did really well to keep them in the game. We had loads of chances, it's really disappointing not to come away with three points.

"Our home is a fortress, we make it hard for teams that come to the CBS. Hopefully, we can start building again against Bristol City on Saturday."

The defender made just his third league start of the season at Deepdale after enjoying a productive loan spell with Preston last season.

United march on in FA Vase

COVENTRY United matched their best-ever performance in the FA Vase after securing a 3-1 win against Hanley Town.

The Red and Greens recovered from an early setback to reach the fourth round of the competition for just the third time in their history.

Hanley led through Eden Bailey's early goal only for Ryan Harkin and Charlie Shaw to strike and turn the game in Coventry's favour at the break.

And Sam Ellis sealed United's place in the next round with an injury-time goal at Butts Park Arena.

Coventry also reached the fourth round in 2018/19 and 2020/21.

United play at the same level as Hanley who ply their trade in the Midlands Football League Premier Division.

And Hanley stunned the hosts after just six minutes as Bailey forced the ball home from close range following a long throw into the box from the right.

However, Coventry drew level on 17 minutes when Harkin scrambled a shot into the net from the ground in the box following a corner from the right.

And the home side completed the turnaround four minutes before half time as Shaw played a neat one-two with Riley Davoile and powered a shot past the Hanley goalkeeper from 15-yards out.

United eventually secured their place in the fourth round in injury time when substitute Ellis coolly found the bottom right corner from Harkin's square pass.

Coventry will play divisional rivals GNG Oadby Town in the fourth round of the competition.

United will host Oadby on Saturday, January 17 at Butts Park Arena.

Both Coventry and Oadby play in the United Counties League Premier Division South.

Winning clubs will receive £1,875 while losing clubs will receive £600.

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BRINGING YOU **ALL THE LATEST** SPORTS NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE AREA

Valley win derby at the death to stun Racers

by **Aaron Sutcliffe**
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FOOTBALL: JACK Concannon's injury-time goal earned Rugby Town a smash-and-grab 1-0 derby win against Racing Club Warwick.

Concannon struck four minutes into injury time at Butlin Road as Valley claimed a third win against the Racers in all competitions this season.

The result means Rugby sit 13th in the Northern Premier League Midlands table, six points outside of the play-off places.

Warwick somehow failed to take the lead early on when Jack Edwards squared the ball across the face of goal only for Aaron Opoku to slide in and hit the crossbar from close range with the goal at his mercy.



And Callum Coyle then played in Opoku down the left-hand side of the penalty area who saw his goalbound effort cleared off the line by a retreating Valley defender.

The visitors remained on top as Opoku fired a low effort narrowly wide of the target with Valley goalkeeper Marcus Bald at full stretch.

Rugby's best chance of the first period

saw Josh Thomas rise highest at the near post to head a corner from the right wide of the target.

The Racers looked to break the deadlock after the break as Bald held Edwards' shot after he failed to cleanly punch a high ball to safety.

Warwick eventually had the ball in the back of the net later in the second period only for James Harding to see his effort ruled out for offside.

However, Valley snatched the points four minutes into injury time as the home side launched a counter attack and Concannon latched onto Geoffrey Lundoloki's through ball and coolly found the bottom left corner.

Rugby are next in action against Carlton Town on Saturday, December 20 with kick-off at 3pm at the Bill Stokeld Stadium.

Marcus Bald punches clear. Picture by Martin Pulley.

Borough denied by late goal at Corby

RUGBY Borough failed to back up their derby win after losing against leaders Carlton Town before drawing at Corby Town in midweek.

Borough suffered a narrow 1-0 defeat against Carlton at Kilsby Lane as the club saw their winless run at home stretch to five matches.

The game's only goal came on 28 minutes when Lamin Manneh scored from the penalty spot in the first half.

Rugby then conceded in injury time to draw 1-1 away at play-off rivals Corby at Steel Park in midweek.

Borough took the lead on 19 minutes when Johnson Gyamfi

drove into the box and curled a low effort into the net via the aid of the post from the left hand side of the penalty area.

However, Corby equalised in injury time at the end of the second half as home captain Rory McAuley blasted a shot into the net from close range after Rugby failed to deal with a ball into the box.

The result means Borough sit ninth in the Northern Premier League Midlands table, four points outside of the play-off places.

Rugby are next in action against Sutton Coldfield Town on Saturday, December 13 with kick-off at 3pm at Kilsby Lane.

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