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Marking an anniversary

COVID-conquering colleagues in Rugby have come together to mark five years since they began administering thousands of vaccines in Rugby.

Around 90 healthcare professionals and volunteers met to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Locke House Vaccination Centre.

Together, they delivered 170,000 vaccinations – more than any other centre in the Coventry and Warwickshire region – between 2020 and 2022.

Since then, the 'Locke House volunteers' have formed a grassroots movement supporting communities, and raising awareness of healthy and sociable living through gardening projects, organised

activities and social gatherings.

Rugby Health Limited Transformation Project Manager Gita Natarajan, who managed Locke House and received a British Empire Medal for services to the community in 2022, said: "The can-do attitude, the humour and the empathy shown by the Locke House volunteers, along with the effective management of the Primary Care staff, is what made for an effective partnership that saved many a life during the Covid times, when emotions ran high, and life, as we knew it, came to a stand-still.

"The community spirit behind this success will forever be recognised and celebrated."



Healthcare professionals and volunteers celebrate the fifth anniversary of the opening of the Locke House Vaccination Centre.

New data shows big drop in waiting lists

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

WAITING lists at hospitals in Rugby and Coventry have fallen by thousands since the 2024 general election, according to new NHS data.

Waiting lists at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) NHS Trust – which runs Rugby's Hospital of St Cross and University Hospital Coventry – have dropped by 3,632 since the general election, despite record demand for NHS ser-

vices in 2025.

Across England, waiting lists fell by more than 86,000 in November alone – the second biggest monthly drop in 15 years. Overall, waiting lists are now down by more than 312,000 since Labour came into office.

The government's Elective Reform Plan has invested in expanded evening and weekend clinics, new and expanded community diagnostic centres and surgical hubs, and reforms to reduce unnecessary appointments by sending patients straight to test.

Rugby MP John Slinger thanked

the 'amazing' NHS staff across Coventry and Warwickshire for their hard work.

He added: "Thanks to Labour's Elective Reform Plan, thousands more patients received faster diagnoses and treatment over the last 12 months.

"This comes alongside improvements at St Cross which are already making a difference for Rugby patients, with a new Haematology and Oncology unit, new Endoscopy unit, and specialist Breast Care unit delivered in the last two years.

"Four new theatres, two 24-bed

wards, and 12 additional recovery bays are also planned. This is not a local hospital in decline.

"But I regularly hear from constituents who need more services at St Cross. That is why I am collecting signatures for my petition calling on the government to encourage the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care Board to conclude its review of urgent care as soon as possible and deliver doctor-led urgent care at St Cross."

Rugby Borough Council's Partnerships and Wellbeing spokesperson Coun Maggie O'Rourke also

welcomed the data.

She said: "The new elective surgery hub at Rugby's Hospital of St Cross is having an impact in six high volume specialties, making a real difference to residents needing surgery. With planning permission awarded last year for a significant expansion at the hospital, I look forward to seeing waiting times continue to drop.

"Rugby's residents are fiercely proud of their local hospital, and we will continue to work with our partners to bring more services to the Hospital of St Cross."

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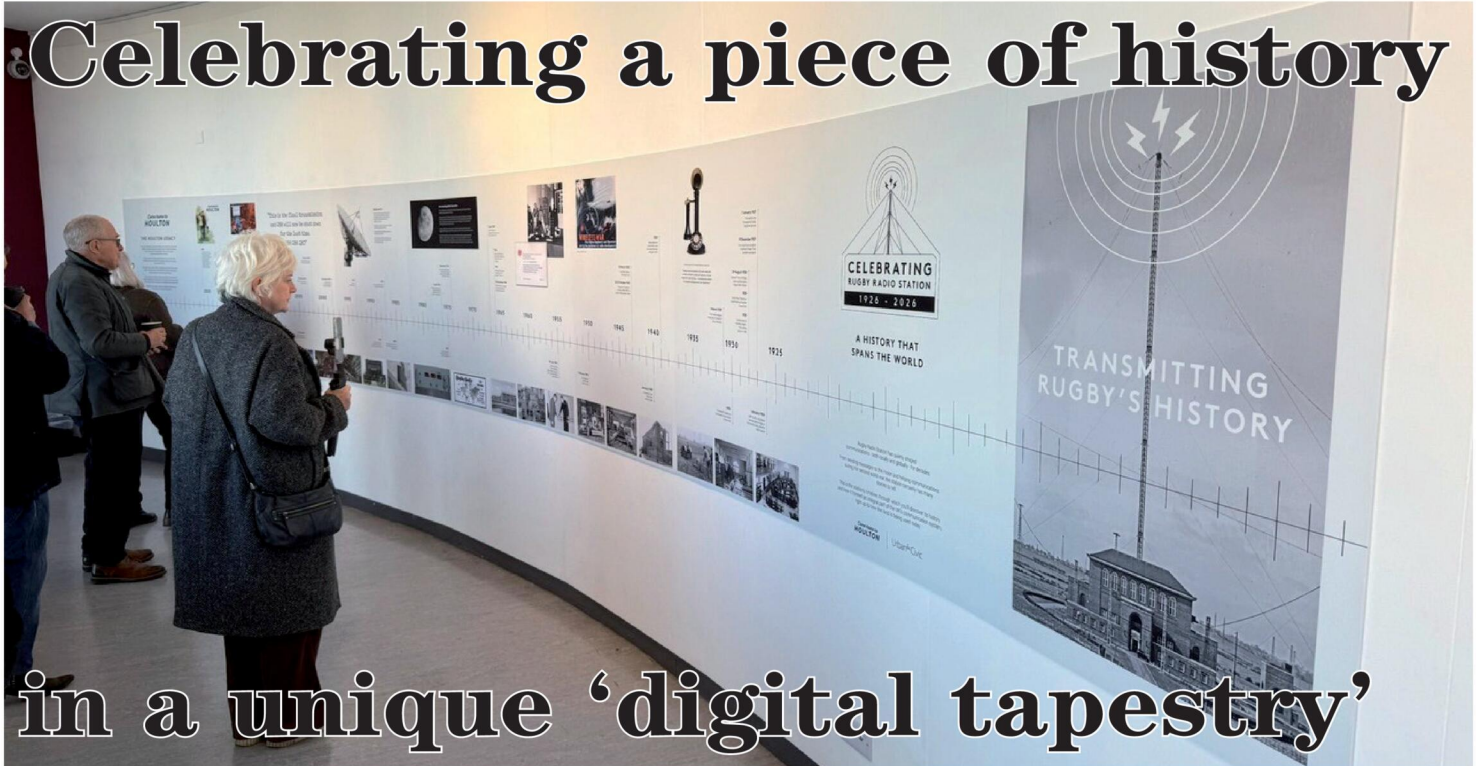
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A UNIQUE digital tapestry made up of thousands of individual pictures of Rugby Radio Station has been unveiled as part of celebrations to mark the site's 100th anniversary.

The tapestry, which combines archives with pictures sourced from the local community into one main mosaic-style image, has gone on display at Rugby Museum and Art Gallery.

The initiative, completed by local artist Allan Levy and backed by Urban&Civic, the master developer of the site at Houlton, is part of a year of celebrations to mark 100 years of Rugby Radio Station.

The station was decommissioned in 2002 but would have been 100 years old in 2026. It was formerly home to 12 820ft masts which helped pioneer global communications in the 1920s.

In 1927, Rugby Radio Station made the first transatlantic broadcast to Houlton, Maine, USA – after which the new neighbourhood is named. The station building is now home to Houlton School.

The digital tapestry, which is the result of contributions from people who live, work, learn or have a connection with Houlton, will also go on show at Houlton School and St Gabriel's C of E School.

Allan Levy said: "It's been a real privilege to see the many pictures received from people who have some kind of connection with Houlton, and learning about some of the stories relating to some of them, in order to create this unique memory of such an iconic site.

"There's the odd mystery too - including a lady who features in the tapestry that we're keen to identify and find out more about. So if anyone knows anything about her, we'd love to hear from you."

Anniversary celebrations kicked off with a transmitting event, at which Rugby Amateur Transmitting Society (RATS) sent messages using an amateur radio transceiver set up

inside Houlton School – in what was the former radio station's broadcast room – and then receive replies from people across the world.

The schools are also carrying out a number of special projects to mark the centenary, and a heritage book by local historian Malcolm Hancock telling the story of Rugby Radio Station is being updated to add the latest chapter of the unique location.



Sonia Nakra-Norman, Communications, Communities and Partnerships Manager at Urban&Civic, said: "The Houlton Tapestry project is the first of many projects that Urban&Civic has invested in to mark the 100 year anniversary of Rugby Radio Station.

"The story of Rugby Radio Station really is fascinating and it's been a real privilege to work with Allan on the project, and other members of the community like local historian Malcolm Hancock – with whom we created a website on the subject, RadioStation Rugby: Connecting You to Now – as well as organisations like RATS, local schools and the wider community to mark this historically significant occasion."

Visit www.facebook.com/HoultonRugby for more on Rugby Radio Station's 100th year anniversary celebrations.

TOP: An exhibition at Rugby Museum and Art Gallery celebrates 100 years of Rugby Radio Station pictured (INSET) in 1933.

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 **28**

A Michelin star a year after launch

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

A NEW restaurant in Leamington, which is overseen by a *MasterChef: The Professionals* winner, has been added to the prestigious Michelin guide – less than a year after opening.

The Warwick, at Mallory Court Hotel & Spa, opened in June under the stewardship of Stu Deeley delivering British dining with bold flavours and the finest local produce served in historic surroundings.

The restaurant has generated more

than 5,500 covers since, to much fanfare from far and wide, including one Michelin guide inspector who described The Warwick's cooking as "ingredient-led with exacting presentation and bold flavours".

Michelin inspectors visit restaurants anonymously and rate dishes based on the quality of ingredients, flavour and cooking techniques, as well as value for money.

Stu is no stranger to culinary excellence, with a background in Michelin-starred and multi-AA Rosette kitchens, and outlined why this latest recognition is extra special.

He said: "The Warwick has represented the biggest blueprint I've



Michelin: Stu Deeley opened The Warwick less than a year ago. s

ever had on my plate as a chef, as the potential is so huge. So this recognition by the Michelin guide, in such a short space of time, is testament to the high standards upheld by our fantastic team every day.

"I have said all along that rather than reinventing the culinary wheel, it is about making sure that it turns

well, and the feedback we have received from diners has been fantastic.

"Our five-course Taste of the Season menu has proven really popular with diners due to the sheer variety on offer, as have our Sunday lunches and, as a restaurant, we are just getting started.

"Moving into spring we will be exploring fresh dishes that will feature ingredients including Oxfordshire hogget, Cornish crab, Wye Valley asparagus and Isle of Wight tomatoes, to name a few, so watch this space."

Visit www.mallory.co.uk/the-warwick-restaurant-for-details.

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A FOUR-legged star of *Pete Wicks: For Dogs' Sake* is hoping to find a forever home.

Belgian Malinois puppy Gelert was born at Dogs Trust Kenilworth in March and, unlike his siblings, is still waiting. Hopefully his star appearance alongside Wicks will find him the perfect family.

Gelert, known as Santino on the show, is an energetic and lively pup. The Dogs Trust Kenilworth team has spent months teaching him how to manage his size and enthusiasm, when to relax, and the best ways to

Can you house TV star Gelert?

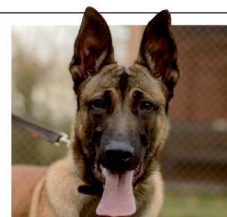
keep him stimulated. Gelert loves search and scent games which manage his energy level and behaviours and shows off his playful nature.

Gelert is ready for a home, and hopes to find one with active adopters who can continue his training and keep him active and stimulated.

Emma-Jane Thomas, manager at Dogs Trust Kenilworth, said: "Gelert is a lovely puppy who, with some

guidance and training, will continue to grow into an amazing companion. He needs an active, adult-only home where he can be the only pet and settle in at his own pace. He would thrive with adopters who can give him a job to do and channel his drive and determination into activities like flyball, canicross or agility work."

Visit www.dogstrust.org.uk/kenilworth for more details.



Gelert the Belgian Malinois is looking for an active forever home. s



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Top cop referred to watchdog after Villa away fan ban furore

Craig Guildford has retired as Chief Constable of West Midlands Police. s



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

THE FORMER Chief Constable of West Midlands Police has been referred to the policing watchdog after the force apologised for failings when banning Maccabi Tel Aviv fans from a football match at Aston Villa in November.

Chief Constable Craig Guildford, who retired from the force on Friday, has been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct by West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Simon Foster.

Mr Guildford's replacement, Acting Chief Constable Scott Green (pictured, right), issued a 'full and sincere' apology on behalf of the force on his first day in the role, on Monday.

Green said: "The failings identified by His Majesty's Chief

Inspector of Constabulary (HMICFRS), in relation to our planning, policing and subsequent response to the Aston Villa versus Maccabi Tel Aviv match, are damning.

"A direct impact of our actions has been a loss of trust and confidence from the public of the West Midlands, and more broadly. More specifically, I know we have damaged our relationship with individuals and Jewish communities. We have damaged our relationship with communities and many others are feeling disappointed in their police force.

"Our response to criticisms of the force, and our reaction to the Home Secretary's statement to parliament on Wednesday [January 14] was too defensive and not acceptable.

"I am committed to West Midlands Police learning from these events but, most importantly, taking immediate action focused on repairing the damage we have caused which has result-

ing in the loss of the confidence individuals and communities have in us. The public losing confidence in policing undermines the core principles of British policing. We will work tirelessly to restore that trust, ensuring that we police without fear or favour.

"We will continue to fully engage with HMICFRS as their work continues and we will respond promptly and effectively to all matters raised by them.

"The Police and Crime Commissioner and I have already met to discuss the actions the force will take to rebuild trust and confidence with the public of the West Midlands, and we are committed to working together to deliver this."

West Midlands

ing, in public, a report I have requested from West Midlands Police and putting questions to the force. I also await the publication of the Home Affairs committee report into these matters.

"I acknowledge the continuing and understandable public interest. I will continue to hold West Midlands Police to account. That is absolute, unconditional and non-negotiable."

Craig Guildford had served with the force since December 2022, after starting his policing career in 1992 as a special constable.

In his resignation letter, he said: "I have come to the conclusion that the political and media frenzy around myself and my position has become detrimental to all the great work undertaken by my officers and staff in serving communities across the West Midlands. I have carefully considered my position and concluded that retirement is in the best interests of the organisation, myself and my family."

"The force know I expect them to comply with the very highest standards of conduct. I will, therefore, make a voluntary referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct regarding any conduct matters by the former chief constable in relation to these events. "At my accountability and governance board next Tuesday (January 27), I will be consid-



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Question of raising cash to help club

A BELOVED youth club which has been working with young people in Rugby for 107 years is aiming to raise vital funds at its annual quiz next month.

The Bradby Club Annual Quiz Night takes place on Friday February 20.

The quiz is open to teams of up to six people.

Entry includes a sausage and mash supper with vegetarian option available, followed by sticky toffee pudding or fruit salad.

The event will raise much-needed money to fund the work of The Bradby Club, which holds open-access evenings to provide a safe centre for young people, with sport, cookery, residential courses and more. Its professional youth workers offer informal education in safe relationships and substance misuse in schools and other clubs.

The quiz will be held at Rugby School Sports Cafe on Friday February 20. Doors open at 6.30pm for a 7pm start.

Contact Rebecca at events@bradby.org.uk or on 07539 573045 to book tickets.

Contributing is the word when it comes to garden

CRAFTY engineering students at Rugby College have played a key role in the creation of a new sensory garden at Caldecott Park which is designed to provide a vibrant and inclusive experience for residents and visitors.

As part of their engineering project, the students helped to design and manufacture laser-cut steel letters spelling out the words 'touch', 'see', 'smell' and 'hear' - which form the centrepiece of the park's new sensory area.

The installation celebrates the beauty of nature through all the senses, creating an engaging and accessible environment for the community.

The sensory garden forms part of the council's wider programme to enhance Caldecott Park, including new raised beds, accessible play equipment, and improved pathways. The initiative has been supported by local sponsors such as the Cottons Group and is maintained by community volunteers and local organisations.

Student Alex Wheeler said: "It was great to be part of something that people in Rugby can enjoy. Seeing our work displayed in Caldecott Park is really rewarding."

Fellow student Khush Kansagra added: "Working on this project taught us a lot about precision and creativity, and knowing it's part of a community space makes it even



Rugby College student Alex Wheeler, Engineering Lecturer Delroy Barnes, and student Khush Kansagra with Town Park Ranger Stephanie Huggett from Rugby Borough Council.

more meaningful." The students' work was completed under the guidance of Delroy Barnes, Engineering Lecturer at Rugby College, in collaboration with Rugby Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team.

Mr Barnes said: "This has been a fantastic hands-on project for our students, allowing them to apply

their design and manufacturing skills to something that benefits the wider community.

"The student group have shown great teamwork and professionalism, and the finished pieces look fantastic in the park."

Stephanie Huggett, Town Park Ranger at Rugby Borough Council, said: "The sensory garden has been

designed to encourage visitors to connect with nature through all their senses, and the addition of the laser-cut letters makes it truly special.

"We're so grateful to the students and staff at Rugby College for their creativity and skill - their contribution adds real character to the space and will be enjoyed by residents for years to come."

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Daughter died weeks after wedding



Liz (right) with her much-missed daughter Natalie.

Mum supports bid to open up clinical trials to more patients

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

A BEREAVED Coventry mum who lost her 31-year-old daughter to a brain tumour just weeks after her wedding has backed a 'much-needed' initiative for people with the disease.

Liz Paul has welcomed the launch of Access to Clinical Trials for Brain Tumours (ACT-BT), an initiative which enables consultants to refer adult patients from anywhere in the UK to a panel of clinical trial experts who will review their case and match them to any clinical trials for which they may be eligible.

Experts hope the initiative will enable more UK patients to access brain tumour clinical trials, while exposing the barriers that still exist and collecting data to strengthen the case for more trials and resources.

Liz's daughter, Natalie, a food development technologist from Warwick, was diagnosed with an aggressive brain tumour in 2017. She blogged during her illness to help raise awareness of brain tumours, and vowed throughout not to let cancer define her.

Treatment included multiple surgeries and gruelling radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Natalie's family also raised money for her to access immunotherapy in Germany – at a cost, excluding travel, of \$56,000 per round.

Natalie died in November 2021 aged 31, just seven weeks after her wedding.

Liz, now an Involvement Champion with The Brain Tumour Charity, welcomed the launch of ACT-BT, highlighting the need for more accessible information about brain tumour clinical trials.

She said: "Accessing clinical trials for Natalie was exceedingly difficult. Even just finding out what they are, despite your best efforts – you're left trawling the

internet for hours. You might find some trials, but then you have to work out if you are eligible.

"ACT-BT is a much-needed initiative for people with brain tumours. It will be a great resource for patients and their families, providing a more equitable route for accessing brain tumour clinical trials."

ACT-BT – co-created and funded by The Brain Tumour Charity, and hosted by the University of Leeds – is expected to be operational by late spring. Consultants will then be able to refer adults with primary brain tumours to the panel by completing an online form, and receive timely, individualised advice that they can discuss with the patient.

ACT-BT lead, Professor Susan Short, co-director of the Leeds Cancer Research Centre at the University of Leeds, runs a portfolio of clinical studies for people with brain tumours.

She said: "Our aim is to remove the barriers that stop patients taking part in clinical research. By improving access to trials, we can accelerate discovery and ensure that new treatments reach those who need them sooner."

The Brain Tumour Charity is funding ACT-BT's set-up and running costs, including a coordinator post and the members' time, for an initial eight-month pilot phase.

Dr Michele Afif, Chief Executive at The Brain Tumour Charity, said: "Brain tumours remain the biggest cancer killer of people under 40. Progress has been frustratingly slow, not helped by the systemic barriers that mean just 12 per cent of brain tumour patients have taken part in a clinical trial.

"By enabling more patients across the UK to access brain tumour clinical trials, we hope to help scientists develop kinder, more effective treatments. This is key to giving individuals the best possible chance of living longer, better lives."

Planning for Spring

with the garden lovers' garden centre



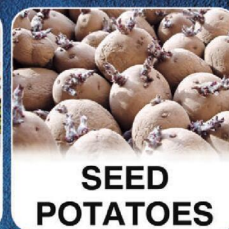
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A packed calendar at the WAC

by Ian Hughes
ian.hughes@bullivantmedia.com

THERE will be plenty of familiar faces at Warwick Arts Centre (WAC) this year.

Among those heading to the University of Warwick venue will be comedians Sir Lenny Henry and Mo Gilligan, *I'm*



Ruby Wax will be taking to the stage fresh from her appearance on *I'm A Celebrity...*

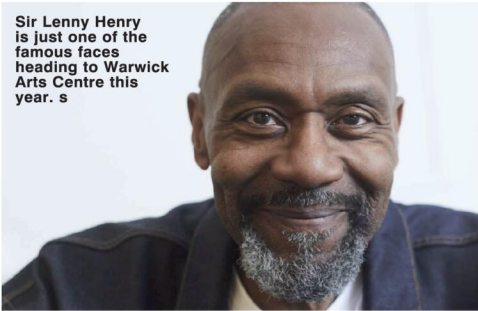
A Celebrity... disruptor Ruby Wax, tenor Alfie Boe, and broadcasters Professor Brian Cox and Michaela Strachan.

There will be music from returning '80s popsters Haircut 100, the boundary-defying Mammal Hands, bluesman Eric Bibb and blueswoman Elles Bailey, together with other big names, including Grammy award-winning singer-songwriter Rickie Lee Jones and violinist Nigel Kennedy.

Other highlights include electric *Bridgerton* favourites the Vitamin String Quartet and Belgian theatre-makers Ontroerend Goed. Hijinx Theatre will celebrate the 10th anniversary of their globe-trotting *Meet Fred* show and Paula Varjack dissects pop icon Janet Jackson's downfall in *Nine Sixteenths*.

After launching in the autumn, the *Handle With Care!* season continues with the family-focused *Ruby's Worry*, and *Brave Bettie*, among the highlights.

The arts centre's ongoing commitment to championing regional talent remains to the fore with a



Sir Lenny Henry is just one of the famous faces heading to Warwick Arts Centre this year.

return visit from Ascension Dance, whose *Early Weaves* is choreographed by WAC's associate artist, Ashley Jordan. Edinburgh comedy award-winning comedian Sam Nicoresti will feature and the *Made In The Midlands* commissioning programme showcases three new pieces.

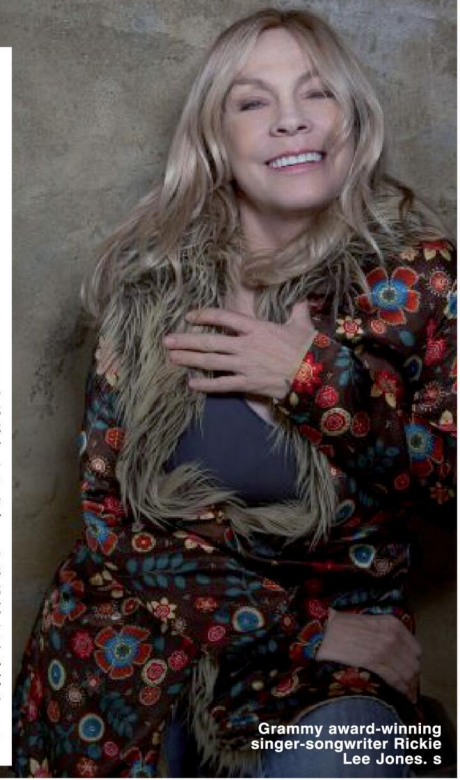
For younger visitors, *Tales Of Acorn Wood Live* celebrates 25 years of the much-loved stories, *Zog* flies in, and *Sisters360* tells the story of skateboarding step-sisters while the new *Pop-Up Family Fest* promises a packed day of creativity for all ages.

Over in the Mead gallery,

there's the last chance to see the acclaimed UK debut of Japanese ceramic artist Takuro Kuwata; followed by Daiga Grantina, who represented Latvia at the 2019 Venice Biennale, and whose Mead show represents her first UK solo exhibition.

And there will also be a range of free workshops and activities, from jazz Fridays and songwriting workshops to mini creatives, family Sundays and more, as well as a cinema programme featuring big blockbusters, indie faves and special screenings.

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Another £36m for greener journeys

Mayor announces funds

by Sarah Mason
sarah.mason@bullivantmedia.com

CYCLING and walking is set to get a £36million boost across the region.

West Midlands Mayor Richard Parker has secured the funds for active-travel projects, to get more people moving.

The funding will be used by Transport for West Midlands (TFWM) and local councils to build more safe cycling and walking routes and to deliver programmes like 'school streets' and 'bikeability', to encourage more people to cycle and walk for their daily journeys.

As well as announcing the four-year funding package, Active Travel England has also given TFWM – which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority – a capability rating

of three – the joint-highest rating achieved by any authority.

This shows the region has 'very strong local leadership' on active travel; capable staff; comprehensive plans; a significant network already in place; and a growing number of people choosing to walk, wheel or cycle.

The mayor has made increasing levels of active travel – especially for shorter trips – a key part of his 'journeys for everyone' priority and of the forthcoming mayor's local transport plan.

Mr Parker said: "This extra funding and high rating is a great show of confidence in our ability to deliver on active travel – and we will.

"This means more cycle lanes, road crossings, and better pathways to make it easier and safer for everyone to walk and cycle, especially for those shorter



Active travel commissioner Beccy Marston and mayor Richard Parker. s

journeys, like the school run or a trip to the local shops.

"Investing in active travel is how we will reduce gridlock on our streets, clean our air, and build a happier and healthier community."

Last year, the mayor appointed Beccy Marston as the West Midlands active travel commissioner, to work with councils, organisations and communities to further increase levels of walking and cycling.

Beccy said: "This funding allows us to further improve the safety and accessibility of walking, wheeling and cycling in our communities. I'm proud

of the commitment demonstrated by our regional officers and the politicians who have championed this work, resulting in the retention of our capability rating.

"We will invest this money to continue building a connected, safe network that supports independent travel for young people and helps people make healthy choices for short trips, baking physical activity into daily routines."

The funding is part of a £626million investment announced by government and Active Travel England for councils across the country.

'Zombie knives' are handed in

MORE THAN 1,000 weapons have been taken off the streets of the West Midlands in the last three months.

West Midlands police and crime commissioner Simon Foster revealed the figure after some 30 bins across the region were emptied by specialist teams, with weapons including ninja swords, 'zombie knives' and kitchen blades deposited into the blue containers.

The bins – including ones at Solihull Railway Station and Coventry Central Police Station, on Little Park Street – are there for the safe dispose of knives, machetes, swords, firearms and other dangerous weapons, with the contents inside collected and destroyed.

Mr Foster said: "Preventing and tackling knife crime is a top priority for me. That is why I invest in a network of 30 weapons-surrender bins across the West Midlands.

"Over a recent three-months period, 1,036 weapons including knives, guns and machetes were deposited into these bins. That means fewer dangerous weapons out on the streets of the West Midlands.

"There have been recent, welcome reductions in knife crime. However, I am not in the least complacent about that. One victim of knife crime is one too many.

"That is why I am doubling the number of weapon-surrender bins across the West Midlands, so that we can remove more dangerous weapons from the streets and continue to prevent and tackle knife crime, keep people safe and save lives."

The bins are funded and owned by the police and crime commissioner (PCC) and managed by the region's violence reduction partnership, which is based in the office of the PCC.

For more information, including the location of the bins, visit www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/preventing-crime/knife-crime/weapon-surrender-bins.

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Taking to the stage for a good cause

A FORMER rugby player is stepping out of the scrum and on to the stage by taking part in Rugby Theatre's family pantomime to raise money for his friend, ex-England captain Lewis Moody, who was recently diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease.

Rob Field played over 200 first class games during the 1990s with Leicester Tigers, Coventry, Rugby Lions and the Midlands, and was Lewis's teammate at the start of his glittering career.

He said: "I vividly remember the first match I played with Lewis, when he scored two breakaway tries on his Leicester Tigers debut.

"You could tell straight away he was something special. And despite everything he achieved – England captain, Lions tours – he's always stayed the same great guy.

"MND is a horrible, debilitating illness. In my small way, I hope I can help Moodos and his family prepare for the years ahead."

Lewis is hoping to come and support Rob in the theatre's production of Treasure Island – and had some words of encouragement for the production's delighted cast and crew.

He said: "I hope Rob has managed to figure out his right from his left when it comes to dancing – he's a massive, lanky, tall, enormous unit! But I just wanted to say have a great show. I'm sure you will absolutely carve it up. I'm looking forward to



Rob Field is taking part in Rugby Theatre's family pantomime Treasure Island to raise money for former teammate Lewis Moody, who was recently diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease.

PAINTING, book making and shadow puppetry are among the subjects of a series of one-day workshops on offer at Rugby's Percival Guildhouse in February.

The choices on Saturday February 7 range from Oil Pastel Painting to Book Making, where participants can learn how to make their own notebooks and sketchbooks using simple binding and stitching techniques.

There is also a workshop on Shadow Puppetry where participants will learn how to make their own shadow puppets, create a

story, and perform and record a short shadow puppet piece.

Chakra Harmony is open to those needing to restore some balance and calm in their lives, while others may prefer the fascination of learning how to research their Family History effectively using key records and archives.

And the Even More Ballet Hoo workshop is an expert-led illustrated and entertaining look at the world of dance.

Places are limited. Visit www.percival-guildhouse.co.uk or call 01788 565316 for more information, and to book places.

coming down and seeing one of the performances."

Following on from his rugby career, Rob, who now works in financial services, has faced his own battles with depression.

Working with a counsellor, he put in place a plan to reduce stress and do more fun things. It was this plan, and a dare from his daughter Robyn, that led him to audition for Treasure Island, and he was cast as a pirate and a sailor.

"Lewis is right – I've got two left feet!" said Rob, who is 6ft 7in tall and weighs 19 stone. "I have been really touched by the other members of the cast and crew who have

not only put up with my regular collisions but embraced me as part of the team.

"I've loved every minute of rehearsals and can't wait to get on the stage. The show will be amazing!"

Lewis's ex-Leicester 'Sabretooth' friends have organised a fundraiser to support his wife and two children following his diagnosis. Visit www.gofundme.com/t/lewis-moody-fundraising-appeal to donate.

Rugby Theatre's production of Treasure Island runs from January 23 to February 1. Visit www.rugbytheatre.co.uk for more information.



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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.

Combatting back pain

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

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DCC David Gardner with colleagues and staff from Hillmorton Primary School.

Police chief helps pupils with their enquiries...

A HIGH-ranking officer with Warwickshire Police has experienced a different kind of police interview during a visit to a Rugby primary school.

Deputy Ch Cons David Gardner has years of experience in interviewing – suspects, job applicants and more – but he has never been interrogated like he was when he paid a visit to Hillmorton Primary School.

A Warwickshire Police spokesperson said: “The kids took great pleasure in asking the DCC and the officer alongside him all sorts of very important questions, including: have you arrested any robbers in masks? Which one of you can get over a fence? And our favourite topic: is the uniform itchy?”

“The children tried on some of the uniform, talked about police dogs and their special noses, looked at the equipment we use and, most importantly, got to sit in the police car and turn the blue lights on.

“One child was very keen to tell us about their dad speeding on the motorway – a future motorway cop?!”

“All in all, a short visit became a great opportunity to influence a future generation on the role of the police – and hopefully encourage some to consider it for careers in the future.”

Warwickshire Police is currently recruiting cadets. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/3pzs27tp> for more information.

Council budget could see many pay lower tax

LUTTERWORTH residents are set to pay less tax to Harborough District Council (HDC) from April.

The council proposes to reduce its share of Council Tax by five per cent, equivalent to £9.16 a year for an average Band D property.

In its draft budget for 2026-27, the council also proposes to freeze charges for car parking and green bins for the third year running, and offer free parking on three Saturdays in December.

HDC also plans to extend the £1million Community Grant Fund into a fourth year, invest in environmental services to tackle fly-tipping, increase fly-tipping enforcement penalties from £400 to £1,000, and increase project support to accelerate the Rewilding Harborough project.

Other proposals include investment in economic development projects, the introduction of the national weekly food waste collection service from November, and improvements to CCTV services. Residents, businesses and community organisations are being encouraged to share their views on the draft budget as part of a public consultation.

A council spokesperson said: “Like all authorities, Harborough district faces significant financial challenges, including rising demand for services, high inflation rates and changes to government funding.

“However, the council wants to continue to deliver investment and improvements needed for the success of the district and its communities long into the future.

“The proposed draft budget has been modelled over three years factoring in the local government reorganisation process where it is expected a new unitary authority will be in place from April 2028.

“The 2026-27 budget is balanced, though the following two years do require funding. This is achieved by using the council’s financial sustainability reserve. Because of these reserves and the council’s careful and prudent management of its finances, the administration proposes to reduce Harborough District Council’s share of Council Tax.”

Coun Jim Knight, HDC’s Cabinet lead for Finance Services, said the draft budget demonstrated the council’s commitment to stability, investment and delivering value for residents.

He added: “Despite financial pressures, we have been able to protect key services, support our communities and plan responsibly for the years ahead.”

Council leader Coun Phil Knowles said: “This is a clear demonstration of our commitment and investment in our communities across the whole of the district, and builds upon the five pillars which have been built into our overall corporate plan.”

HDC’s cabinet has agreed to take the draft budget to public consultation.

On February 9, cabinet will agree its formal recommendations on the proposed budget to the full council for consideration on February 23.

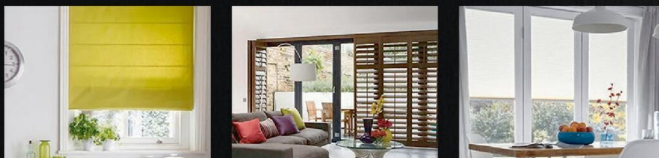
Visit www.harborough.gov.uk/consultation to take part in the consultation before it closes at 9am on February 6.



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Young stars sail to a clutch of prizes

HOME-grown young sailors claimed an impressive clutch of top prizes against competitors from around the country at the one-day Draycote Water Sailing Club Youth Open.

The competition attracted 116 entries, with sailors battling it out across a variety of single-handed dinghy racing classes.

A good north easterly breeze provided ideal conditions for a cold but action-packed day with four back-to-back races across two courses, which saw some outstanding results for the club's Draycote Academy youth team.

In the ILCA4s with the biggest entry of 38 boats, first overall went to Callum Marshall from east coast club Blackwater SC, with Draycote Academy sailors Toby Turner and Pippa Knights in second and third.

The ILCA6 fleet was won by Amalie Hacker ahead of Merry Lewis (Hayling Island SC), with Draycote Water SC's Felicity Angell in third.

And the ILCA7 fleet saw Draycote Water sailors in first and third, Freddie Sunderland claiming victory just a point ahead of Nathan Russell (Royal Harwich

YC), with Joe Rowe hot on their heels.

In the Topper 5.3s, Draycote Water's Hari Clark – a Topper 4.2 and RS Tera Sport world champion – dominated proceedings for the overall win. Fellow Draycote Academy sailors Joseph Hulse and Jake Day claimed second and third to lock out the podium with a comprehensive home victory.

It was also a 1-2-3 on the podium for Draycote sailors in the Topper 4.2 fleet for smaller sailors, with Elizabeth Stainton first, Isaac Foulds second and Hattie Steele third.

Draycote Academy siblings Molly and Harry Wilson – who travel from Filey to be members of Draycote Water SC – each claimed third overall in the RS Tera Pro and RS Tera Sport fleets respectively.

Club manager Dave Rowe said: "It was fantastic to welcome sailors from across the country to Draycote Water and pleasing to see some great results from our home sailors."

"A massive thank you to all the volunteers and staff at the club who help us to run these events, and well done to our Draycote Academy team."

Draycote Water's Hari Clark leading the Topper fleet. Picture by Malcolm Lewin Photography



Steve Bradnam as Nanny the Dame, Simon Burne as Longjohns Silver, and Victoria Gillias as Jim Hawkins.

An offering to treasure

AHOY me hearties – a swashbuckling pantomime version of Treasure Island is taking to the stage at Rugby Theatre.

Promising pirates, parrots and plenty of audience participation, the show follows cabin boy Jim Hawkins and a cast of larger-than-life characters as they embark on a rip-roaring voyage across the seven seas. Will Jim defeat villainous Longjohns Silver and find the buried treasure? Will the sparkling Spirit of the Ocean's magic spells be strong enough? And will Nanny pack enough pork pies to last the journey?

Director Emma Bright said: "Expect non-stop laughter, live music and fun costumes in this action-packed tale of adventure and slapstick on the high seas."

"Tip the black spot to the January blues, polish your cutlasses and come and join us for a heartwarming adventure for the whole family."

The script is written by local writer and performer Michael Read, capturing the spirit of Robert Louis Stevenson's beloved story with a mischievous modern twist.

The adult cast are joined by local young dancers from the Carrie Bianco Stage School.

And audience members can get a selfie with their favourite hero, heroine or villain at a free meet-and-greet in the theatre bar after the show.

Treasure Island runs from January 23 to February 1, with discounts for groups of four. Visit www.rugbytheatre.co.uk or call 01788 541234 for tickets.

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A pink-letter day for fundraisers

FUNDRAISERS in Warwick will be aiming to paint the town pink in the New Year.

Gala dinner A Touch of Pink, on February 7, is set to raise thousands of pounds for The Esther Project.

The Leamington-based project was established by Lianne Kirkman in 2023. Her mission was to create a nurturing and empowering community where every woman can heal, grow and reach their future potential. It does this through a range of services, including counselling, one-on-one support, creative activities, employability opportunities, and drop-in sessions.

Esther House - a seven-bed supported living accommodation, opens its doors for vulnerable women who need a safe space to recover.

Lianne said: "We are absolutely thrilled to

be organising our very first fundraising gala dinner - an opportunity for our supporters to come together and truly help elevate our fundraising efforts.

"We have been blown away by the incredible generosity shown so far, from our event sponsors to everyone who has donated auction lots and raffle prizes. Their support is what makes a night like this possible, and it's shaping up to be one we will never forget.

"We've set an ambitious fundraising target for this event because the need is great. Every pound raised will help strengthen the work we do in



creating safe spaces and opportunities for women in our Esther community - women overcoming trauma, social or economic disadvantage, and the barriers that stand in the way of thriving and building independent, fulfilling lives."

The full evening of entertainment, at Kings High School, is being compered by award-winning host and broadcaster Kirsty Leahy, and includes live music from all-female electric-acoustic trio String Infusion and talented singer-songwriter Shanade Morrow.

Also helping to keep the guests entertained will be Angus Baskerville, wowing with his table magic, and DJ James Farmer will see the night out with plenty of dance-floor fillers.

There will be the chance to have a photo taken wearing the Queen Cape, handmade by the Esther ladies earlier this year and now touring the area to raise awareness.

And a host of auction and raffle items have been donated by businesses. Visit www.theestherproject.co.uk/ to book a table.

ABOVE: Angus Baskerville will be wowing with his table magic while String Infusion will be providing live music.

LEFT: The Esther Project was set up by Lianne Kirkman.

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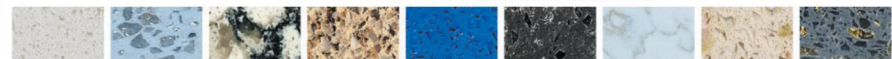
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LEFT: Twitchers will be out counting birds this weekend. Picture by Katie Nethercoat (rsqb-images.com) RIGHT: Blue tit, Parus caeruleus, perched on branch in garden. Picture by Ray Kennedy (rsqb-images.com)

Things are looking up for Birdwatch survey

THE WORLD'S largest garden wildlife survey returns this weekend, with hundreds of thousands of people expected to watch and count the UK's garden birds for the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.

Nearly 600,000 people took part in 2025, counting more than 9million birds.

In the West Midlands around 15,500 people took part, with the Woodpigeon taking the top spot as the most commonly seen bird, followed by the house sparrow and blue tit.

In Worcestershire, more than 9,500 counted with the house sparrow the most popular, the blue tit

second and woodpigeon third.

This year's event takes place on today, tomorrow and Sunday (January 23, 24 and 25).

People in the region are asked to spend an hour watching and counting the birds that land in their garden, allotment, balcony or local park, then send their results to the RSPB.

Beccy Speight, the RSPB's chief executive, said: "By taking part in the Birdwatch, you and hundreds of thousands of other nature lovers across the UK, are helping us understand how garden birds are doing.

"Birds and wildlife are struggling right now. Every observation counts, even if you see nothing at all.

"Whether you live in a city or

the countryside, anyone, anywhere, can take part in the Big Garden Birdwatch – even if you don't have a garden.

"A park, balcony, allotment or window box will do. Simply spend an hour and count the birds you see. It's good for wildlife and evidence shows it's good for our own wellbeing."

The Birdwatch, which started in 1979, has since become a much-loved annual citizen science survey, that gives the RSPB a valuable snapshot of how garden birds are doing in the UK.

There have now been over 7million surveys over that time, more than 200million birds have been counted and nearly 12.6million hours spent watching and counting

garden birds.

Last year's UK-wide Big Garden Birdwatch results revealed that, nationally, the house sparrow held the top spot for another year as the most commonly spotted bird, with blue tit riding high at number two and Woodpigeon coming in at number three. Starling and Blackbird made up the remainder of the top five most recorded species.

Despite the top 10 remaining the same as the previous year in 2024, there were declines in average numbers counted for house sparrow, blue tit, and starling. It could be that these results are weather related - Storm Eowyn hit last year's Big Garden Birdwatch weekend, which makes it even more interesting to

see this year's results.

Beccy added: "Even on the greyest winter day, garden birds bring a welcome dose of nature into our everyday lives.

"Take a moment to pause, to listen, to notice. We need nature, and nature needs us.

"By joining the Big Garden Birdwatch you're doing something positive for birds and nature.

"Because when we act for nature together, we can do so much more."

People can visit: rsqb.org.uk/birdwatch for a digital Big Garden Birdwatch guide, which includes a bird identification chart, top tips, along with an RSPB shop voucher and advice on how to attract wildlife to gardens.

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March		
3rd Melton Mowbray.....	£29.00	£22.00
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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
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Llandudno - The Chatsworth House Hotel 10th-14th August 26 5 Days/4 Nights £295 Per Person.
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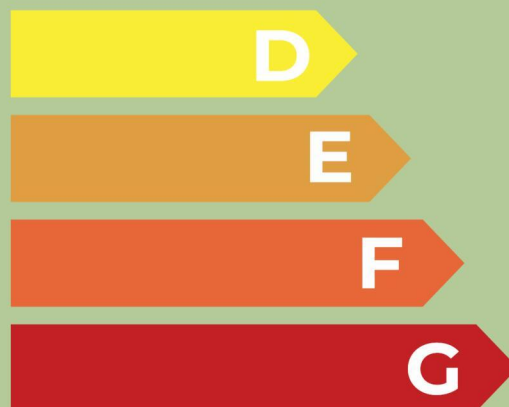
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Severn Trent seeks apprentices

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

SEVERN Trent this week opened applications for 100 apprenticeships.

The roles, from human resources (HR) to water networks, engineering and electrical, are open to anyone, regardless of age and where they are in their careers: whether starting out or looking to re-skill in

a new job. The move marks the biggest recruitment drive for apprentices the company has seen, after taking on 97 recruits in 2025 and 89 in 2024.

To reduce barriers for entry, Severn Trent has removed the need for people to have achieved a pass for both English and maths for some of the apprenticeships, opening some of the schemes up to more people.

Applicants without those quali-

fications will be able to gain them during their apprenticeship.

Applications will close on March 16.

Harry Edwards, an HR apprentice at Severn Trent, said: "My experience at Severn Trent so far has been genuinely fantastic; from the induction, which gave me the opportunity to network with other apprentices and graduates across the business, to being given real responsibility supporting key projects.

"The support which I've received has been amazing and I've learnt far more than I ever would've anticipated. The academy has also played a massive part in my development, offering unique training opportunities which help me to grow and succeed. It's been an amazing start and I can't wait for more to come."

Kellie Emery, new talent lead at Severn Trent, said: "Every year we open our apprenticeship applications with the ambition of bringing

in some of the brightest talent from across our region. Our apprenticeship schemes will offer people of any age the chance to learn new skills while also being able to put them into practice at the same time.

"At a time when research is showing a 2 per cent decrease in school and college-leaver recruitment in the energy and engineering sector, we're proud to be offering more opportunities in that space."

The chance to win a plum award

RESIDENTS are being called on to get applications in to find the nation's best plumber.

The inaugural Plumber Awards will celebrate the best of the trade in the UK and give tradespeople the chance to be recognised for their amazing work.

Winners will also get prizes, from sponsors including CT1, Kingsbridge, Polypipe Building Products, Powered Now, the Chartered Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineering (CIPHE) and Refresh.

There are 11 regional awards up for grabs, with the winner from each region going through to the final stage of the competition, to be in with the chance of being crowned national winner.

Regional winners will be announced in March and the national winner will be crowned on stage at InstallerSHOW 2026, to be held at the NEC

in June. The winners will be determined through a combination of judges' scores, a public vote and then a technical challenge to decide the national winner.

The judging panel is made up of industry experts, professional bodies and fellow plumbers, including key people from CIPHE and Watersafe, as well as award-winning plumbers.

The awards are for plumbers working on domestic projects only and, to be eligible, they must be 18 years old or over and hold an NVQ level 2 or 3 as a minimum.

Plumbers are being encouraged to enter, to showcase their work and make the most of the business, media, and brand awareness opportunities that come with winning an award such as this.

For more details and to submit an application visit www.plumberawards.co.uk/enter.



The winner of the first ever Plumber Awards will be announced at the NEC. s

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<p>Peterborough</p> <p>Thur 19 Feb 2026</p> <p style="background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; padding: 2px;">£32pp</p>	<p>London Covent Garden</p> <p>Fri 20 Feb 2026</p> <p style="background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; padding: 2px;">£32pp</p>	<p>Liverpool</p> <p>Sun 22 Feb 2026</p> <p style="background-color: #2c3e50; color: white; padding: 2px;">£32pp</p>

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Youth cash is on offer

GRANTS are available for youth projects across Warwickshire.

The Warwickshire Youth Council Project Grant Fund is aimed at supporting community and voluntary organisations that provide essential services for young people aged 11 to 17.

It is designed to strengthen youth provision in three key areas - crime and safety, experience in schools, and mental health. The funding supports projects running over a 12-month period, ensuring initiatives are accessible to young people at times and in locations that suit their needs. Grants of up to £5,000 are available with applications open until Sunday February 8.

Warwickshire County Council's leader Coun George Finch said: "As a child friendly county, we are dedicated to ensuring young people have the support and opportunities they need to thrive. This grant fund will enable local organisations to deliver projects that promote good mental health, improve safety and support positive experiences in school, helping to secure the long-term wellbeing of Warwickshire's young people.

"We encourage all eligible organisations to apply and make a real difference in the lives of our children and young people."

To be eligible for a grant, organisations must ensure their projects are inclusive, accessible without a referral system, and aim to make a positive impact on the lives of young people.

Visit www.childfriendlywarwickshire.co.uk/friends/information-friends-partners/4 for more details.

Welcome support will help groups to continue

THREE vital Warwickshire charities supporting women who have experienced domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse and complex challenges have each been awarded £10,000.

Heart of England Community Foundation has given the cash to RoSA in Rugby, Safeline in Warwick, and The Esther Project in Leamington, from its Women and Girls Fund.

The foundation is also backing calls for the government to create a specific fund which supports women and girls nationally.

The announcement was made on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, which marks the start of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence and calls for global solidarity to end violence against women and girls everywhere.

The £100,000 fund was established to provide donations to a range of women and girls projects across the region - with ten charities all receiving £10,000.

All three of the charities in Warwickshire will be using the funds to help cover the cost of core services and staffing.

RoSA, an organisation which provides services for women and girls across Warwickshire who have experienced sexual abuse, sexual assault or violence, rape, domestic violence, or child sexual



The fund was launched at a special Women and Girls event held by Heart of England Community Foundation.

exploitation (CSE), will be using the funds to deliver its counselling and support services.

Safeline is a specialist charity dedicated to supporting survivors of sexual abuse aged three plus and anyone affected and preventing its occurrence, providing services include trauma-informed counselling, creative therapies, independent sexual violence advoca-

cacy, and prevention and early intervention services and will be putting the donation towards staff costs.

The Esther Project, which provides trauma-informed support to women over the age of 18 facing complex challenges including domestic abuse, addiction, homelessness, poor mental health, and contact with the criminal justice

system, will also be covering staff costs with the funding.

Lianne Kirkman, founding director of The Esther Project, said: "The funding will be used to help us develop as an organisation - we launched around 16 months ago and it's so difficult to get off the ground as a new charity, so this money is literally supporting our foundations."

just go holidays



By Coach from Coventry, Rugby

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Observer



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- ✓ Return coach travel from Rugby
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True grit from roads heroes

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

ROADS teams showed plenty of grit as they ventured out across Warwickshire during Storm Goretti.

Warwickshire County Council (WCC) says it is celebrating the dedication and professionalism of its gritting fleet after their extensive efforts to keep the county moving during the recent cold snap.

Between January 5 and 10, WCC's highways teams carried out 11 gritting runs, spreading around 3,000 tonnes of salt across Warwickshire's roads. Each run covered approximately 1,100 miles so more than 12,100 miles were treated in six days.

Storm Goretti brought challenging conditions, prompting snow ploughs to be fitted to gritters for the first time since the 'Beast from the East', in February 2018. During the height of the recent storm, teams carried out four gritting runs within 24 hours, at 1pm, 5pm, 9pm and 1am, using around 1,000 tonnes of salt.

The highways response to the storm involved a significant mobilisation of staff and resources. The operation included 58 gritter drivers, 10 supervisors, 20 plough mates, two county fleet maintenance vehicle technicians and a duty man-

ager, all contributing around 2,200 hours of work. Additional day crews were deployed on Friday as severe conditions continued.

WCC's transport spokesperson, Councillor Jennifer Warren, said: "Storm Goretti tested our winter service teams in some of the most challenging conditions we've seen in years. The commitment shown by our gritter drivers, supervisors, fleet technicians and support staff was exceptional, with crews working around the clock to keep Warwickshire's roads as safe and accessible as possible.

"Fitting ploughs for the first time since 2018 underlines just how severe this weather event was, and I would like to personally thank everyone involved for their professionalism, teamwork and dedication in protecting our communities."



Plenty of grit: Warwickshire's gritting fleet has been praised for its dedication during Storm Goretti. s

GET YOUR COAT: Warm-hearted residents are being urged to donate a coat to Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire.

As part of the charity's winter health campaign, it is calling on the local community to donate winter warmer items to help older people stay warm during the colder months.

Colder weather can make it harder for older people to get out and about, increasing feelings of loneliness and impacting health and well-being. Spending more time at home

also leads to higher energy bills and, combined with the cost-of-living crisis, places extra pressure on those already struggling. An estimated 1.9 million older people across the UK will face this winter in poverty.

Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire spokesperson Kaljit Madahar said: "It's a crisis hiding in plain sight. As costs rise and temperatures fall, many older people are facing winter in the cold. Your donation of a winter warmer item can make an immediate difference to someone in need."



Age UK Coventry and Warwickshire has launched a donate a coat appeal. s

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✉ j.rugg@wcs-care.co.uk



Josephine Rugg

Make 2026 the year of sustainable gardening



New year, new garden: People are being urged to plant for pollinators, such as lavender. s

by **Toby Almond**
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AS PEOPLE try – and often fail – to maintain new year’s resolutions, the British Garden Centres team is conveying an important message about how to improve a space which is often overlooked.

Staff say now is the perfect time for setting nature-friendly goals.

Here are six ways to set green fingers in action and enhance gardens at the same time.

Grow your own, even in small spaces: After years of rising interest in homegrown produce, grow-your-own remains top of the list for 2026.

Even the smallest spaces can grow herbs, salad leaves, and tomatoes as they are easy to nur-

ture and provide a quick, satisfying harvest. Those short on space can make good use of window-sills, balconies and hanging baskets, along with ‘vertical space’ – especially for climbing plants such as peas, cucumbers and cherry tomatoes. People can also try compact crops like chillies, strawberries, radishes or dwarf beans, which thrive in pots.

Make 2026 the year for pollinators: Britain’s gardens are vital habitats for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators yet many species face increasing challenges due to habitat loss and changing weather. Filling beds, pots and borders with nectar-rich favourites such as lavender, salvia, and echinacea makes a difference. Planting for pollinators helps safeguard biodiversity.

Compost more, waste less: This resolution benefits gardens and the planet. Creating com-

post from kitchen scraps and garden cuttings reduces waste while enriching soil naturally.

Most fruit and vegetable peelings, plus teabags, coffee grounds, eggshells, grass clippings, leaves and shredded paper can all be composted at home.

Garden for wellbeing: Eight in 10 UK adults say gardens benefit their physical health, with 85% reporting improvements to their mental wellbeing, according to the Horticultural Trades Association (HTA).

Gardening for 30 minutes, three times per week, can lower blood pressure and improve sleep quality, according to health studies.

Support sustainability by shopping smart: British Garden Centres is expanding its environmentally conscious product range, including peat-free compost, biodegradable pots and eco-friendly pest control solutions.

Small choices add up, and by choosing more sustainable options, gardeners can help protect natural resources and reduce their carbon footprint.

Love your soil: Healthy soil is the secret to every thriving garden and 2026 is the year to give it the attention it deserves.

Soil is alive with millions of microorganisms, fungi and insects that work together to support plant growth and resilience.

Heavy clay soils hold nutrients well but can become compacted, while sandy soils need organic matter to improve water retention.

Adding compost, manure or mulch annually enhances soil texture, introduces beneficial microbes and helps regulate temperature and moisture levels.

To test soil health, look for earthworms and a crumbly texture that signals good structure. Regularly topping up with

organic matter feeds the soil’s ecosystem naturally, reducing reliance on fertilisers, over time.

Gardeners often focus on the plants but success starts beneath the surface.

Improving soil health brings stronger plants, fewer pests and more sustainable growth across gardens.

Julian Palphramand, head of plants at British Garden Centres, said: “January is the ideal time to plan and revitalise your garden, just as you would do by making resolutions for yourself.

“Whether you’re refreshing flower beds, planting your first seeds, or transforming your space into a wildlife haven, make this the year you grow something great.”

Find inspiration online at britishgardencentres.com or visit your nearest garden centre to start the 2026 horticultural journey.

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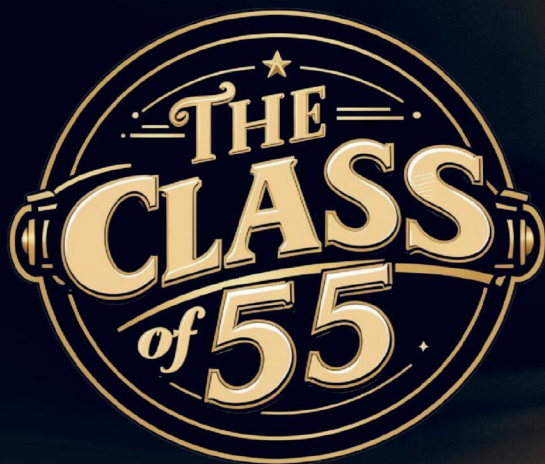
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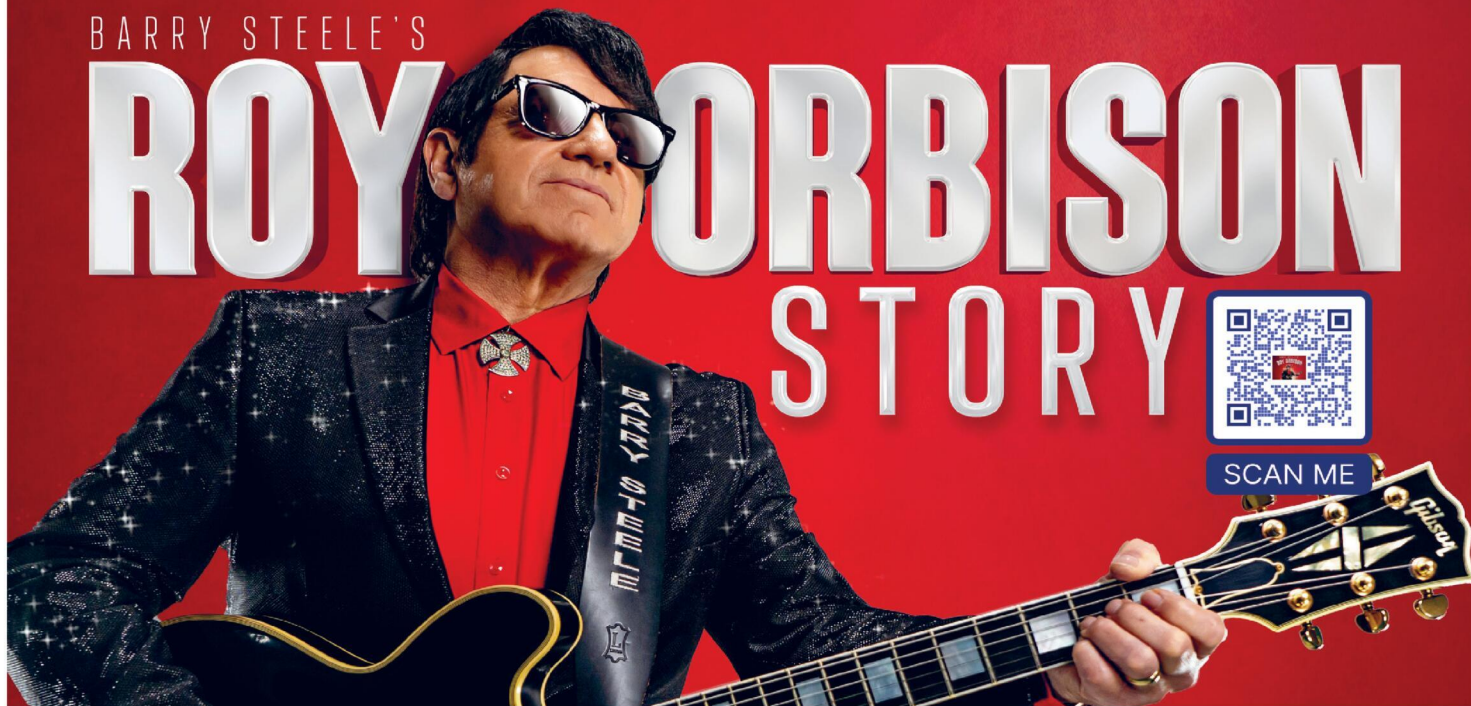
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NHS drive is helping people reduce their risk of type 2 diabetes

The NHS's Healthier You Programme is a clinically proven weight management and lifestyle change initiative. s

by Ashleigh Osborne
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

MORE than 158,000 Midlands have started a specialist NHS scheme to prevent or delay the onset of type 2 diabetes, according to new analysis.

Of those participants, almost 87,000 are in the West Midlands.

The NHS's Healthier You Programme is a clinically proven weight management and lifestyle change initiative, and was one of the world's first diabetes prevention schemes, when launched in 2016.

Nine out of 10 people living with diabetes in England have type 2, which is largely preventable. There

are also around two million people in England each year who are vulnerable to developing type 2 diabetes.

Participants on the nine-month Healthier You Programme receive personalised support – either face-to-face or digitally – with healthier eating, maintaining a healthy weight and keeping physically active.

A review into the programme's effectiveness, by Manchester University, found that completing it reduces someone's chance of developing type 2 diabetes by 37 per cent, with participants achieving an average weight loss of 3.3kg.

Previous estimates have suggested that 5.5 million people in the UK will be living with type 2 diabetes by 2030.

Each year, the NHS in England

typically spends around £10.7 billion on identifying and treating diabetes, according to the latest data.

Dr Clare Hambling, national clinical director for diabetes and obesity at NHS England, said: "This transformative NHS programme is improving the nation's health and empowering people across England to lead healthier lives, which is fantastic."

Concern

"Type 2 diabetes is a growing concern with millions of people affected and, unfortunately, it can increase the risk of major health problems such as heart attack, stroke, amputation, kidney failure and sight loss, as well increasing the risk of certain types of cancer."

"Doing nothing on this major public health challenge is not an option for the NHS so we will continue to develop and roll-out world-leading initiatives such as our Healthier You Programme to help people take action to prevent type 2 diabetes."

The NHS Healthier You Programme is a flexible preventative health scheme and can be performed either in a face-to-face group or as a digital service.

People using the digital service get similar support online and via apps where users can access course content, health coaches, and online peer support groups, and are able to set and monitor goals electronically.

Colette Marshall, chief executive at Diabetes UK, said: "The NHS

Healthier You Diabetes Prevention Programme has a pivotal role to play in tackling the rising number of people developing type 2 diabetes. Diabetes UK is proud to be a partner in this programme, which has helped so many people access life-changing support."

"For those completing the programme, it's possible to reduce their risk of developing type 2 diabetes by more than a third, in turn helping people avoid the serious complications associated with the condition."

"The first step is knowing your risk. Diabetes UK's free, online Know Your Risk tool is a great place to start. By answering a few simple questions, you can find out your personal risk of type 2 diabetes and how to lower it."

Browse the Winter Edition of Seasons

As winter's chill begins to settle across our three counties, there's a certain kind of beauty that only this time of year brings.

This, then, feels like the perfect moment to launch **'Seasons'** – our brand-new glossy magazine, created to celebrate the people, places, and stories that make Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the West Midlands such a wonderful part of the world

Pick up a copy locally for free, or simply browse on line
www.seasons-magazine.com

Each quarter, Seasons will follow the rhythm of the year – from the crisp calm of winter to the first buds of spring, the brightness of summer and the richness of autumn – highlighting the very best of local life, from independent shops and community ventures to countryside walks, home inspiration, and hidden gems worth discovering.

Our first Winter edition is all about warmth – in every sense of the word. You'll find features that reflect the spirit of the season: comforting food, inspiring people, caring places, and ways to make the cold months glow with local charm.

This magazine is for you – our readers, neighbours and local businesses – and we can't wait to share the year ahead with you, one beautiful season at a time.

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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

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

HARD

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

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.

Puppets

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

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	

ACROSS

- 6. Endanger (7)
- 7. Coach (5)
- 9. Smooth (5)
- 10. Please (7)
- 12. Disorder (11)
- 14. Mercury (11)
- 18. Accept (7)
- 19. Hoard (5)
- 21. Cut (5)
- 22. Weakness (7)

DOWN

- 1. Signify (5)
- 2. Erase (6)
- 3. Concealed (3)
- 4. Habit (6)
- 5. Enclose (7)
- 8. Squirm (7)
- 11. Inert (7)
- 13. Calm (7)
- 15. Gifted (6)
- 16. Involve (6)
- 17. Veracity (5)
- 20. Weep (3)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Masculine
- Auction
- Singular
- Vended
- Precious element



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.

- 415339 gives wine;
- 875 gives beer;
- 1264 gives a beer ingredient.

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

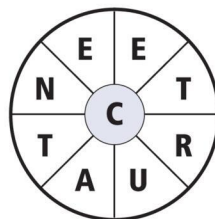
CODEWORD

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.

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

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.

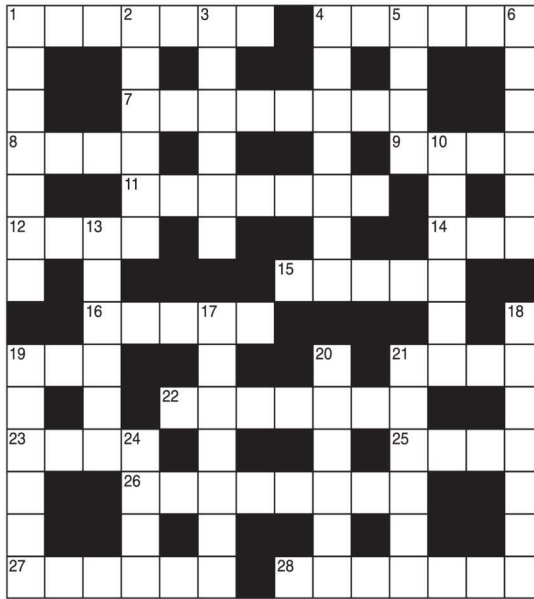


How you rate
 20 words: average
 30 words: good
 40 words: very good
 50 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Surname assumed by the British royal house since 1917 (7)
4. Seclusion of women practised by some Islamic and Hindu peoples (6)
7. In biology, an occurrence of a new form differing from its parents (8)
8. A sunken fence bounding a garden, etc. (2-2)
9. In mythology, Norse god after whom Thursday is named (4)
11. Old musical instrument like a trombone (7)
12. Piece of crisp-baked bread (4)
14. A solemn promise or pledge (3)
15. Animal life of a region (5)
16. Kind of card game (5)
19. Fish closely related to the skate (3)
21. The female of an equine animal (4)
22. Territory of a country lying wholly within another (7)
23. In history, a Conservative (4)
25. Tailless, froglike amphibian (4)
26. Oxford and Cambridge (8)
- 27 and 28. Zoologist, author of My Family And Other Animals (6,7)



DOWN

1. Ridge between the shoulder blades of a horse (7)
2. Reversible, figured fabric of silk, linen, etc. (6)
3. The science of sight (6)
4. Plant genus including polyanthus and primrose (7)
5. The smallest of a litter (4)
6. Public school founded by John Lyon in 1572 (6)
10. Cigar of Cuban tobacco (6)
13. "The Adventures of Tom —", a novel by Mark Twain (6)
17. "The Sailor", hero of a tale in the "Arabian Nights" (7)
18. Plant's slender shoot by which it clings for support (7)

19. Sailor who is not an officer (6)
20. Four-wheeled, horse-drawn carriage with folding hood (6)
21. Small, solid body, becoming luminous when entering the earth's atmosphere (6)
24. Hindu system of meditation, as a means of attaining union with the Supreme Spirit (4)

SOLUTIONS

ACROSS: 1 Windsor; 4 Purdah; 7 Mutation; 8 Ha-ha; 9 Thor; 11 Sackbut; 12 Rusk; 14 Yow; 15 Fauna; 16 Whist; 19 Ray; 21 Mare; 22 Endave; 23 Tony; 25 Toad; 26 Oxbridge; 27 Gerald; 28 Durrell. DOWN: 1 Withers; 2 Damask; 3 Optics; 4 Pmula; 5 Runt; 6 Harrow; 10 Havana; 13 Sawyer; 17 Sindh; 18 Tendril; 19 Rating; 20 Landau; 21 Meteor; 24 Yoga.

General Knowledge Crossword
 ACROSS: 6 Impert; 7 Tutor; 9 Sleek; 10 Gratty; 12 Deangement; 14 Quicksilver; 18 Receive; 19 Store; 21 Sever; 22 Frailty; Down: 1 Imply; 2 Delete; 3 Hid; 4 Custom; 5 Confine; 8 Wriggle; 11 Passive; 13 Quieten; 15 Clever; 16 Enrall; 17 Truth; 20 Cry.

Crossword
 HORSEPLAY
 Paddy Woodentop, Gordon the Gopher
 Captain Troy Tempest, Bungle, Ollie the Ardvardk, Fozzie Bear,
 the Grouch, Miss Piggy, Scott Tracy, Roland Rat, Muffin the Mule,
 Fingerhouse, Kermit the Frog, Basil Brush, Lady Penelope, Oscar
 UTTERANCE
 Cooke Monsters, Captain Scarlet, Edd the Duck, Andy Pandly

Wordwheel Pathfinder
 24=A, 25=B, 26=N
 17=R, 18=L, 19=Q, 20=P, 21=O, 22=T, 23=X,
 10=A, 11=U, 12=L, 13=Y, 14=W, 15=E, 16=C,
 1=G, 2=Y, 3=F, 4=H, 5=S, 6=K, 7=D, 8=Z, 9=M,
 Make, Male, Sale, Sole, Sold,
 Gold, Good.

Ladder Codeword

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

Hard

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

Easy



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Classified

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:
RUGBY ROAD, BLUE BOAR, DUNCHURCH
Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from A45 London Road slip road to A4071 Blue Boar Flyover junction.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-17.00hrs.
Order Commences: 25 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 25 January 2026.
Access & Diversion: A45 London Road east bound d/c, A45 London Road west bound d/c, A4071 Straight Mile, A4071 Blue Boar Flyover, A4071 Rugby Road, A4071 Coventry Road, A4071 Rugby Wester Relief Road, A428 Lawford Road, A428 Rugby Road, A428 Coventry Road, Lawford Heath Lane, Coalpit Lane (locally known as Lawford Heath Lane) and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.
BATH STREET, TOM BROWN STREET & MARKET STREET, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To enable replacement/repair of defective manhole cover and frames.
Order Commences: 29 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 29 January 2026.
Access & Diversion: Railway Terrace, Craven Road, Murray Road, Whitehall Road, Clifton Road and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 298 599.
FARM LANE, EASENHALL
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Langdon House to Apple Tree Farm.
Reason for Order: To enable duct laying works.
Order Commences: 26 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 30 January 2026.
Access & Diversion: No diversion available.
Contractor: Callian Connect, Tel: 01213 275 167.
EDVYAN CLOSE, OVERSLADE, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable works to lay duct in carriageway.
Order Commences: 27 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 29 January 2026.
Access & Diversion: No diversion available.
Contractor: Quantum Traffic Management, Tel: 01724 786 286.
WEST LEYES, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To enable repair/replacement of defective manhole frames and covers.
Order Commences: 28 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 28 January 2026.
Access & Diversion: No diversion available.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 298 599.
Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:
CONSUL ROAD, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of manhole frame and covers.
Order Commences: 8 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 8 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Giebe Farm Road, Old Leicester Road, Brownover Road, Leicester Road and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.
C34 FRANKTON LANE, STRETTON ON DUNSMORE
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Fosse Way to Princethorpe Road.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-18.00hrs.
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 13 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: B4455 Fosse Way, B4453 (Rugby Road, Princethorpe Road) and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.
C88 LAWFORD LANE, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Main Street/Coventry Road to Calvestone Road.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.00hrs.
Order Commences: 11 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 13 February 2026.

Access & Diversion: Calvestone Road, B4642 Coventry Road and vice versa.
Access/egress: to/from Frobishier Road and Nelson Way to be via Addison Road direction only whilst works are in progress. Access/egress to/from Cheshire Close and Winwick Place may be restricted whilst works are in progress.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.
D3584 NELSON WAY, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from Lawford Lane to Wheatfield Road/Blackwood Avenue.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 10 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Lawford Lane, Frobishier Road, Freemantle Road, Blackwood Avenue and vice versa.
Access/egress: to/from Ditton Close, Franklin Close, Queensberry Close, Montgomery Drive, Plover Close and Holyoak Close may be restricted whilst works are in progress.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.
REGENT STREET, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic and temporary suspension of turn from Church Street onto Regent Street.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the undertaking of a high-level roof and building survey.
Order Commences: 8 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 8 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Church Street, North Street, Park Road, Regent Place, Albert Street, Bank Street and vice versa.
Contractor: Paragon TM Ltd, Tel: 08006 980 267.
MAIN STREET, WILLEY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of a manhole frame and cover.
Order Commences: 10 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 10 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Coal Pit Lane, Watling Street, 45 and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.
HOLBROOK AVENUE, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic near 86 Holbrook Avenue.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of a manhole frame and cover.
Order Commences: 10 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 10 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Park Road, Manor Road and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.
ST EDITHS CLOSE, MONKS KIRBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from the junction on Bond End to outside number 9, St Ediths Close.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the renewal of approximately 80m of water mains within the carriageway and verge, plus other essential works to ensure complete reinstatement of water supply.
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 8 March 2026.
Access & Diversion: No diversion is available.
Contractor: Severn Trent Water, Tel: 0800 783 444.
HUDSON ROAD, RUGBY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic to junction with Marlborough Road.
Reason for Order: To safely enable pipe repairs.
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 11 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Hudson Road, St Annes Road, Lytham Road, Marlborough Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Chevron TM Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.
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 22 Jan 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003
 Notice is hereby given that **Phil Rooney of DCB EMPIRE LTD** has applied to Coventry City Council for a Variation Premises Licence for **hmv Empire Coventry, 22 Hertford Street, CV1 1LF**
Details of Application: Layout change to premises. 2 Temporary EMX staircases leading from hmv Empire's East balcony onto Hertford Street
 Any person wishing to lodge a representation concerning this application may write to: Licensing Authority, Coventry City Council, PO Box 7097, Coventry CV6 9SL. 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 **Midnight on 9th February 2026**.
 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.

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council
ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council has made the following Temporary Traffic Orders:
C64 CHURCH LANE, CORLEY
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between its junctions with Stonehouse Lane and Tamworth Road.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 26 January 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 30 January 2026.
Access & Diversion: Common Lane, Wall Hill Road, B4102 Meriden Road, B4098 Coventry Road, Tamworth Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 4715 302.
 For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.
To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.
S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 22 Jan 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

Department for Transport
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
 The Secretary of State gives notice of an Order made under Section 247 of the above Act entitled "The Stopping up of Highway (West Midlands) (No.2) Order 2026" authorising the stopping up of a southern part width of Hermes Crescent at Henley Green in the City of Coventry. This is to enable development as permitted by Coventry City Council under references R/2008/1801 and PL/2024/0001129/RESM.
 Copies of the Order may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State, National Transport Casework Team, PO Box 1393, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 5FQ or nationalcasework@dtf.gov.uk (quoting SU0451307). They may also be inspected during normal opening hours at Coventry City Council, Highways Development Control, City Services, Floor 8, One Friargate, Coventry, CV1 2GN.
 Any person who wishes to challenge the validity of the decision to make the Order may apply to the High Court within 6 weeks from 23 January 2026.
N Crass, Casework Manager

PUBLIC NOTICES

LICENSING ACT 2003
NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR (GRANT/PROVISIONAL STATEMENT) OF A PREMISES LICENCE/CLUB PREMISES CERTIFICATE
 Notice is given that on 16/01/2026, **SNS D&G Rugby Ltd** applied to Rugby Borough Council for Grant of a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003 for **Donor & Gyros, 10 Church Street, Rugby, CV21 3PH**.
 The licensable activities/qualifying club activities are: **Late Night Refreshment, Mon-Sun 2300-0200**
 Anyone who wishes to make representations regarding this application must give notice in writing to: Head of Environmental Services, Rugby Borough Council, Town Hall, Rugby, CV21 2RR.
 Representations must be received no later than **13/02/2026**.
 The Licensing Authority's Register may be viewed during normal office hours at the above address.
 It is an offence under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for the offence is up to level 5 on the standard scale (unlimited).

PUBLIC NOTICES

Department for Transport
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990
 The Secretary of State gives notice of an Order made under Section 247 of the above Act entitled "The Stopping up of Highway (West Midlands) (No.3) Order 2026" authorising the stopping up of an irregular shaped area of highway to the east of Castle Mound Way at Rugby in the Borough of Rugby. This is to enable development as permitted by Rugby Borough Council under reference R20/0551.
 Copies of the Order may be obtained, free of charge, from the Secretary of State, National Transport Casework Team, PO Box 1393, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE99 5FQ or nationalcasework@dtf.gov.uk (quoting NATTRAM/WMS247/6110). They may also be inspected during normal opening hours at Rugby Borough Council, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR.
 Any person who wishes to challenge the validity of the decision to make the Order may apply to the High Court within 6 weeks from 23 January 2026.
N Crass, Casework Manager

PUBLIC NOTICES

RICHARD LOCKLEY (Deceased)
 Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of The White House, Bell Street, Claybrooke Magna, Lutterworth, LE17 5AL, who died on 14/09/2024, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 24/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.
Josiah Hincks Solicitors,
 The Manse, 22 De Montfort Street, Leicester, LE1 7GB

PUBLIC NOTICES

ELIZABETH ANNE ALEXANDER (Deceased)
 Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the above named, late of 1 Clarendon House, Lillington Avenue, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, CV32 5DQ, who died on 01/11/2025, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 24/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.
LLOYDS BANK PLC,
 PO Box 5005, Lancing, BN99 8AZ

PUBLIC NOTICES

Rugby Borough Council
Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Application Number R25/0394
2, CHURCH STREET, RUGBY, CV21 3PH
 Change Of Use of First Floor Offices to 1 Bed Flat & proposed ground floor rear extension and associated staircases.
This development may affect a Conservation Area
Application Number R25/1099
5, HIGH STREET, RUGBY, CV21 3BG
 Proposed change of use of part of the first floor and second floor from shop storage area to residential.
This development may affect a Conservation Area
Application Number R25/1123
UNIT A-B, VALLEY DRIVE, RUGBY, CV21 1TN
 Proposed full refurbishment of the office space and a partial refurbishment of the warehouse. Comprising provision of external plant/equipment and repainting and maintenance of external facade.
This is a major development
Application Number R26/0023
H M PRISON SERVICE COLLEGE, NEWBOLD REVEL ROAD, STRETTON UNDER FOSSE, RUGBY, CV23 0TH
 Re-roofing of a residential block adjacent to a listed building
This development may affect a Listed Building
 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 13 February 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.gov.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

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However in-house training would be made available for any candidate who believes they have a good level of expertise in other areas of woodworking, an understanding of maths and a keen eye for detail.

These are permanent, full-time (39 hours per week) positions based at our manufactory in Brixworth, Northamptonshire.

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Please apply to Richard Wilson-Hart, Mould Shop Manager at: richardwh@haddonstone.co.uk



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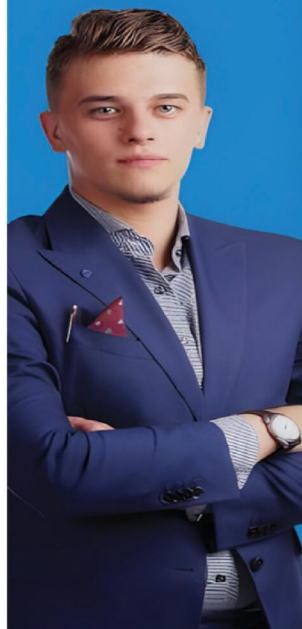
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We are looking to recruit Sales Account Managers for a number of our titles spanning Warwickshire, Worcestershire and West Midlands.

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Esse 'grateful' for Sky Blues chance

ROMAIN Esse could not hide his delight after scoring a 'special' first Coventry City goal against former club Millwall in midweek.

The on-loan Crystal Palace winger scored on 11 minutes to put the Sky Blues ahead at the Coventry Building Society Arena.

Esse found the net in just his third appearance for the club, after hitting the post in Coventry's M69 derby win against Leicester City last weekend.

And the 20-year-old thanked Sky Blues boss Frank Lampard for allowing him to express himself on the pitch following a frustrating first half of the campaign at his parent club.

Esse said: "It felt amazing. It's a moment that was very special to me.

"We won the game which was the main goal but I'm happy to get my first goal for the Sky Blues.

"It was strange [scoring against Millwall]. I respect Millwall a lot for how they helped me grow from a boy to a man.

"Celebrating against them isn't the best but it's been a difficult period for me, not playing a lot [at Crystal Palace].

"Being giving a chance from the gaffer here and expressing myself and getting my first goal felt very good.

"After hitting the post [against Leicester] I was thinking 'when is my goal going to come?'

"But I'm delighted to get my goal and I want to keep going now."

The Sky Blues needed another late goal from Haji Wright to take the three points after Mihailo Ivanovic drew the visitors level just before the half-hour mark.

And Esse believes the home side's collective character on the pitch helped Coventry battle to another hard-fought victory.

Esse added: "I just want to kick on, keep working hard and delivering the three points for the team.

"We've got a strong bunch of lads and the [collective] character shows in the game.

"We're very close to each other. Whenever we need to get through something, we always manage.

"That's dedicated to the manager and the staff who set certain principles which we all abide by and it shows on the pitch."

Young City striker departs club for QPR

FRANK Lampard felt it was the right time for young striker Justin Obikwu to depart Coventry City and take the next step in his career.

The Sky Blues sold Obikwu to Championship rivals Queens Park Rangers for an undisclosed fee earlier this week.

That came after Coventry recalled Obikwu from his loan spell at League One high-flyers Lincoln City in order to facilitate his move to Loftus Road.

Obikwu scored three goals in 21 appearances for Lincoln and also enjoyed two loan spells at Grimsby Town in the 2023/24 and 2024/25 seasons.

The 21-year-old signed his first professional deal with the club in 2023 but never made a senior appearance for the Sky Blues.

And while Lampard believes Obikwu has good attributes to lead the line, the Sky Blues boss feels the move makes sense for both the player and the club.

Lampard said: "We think [it was the right timing]. I think it is good business.

"He's a good lad

Justin. He came in to say his goodbyes, he's a polite boy.

"He's had a different pathway as a player and he's got nice attributes as a striker.

"He hasn't always played on loan at Lincoln this season. He's dipped his toe in the water with playing.

"We wish him the best. Sometimes it feels like the right time for the player and the club.

"He's a talented boy and he's going to the next stage of the career.

"We have to make decisions about what effects us in the short term and a bit longer term."

Coventry play Obikwu's news, QPR, in the Championship at the end of the month.

And Lampard believes Obikwu is free to play against the Sky Blues with no clause inserted into the deal that would prevent the striker from taking part in the fixture.

Lampard added: "I presume [he can play against us].

"I'm not aware of a clause and I think it would have gone through me if there was one."

Historic FA Vase run continues as United put six past Oadby

by Aaron Sutcliffe
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FOOTBALL: COVENTRY United assistant manager Luke Morton says the club are 'over the moon' after reaching the fifth round of the FA Vase for the first time in their history.

The Red and Greens romped to a 6-0 victory against United Counties League Premier Division South rivals GNG Oadby Town in the fourth round tie at Butts Park Arena.

A brace from Ryan Harkin and further goals from Cameron Dunn, Charlie Faulkner, Benji Adomako and Nehemia Zazi helped United equal their biggest-ever win in the competition.

And Coventry boss Terry Anderson hopes the club's historic run in the FA Vase can aid his side's push for a play-off place in the league.

Anderson said: "It's a great day for the club and I'm very proud of the lads.

"But we haven't won anything. We've got to the next round and then there's another round and we've got to go and win that.

"We're in the hat. We're fighting on two fronts, we've got to try and get to the play-offs [in the league] which is a big aim for the club.

"The Vase run is something special and hopefully we can continue the way we are and do both. We're going to keep trying.

"We played really well in the end, we were very slow to get out of the blocks but we put them to the sword really.

"It's a convincing win, we were just better on the day."

Coventry took the lead when Faulkner squared the ball across the box to Harkin who finished into an empty net from eight-yards out.

And United doubled their advantage as Dunn received a pass 20-yards from goal and lashed a stunning effort into the bottom right corner.

Coventry added a third goal before the break as Harkin headed in his second of the game from six-yards out from Danny Fraser's cross



Luke Morton (left) and Terry Anderson (right) have guided Coventry United to the fifth round of the FA Vase.

from the left.

United all but sealed their place in the next round of the competition after the break when Faulkner raced onto a loose ball in the box and coolly slipped a shot past the Oadby goalkeeper from close range.

The hosts made it five when substitute Benji Adomako drove into the box and lashed a shot into the roof of the net and beyond the goalkeeper at his near post from the left-hand side of the box.

And United added a sixth goal when Adomako delivered a low ball into the box from the right and substitute Zazi finished into the bottom left corner from close range.

The management team of Anderson and his assistant manager Luke Morton previously took charge of Coventry for more than five years from 2016 to 2021.

Anderson returned to the club as manager in November last year while Morton formed part of the club's interim coaching team at the start of the campaign.

And now assistant boss Morton insists Coventry do not fear of any of the teams left in the FA Vase this season and backed his players to match anyone on their day.

Morton added: "We're over the moon. We're

through to the last 16 for the first time.

"We asked everything of the lads and they gave everything so we're over the moon.

"Even though we were three-nil up, we thought we were miles off it. We were nowhere near where we should be [performance wise].

"Terry gave them a dressing down which they deserved. The lads took it on the chin and Terry told them some home truths.

"And all credit to the lads, we were much better in the second half.

"We'll take anyone on in the next round as long as we're at home.

"We're not scared of anyone. We're not cocky, we're not arrogant, we're just not scared of anyone.

"If we play to our ability on our day, we'll give anyone a game."

Coventry will play former winners North Shields in the fifth round of the FA Vase.

The Red and Greens will host North Shields at Butts Park Arena on Saturday, February 7.

North Shields won the competition back in 2015 after beating Glossop North End 2-1 in the final at Wembley after extra time.

The Robins also ply their trade at Step Five in Division One of the Northern Football League which is at the same level as Coventry.

Blaze avenge Stars defeat before Glasgow victory



ICE HOCKEY: COVENTRY Blaze avenged their recent defeat against Dundee Stars and also beat Glasgow Clan on home ice in a four-point weekend.

Blaze won 5-2 at Dundee Ice Arena as both Elijah Barriga and Adam Robbins scored braces while William Boysen also found the net in Scotland.

And Coventry then won 4-1 against Glasgow at the Skydome to celebrate a four-point weekend.

Coventry came from behind to beat Dundee as Stars netminder Emil Kruse made a desperate stop to deny Matthew

Gleason in the first 20 seconds.

Blaze then failed to capitalise on a three-on-zero break soon after before Dundee opened the scoring at 13.54 when the puck fell kindly to Craig Garrigan who duly broke the deadlock.

However, the visitors equalised at 18.02 as Robbins tapped home after Grant Mismash's initial effort trickled through Kruse.

After both teams spurned powerplay chances, Coventry eventually took the lead at 36.10 when Barriga crashed a shot into the net to score against his former club.

And Blaze extended their lead at 38.25 as Boysen hammered a one-timer past Kruse on the powerplay.

Dundee pulled a goal back early in the third period at 41.02 when Matthew Boudens scored on the rebound after Mat Robson made an initial save.

However, Barriga scored for a second time against his old side at 49.47 on a breakaway as he slid the puck through Kruse's legs.

And Robbins sealed victory for Blaze at 53.13 with his second of the game as he finished off a flowing passing move.

Coventry then secured victory against Glasgow on home ice to extend their unbeaten run in regulation time to eight matches.

Blaze broke the deadlock at 13.30 when Artie Buzoverya raced onto Jordan Power's perfectly-weighted feed and feinted past Lucas Brine before sliding the puck into the net.

And the hosts doubled their lead at 16.43 as Jack Hopkins produced a clinical finish from Alessio Luciani's wraparound pass.

Glasgow halved the deficit in the second period at 26.08 when Hugo Roy rounced on a rebound from Daniel Tedesco's initial effort to score on the powerplay.

Coventry killed another penalty soon after and restored their two-goal cushion at 34.31 as Mismash rifled a one-timer past Brine from a face-off on the powerplay.

The home side sealed the points at 52.35 when Grayson Constable finished off a well-worked more to score his eighth goal of the season.

Coventry are next in action against Glasgow on Friday, January 23 with the face-off at 7.30pm at Braehead Arena.

Blaze then host Fife Flyers on Sunday, January 25 with the face-off at 5.30pm at the Skydome.

Jack Hopkins found the net for Blaze against Glasgow Clan. Picture by Scott Wiggins.

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

Valley in stalemate after penalty save

by Aaron Sutcliffe
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FOOTBALL: GRANT Joshua wants Rugby Town to find their 'cutting edge' following a goalless draw against Boldmere St Michaels last weekend.

An injury-time penalty save from Valley goalkeeper Marcus Bald ensured the visitors came away from the Amber Arena with a point.

Rugby sit just two points above the Northern Premier League Midlands relegation zone.

And Joshua insists Valley must find their cutting edge soon after failing to score in any of their last



three league matches.

Joshua said: "We take the point and move on, but I'm really encouraged.

"We were aggressive without the ball, and didn't let in-form opposition dictate the game.

"We looked hungry and more confident in possession. It's just about finding that cutting edge now.

"I couldn't be happier for Marcus. It should give him huge confidence.

"He's had a lot to deal with over the past month and that double save was outstanding."

Bald kept his place in the side despite the club signing goalkeeper Xander Grieves on a work-experience loan from Wolverhampton Wanderers.

Grieves picked up a knee injury in training which allowed Bald to retain the gloves as he atoned for his errors in recent matches.

Bald saved Danny O'Callaghan's injury-time spot kick and subsequent follow-up attempt to ensure the game ended goalless.

Rugby are next in action against Lichfield City on Saturday, January 24 with kick-off at 3pm at Butlin Road.

Borough appoint Bishop to lead club's pathway

RUGBY Borough have appointed Stu Bishop as the club's football and education lead for the 2026/27 season.

Bishop has spent the past 13 years with Borough and will work alongside current interim Leamington boss Chris Knott.

Knott will support the programme with a focus on post 16 to 19-years-old recruitment.

Bishop's remit is to create and oversee a side which will compete in the Midland Floodlit League.

He will also manage the mid-week Future Lions fixtures and will lead the recruitment and setup of a development team to run alongside the first team.

The development team will play in the Leicestershire Senior League.

Bishop said: "I'm absolutely delighted to take on this role.

"Rugby Borough has been my home for 13 years, and I'm proud to help shape the future of our football and education pathway.

"The interest we've already had is fantastic, and I can't wait to get started."

Knott added: "It's great to be working with Stu on this project.

"The vision for the 16 to 19 programme and the development pathway is very exciting, and I'm looking forward to helping bring in the right players to make it a success.

On the pitch, Borough started the year with back-to-back derby defeats after losing 2-0 at home against bottom club Bedworth United.

Goals from Bryan Kohyrelon and Samson Hewett after the break condemned Borough to defeat at Kilsby Lane while the visitors finished the game with 10-men after George Dunkley was sent off at the death.

Rugby are next in action against Colehill Town on Saturday, January 24 with kick-off at 3pm at Pack Meadow.

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