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Charity on the move

THE MYTON Hospices is geared up for its popular Donation Drive Thru events.

These provide a quick and simple way to donate unwanted items, allowing supporters to drive up, receive help unloading donations, and drive away again in under five minutes.

There are no parking fees, no hassle, and friendly assistance is available throughout, all while supporting the work of the local hospice.

Hosted at The Myton Hospices in Coventry, Rugby and Warwick, previous Donation Drive Thru events have seen hundreds of generous donations to help fund hospice care.

Upcoming Donation Drive Thru

dates take place at Warwick Myton Hospice (CV34 6PX), on Saturday February 21 and Wednesday March 18, both from 10am to 1pm; Coventry Myton Hospice (CV2 2HJ) on Saturday February 7 and Saturday April 25, also between 10am and 1pm; and Rugby Myton Support Hub (CV22 5PY) on Saturday January 24 and Saturday April 11, between 10am and noon both days.

Visit www.mytonhospice.org/Drive for further information and booking details.

The Myton Hospices is gearing up for the return of its Donation Drive Thrus.

Stats show ambulance crews cutting times

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

AMBULANCES are reaching emergencies in Warwickshire more quickly than they were a year ago, new figures show.

Ambulances in the county are responding to Category 2 incidents like heart attacks and strokes in 25 minutes on average – down from 39 minutes last year.

The improvement follows new

government investment in emergency care, with an additional \$450million announced through the 2025-26 emergency care plan.

The analysis follows news last week that waiting lists at Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust have fallen by 3,632 since the last general election in 2024.

While Category 2 ambulance response times in Warwickshire have improved, more investment is planned to bring them down to the target time of 18 minutes.

Rugby MP John Slinger said: "Labour is working hard to get our NHS back on its feet here in Rugby, Bulkington and the Villages and right across the country - and we see that change in faster ambulance responses, higher GP satisfaction, falling waiting lists, and shorter waits at A&E.

"The simple fact is that quicker ambulance times like these mean better outcomes for people in Rugby and it is something I know constituents have been concerned about.

"I am glad to be a part of the government making these improvements that will greatly benefit people right here in Rugby. This is lifesaving care arriving faster."

"For too long, patients were promised change in the NHS but saw little of it. This Labour government has started to turn that around.

"Waiting lists are now down by more than 312,000 since we came into office, despite record numbers of people coming forward for treat-

ment. GP satisfaction is up. And A&E waits are down.

"This has only been achieved with our record investment alongside real modernisation of the NHS, and the hard work of staff right across the country. More evening and weekend appointments. Tests closer to home. Surgical hubs cutting backlogs. Specialist 'crack teams' to get through surgeries quicker. Millions more GP appointments. And smarter use of technology."

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Crowdfunder bids to ensure it's not the final call for iconic bird species

A crowdfunding campaign aims to save the curlew from disappearing from the Warwickshire countryside. Picture by Mark Hunter. s

by Ian Hughes
ian.hughes@bullivantmedia.com

CURLEWS are in danger of vanishing from the Warwickshire countryside.

There are fears that without urgent intervention, the wading bird, and its distinctive call, will become locally extinct. As recently as 2004 there were still 25 pairs in Warwickshire but this year only five pairs were found – all in south Warwickshire.

A fundraising campaign to help save curlews has been launched across Warwickshire, led by two environmental charities from neighbouring Oxfordshire.

The Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and Wild Oxfordshire are aiming to raise £50,000 to fund a recovery project for curlews across the upper Thames, which includes south Warwickshire.

Curlews are ground-nesting birds and their eggs and newly-hatched chicks are particularly vulnerable. Across the UK, the population has

halved in the past 25 years and they are now a 'red list' species at urgent risk of extinction. That has largely been driven by loss of wetland and meadow habitat, intensive agricultural practices and predation from animals such as foxes and crows.

The upper Thames is home to 10 per cent of the UK's lowland breeding curlews. To protect this important population, volunteers from charities, and farmers, have formed the Curlew Partnership, led by Wild Oxfordshire. Over the past five years, the partnership has protected 110 nests using temporary electric fencing, resulting in a 74 per cent hatching success rate – compared to the national average of 25 per cent. Thanks to those efforts, 61 young curlews have successfully fledged.

A crowdfunder has been launched to scale up the efforts of the Curlew Partnership.

The funds will enable the volunteers to locate and protect more nests and for Wild Oxfordshire to employ a coordinator to work alongside farmers and volunteers to manage the land for the benefit of the breeding curlew.

Every pound donated to the campaign is match-funded by the British Airways Better World Community Fund and the Aviva Community Fund.

Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment has already matched £10,000 of public donations, enabling the campaign to exceed its initial target of £25,000 and to aspire to extend the project for a further year by aiming for £50,000.

Rosemary Collier, who volunteers to help curlews in south Warwickshire, said: "We are rapidly running out of time keep this iconic species in our county and to do our bit to ensure its survival across

the UK. We want generations to come to hear the amazing sound of the curlew across the meadowlands and wetlands of Warwickshire, and we're grateful to everyone who is able to contribute to our crowdfunder.

"We are asking everyone to donate to help us achieve our goal. There are some great rewards for donors, on top of the knowledge that the curlews may yet survive. Fundraising so far has been through press and social media, and the Banbury Ornithological Society are arranging some in-person events in Cropredy and Tysoe to engage even more of the residents local to where the curlew breed, to get involved."

More information on the events can be found on the crowdfunder page, where donations can also be made. Visit www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/help-us-save-the-last-curlews-of-the-upper-thames.



Candlemas Light Journey

Candlemas comes forty days after Christmas, when Mary and Joseph brought the newborn Jesus to the Temple and he was recognised as a light for all people.

It marks the moment when the brightness of Christmas meets the reality of life ahead – light shining in the midst of everyday things.

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Boxing clever to give birds and bats shelter

KENILWORTH Castle is preparing to welcome some very small, but important new residents.

Some 33 bird and bat boxes will support wildlife at the historic site.

The boxes are designed to attract species including robins, treecreepers, owls and bats, alongside other birds that need safe, sheltered nesting spaces.

Woodland around old stone buildings such as Kenilworth Castle can be rich in insects and natural cavities, making it an ideal habitat and additional nesting sites can make a crucial difference, particularly during breeding season.

The former royal fortress and grand palace is valuable for birds hunting at the water's edge and bats roosting in crevices after dusk.

Early spring is an important time for conservation. Many birds begin scouting for nesting sites and bats are emerging more frequently as temperatures rise and insects become more abundant.

Secure boxes enable the animals to settle before breeding.

The project at Kenilworth Castle also highlights what people can do closer to home. Garden bird boxes, placed on walls or trees and ideally facing north or east and away from strong sunlight, can encourage small birds to nest. Leaving garden areas slightly wild, with logs, leaf piles or native plants, supports insects birds and bats rely on.

Avoiding pesticides, keeping ponds topped up and planting hedgerows or flowering shrubs can all create wildlife havens.

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Jayne's life-saving Euro odyssey to help Ukraine

by **Andy Morris**
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'TURNING generosity and courage into life-saving action' – that is the driving force behind a Yelvertoft woman's plan to go on an extraordinary mission to Ukraine.

Next month, Jayne Wheat will drive a 4x4 pickup truck 1,300 miles across seven countries over four days and directly into war-torn Ukraine, where the vehicle will go on to save lives within days.

She will join a convoy of volunteers delivering evacuation vehicles to Ukrainian frontlines, as part of charity Driving Ukraine's initiative to fill Lviv town square with medevac vehicles, and love, on St Valentine's Day.

The 4x4 will be handed to veteran-run Driving Ukraine's workshop, where it will be hardened for frontline service and used by medics to evacuate the wounded.

Jayne has been invited to the town hall by the mayor of Lviv.

She said: "My husband and I fell in love with Ukraine and its people when we visited Kyiv and Chernobyl in September 2019. We promised we would return as soon as possible. Unfortunately, Covid struck and put a stop to that dream.

"As we were planning a longer trip to Ukraine, Russia invaded. With tears in our eyes we vowed to help in

any way we could. We collected aid, worked in a large distribution centre and offered a peaceful, quiet life to a Ukrainian refugee."

On Christmas Eve 2022, the couple left their home in a large transit van full of humanitarian aid and headed for a refugee centre on the Polish-Ukrainian border, picking up a Ukrainian refugee in Towcester on the way.

Jayne said: "Olef had broken down in Germany and left his Toyota Hilux – packed with very expensive, high-end medical supplies destined for the front line – in a car yard owned by Armenians.

"On Christmas Day, at 8pm, we arrived, having collected Olef's life-saving medical supplies en route.

"The gravity of the situation couldn't have hit us any harder the following morning when we walked into the dining room to be met with some 50 women and children who had fled their homes.

"When we returned to England, I promised I would make return journeys to Ukraine to help in any way I could."

Jayne started working for Driving Ukraine, writing press releases about volunteer drivers and their experiences.

She added: "Through reading each volunteer's story, and their experience of the gruelling but worthwhile trip – and by taking short road trips moving medevac vehicles around the UK – the desire to join one of the

amazing convoys has been uppermost in my plans for 2026."

Since the invasion in 2022, Driving Ukraine has mobilised more than 1,600 volunteers, completed 52 convoys and delivered 282 vehicles, raising more than £1.8million to support medical evacuation efforts.

Ukrainian medic Denys said: "These vehicles represent more than just four wheels to us – they're a chance, a lifeline. If I get wounded, these vehicles will be my ambulance."

In Ukraine, an evacuation attempt is made every nine minutes. Without fast, all-terrain, reliable vehicles, casualties often don't survive.

The Driving Ukraine convoys are driven by volunteers from all walks of life. A recent convoy featured a firefighter, a dental nurse and a retired RAF mechanic.

Driving Ukraine founder Fynn Watt said: "It felt like the best of Great Britain. Just people turning up to help. Since the beginning, Driving Ukraine has been about action, not standing by and watching. Maybe we can't change the course of the war but we can change the course of an evacuation, and that's a life saved.

"Jayne has taken on this amazing journey with us and this vehicle she is fundraising for represents our mission, turning generosity and courage into life-saving action."

Jayne, who is raising funds for the mission herself, added: "I think driving 1,300 miles through seven countries, over four days, to deliver a medevac



Jayne will swap two wheels for four when she embarks on her 1,300 mile mission into war-torn Ukraine. s

vehicle for life-saving missions on the front line will be number one on my list of 60 things to do when I'm 60. "Please help me to do this." Visit www.donorbox.org/jayneukraine to donate. Visit www.drivingukraine.org for more information.



Volunteers at the veteran-run Driving Ukraine workshop, in Lviv, harden donated vehicles for frontline use before they are used to evacuate the wounded. s

Can you help police find these men?

POLICE are appealing for help finding two wanted men.

Officers would like to speak to Brady Winterburn, 21; and Tyrese Thomas, 22; in connection with an aggravated burglary at a flat in Rugby on Monday, January 19.

Both have connections to Rugby and Coventry.

Anyone who sees them or who knows where they are, should contact Warwickshire Police via www.warwickshire.police.uk/ro/report or call 101, quoting incident number 349, of January 19.



Brady Winterburn (left) and Tyrese Thomas. s

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Worth raising a toast to success

A POPULAR pub which stood empty for over ten years has risen from the ashes to be crowned the best boozier in Rugby.

The Rugby branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) has named The Windmill Inn as its Pub of the Year for 2025.

The town centre pub was closed for over a decade until it was resurrected by Black Country Ales in 2019.

Since then, it has passed through a succession of landlords with what Rugby Camra described as 'many false starts' before Gemma and Andy Barber took over the reins 18 months ago.

Rugby Camra chairman Richard Potter said: "The couple, who only had two weeks experience of running the company's sister pub in the town – the Raglan Arms – made an instant improvement. They had finally put the Windmill on a solid foundation."

"As well as selling a vast array of real ales, they are constantly promoting them too. They will be running four beer festivals this year as well as many tap takeover weekends. They also run bus trips to their favourite breweries, with Salopian happening very soon."

"They truly are deserving winners of the award."



Andy and Gemma Barber behind the bar at The Windmill.

Holocaust is at heart of new display

A 'MEANINGFUL' installation of origami butterflies is now on display in the Rugby Art Gallery and Museum Community Space to mark this year's Holocaust Memorial Day theme, Bridging Generations.

Inspired by the butterfly as a symbol of hope and light, the display includes contributions from various community groups.

The international memorial day, which remembers the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust under Nazi persecution, is held on January 27 each year.

This year's theme is Bridging Generations to highlight that the responsibility of remembrance doesn't end with the survivors – it lives on through their children, their grandchildren and through everyone. A different theme is chosen each year by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

The theme underscores the importance of connecting people across different age groups, and the display embodies this spirit by showcasing a collaborative installation that reflects the creativity of Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's diverse community.

Participants included adults living with dementia and their carers who engage in The Good Times workshops, local care home residents, young chil-

dren aged 3-5 from the Mini Makers session, and members of the inclusive Express Art Group which takes place at the Benn Partnership Centre and Rugby Art Gallery and Museum.

Participants took part by making their own origami butterflies, or decorating paper that was then made into butterflies by other groups involved, supported by the Art Gallery and Museum team.

Coun Maggie O'Rourke, Rugby Borough Council portfolio holder for partnerships and wellbeing, said: "We are thrilled to bring together people of all ages to contribute to this meaningful project."

Her Liberal Democrat counterpart Coun Neil Sandison added: "Through art, we can build understanding and unity, commemorating the past while looking forward to a brighter future."

Bridging Generations is on display now until Thursday February 5, and is open to the public during regular opening hours. Visitors are encouraged to explore the artworks and create their own butterflies to add to the display.

Visit www.ragm.co.uk for more information on planning a visit.

Bridging Generations runs at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum until February 5.

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Warwick student Jade 'so close' in Traitors finale



A STUDENT from Warwick just lost out on winning The Traitors after making it to the final.

Jade Scott made it to the last five in the hugely popular BBC One game show, which sees the Faithful tasked with weeding out the Traitors.

The 25-year-old PhD student was banished at the very last round table, missing out on pitting herself against the remaining contestants to win the prize pot of some £94,000.

The game was ultimately won by Traitors Stephen and Rachel.

Jade said of her near win, it was a case of "so close and yet so far".

The Warwick University student said she decided to apply to be on the programme as she plays a lot of video games which are similar to The Traitors.

She graduated from Warwick with a first-class Master's degree in Biomedical Science. Her PhD involves research into women's health and pregnancy. She also enjoys the gym and running.

Jade considers herself quite an observant person.

Speaking to the BBC ahead of going into the castle, she said: "I'm good with people and I pick up on things that a lot of people think I miss, but that might change if you ask me that at the end of the show."

"I have quite good problem-solving abilities, so that will hopefully help in trying to navigate through the game and missions. I think I can

bring good teamwork to the table. I think I'll also get along with everyone as well."

Her game plan was to play everything that she does down.

She explained: "I'm going to say that I am a master's student, rather than a PhD because this is my whole life. I can't go in there and make up a whole new background as that's too much effort to keep up, so I will just play down what I do."

"I have a resting mean face sometimes, which can kind of look like I'm just staring people out, so I need to watch myself as I can be quite blunt and direct as well."

"It's a game, and I'm here to play the game. I signed up for the game and I'm a gamer by heart. I think everyone there is hiding something to a certain degree or trying to come off as a particular way. You don't really know who these people are, so I am going to go in and be sceptical of everyone."

Jade added if she had won the game she would have liked to buy a house.

■ Following the dramatic end to the series it also emerged that fellow finalist James Baker is a life-long Coventry City fan.

The 38-year-old, who lives on the south coast, told the BBC he fell in love with the Sky Blues after watching Peter Ndlovu score a hat-trick at Liverpool back in the 90s.

Jade Scott from Warwick made it to the final of The Traitors.

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Tram could be light years ahead of rival systems

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

THE FIRST stop has been approved of a pioneering new tram network set to be built in Coventry.

Coventry City Council has approved a new demonstrator line for its Coventry Very Light Rail (CVLR) network, which is designed to showcase the benefits of the technology.

The initial, 800m section will run from Coventry Railway Station to Coventry University's Technology Centre and will include a new service area and charging station at the university's Mile Lane site.

Should the demonstrator prove successful, the line will remain in place as part of the permanent network and will be extended further afield.

The technology behind CVLR enables tram routes to be built quickly and cheaply. Shallow tracks mean most existing sub-surface infrastructure, such as pipes and cables, can remain undisturbed.

The electric trams are designed to cope with sharp turns, enabling them to navigate the city and negating the need for wholesale changes to city layouts and for the acquisition of land.

The non-invasive construction of the track routes means they don't

require planning consent, which further speeds up project delivery.

The route to the Technology Park has been made possible thanks to an agreement by the university which allows Coventry City Council to use its land.

The team behind CVLR also plan to base their delivery headquarters at the Technology Park.

Brendan O'Reilly, sustainable transport manager at Coventry University, said: "CVLR is a first-of-its-kind transport system that offers huge benefits, not just for Coventry but for other cities across the globe of a similar size who may find a traditional tram system too costly or problematic.

"We have collaborated closely with the city council and it is fantastic that Coventry University's Technology Park will be the first stop on the demonstrator line.

"With our focus on sustainability, being able to offer transport from the railway station in the city centre to the Technology Park, will help us encourage people to leave their cars at home.

"The technology behind CVLR is owned by Coventry City Council so should other cities adopt it, this would be a very proud moment for us to see it help others."

Unlike a short demonstrator line which was temporarily installed in the city centre last year, the new, longer line is said to be an important step for the project as it will



Nicola Small, head of infrastructure and delivery for CVLR, and Coun Jim O'Boyle, Coventry City Council's cabinet member for jobs, pictured at the first CVLR demonstrator last year. Picture by Marcus Mingins 2325017MMR1

allow the CVLR to run alongside live traffic.

Coventry City Council wants the demonstrator line to be operational by October 2027, enabling delegates at the Intelligent Transport Systems World Congress to be staged at the NEC that month to experience it for themselves.

It is hoped that such exposure will increase interest in CVLR and potentially see the system adopted in other cities around the world.

Councillor Jim O'Boyle, the city authority's cabinet member for jobs, regeneration and climate change, said: "By approving this next, and longer demonstrator route for Coventry Very Light Rail, we have taken a decisive step toward transforming how people move around our city.

"This is a bold investment in cleaner, smarter and more sustainable transport and it shows our commitment to delivering real change

for residents and businesses. The route to Coventry University's Technology Park will allow us to showcase the benefits of CVLR in a live environment, proving how this innovative system can be delivered quickly, affordably and with minimal disruption.

"It's an exciting moment for Coventry and brings us significantly closer to a transport network that reflects the ambition and ingenuity of our city."

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Six-month ban for wrong-way A-road driver



The careless driver (right) drove the wrong way up an entry sliproad to the A46 Stoneleigh.

by Andy Morris
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

A CARELESS driver from Coventry has been banned after being caught on camera driving the wrong way along the A46 Stoneleigh road.

Dashcam footage given to Warwickshire Police's Operation Snap by a member of the public in May showed the motorist driving the wrong way up an entry slip road, meeting drivers travelling in the opposite direction.

Rather than stopping, the driver switched on his hazard lights and continued driving against the flow of traffic.

The 25-year-old appeared at Leamington Magistrates Court on January 20, and was fined £500 and banned from driving for six months after pleading guilty to careless driving, and driving without a licence and insur-

ance. Road safety officer PC Ken Bratley said: "This man's driving fell well below the standard of a competent and careful driver, putting himself and others at risk of serious injury."

"We can only hope he uses the six-month ban to reflect on the potential consequences and takes responsibility by becoming a safer, better driver when he eventually returns to the roads."

Offences that can be submitted to Operation Snap range from driving dangerously or carelessly to overtaking on solid white lines, using a mobile phone while driving, ignoring traffic lights and dangerous driving around other road users, such as horse riders and cyclists.

People can visit www.warwickshire.police.uk/operationsnap for more information.

Footage of the incident can be seen at www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJtpIH2Oeas&t=21s.

Council swoop on rogue landlords

RAIDS were conducted at two addresses in Coventry last week as part of ongoing action to tackle suspected unlicensed houses in multiple occupation (HMOs).

Arrests were made when environmental health officers from Coventry City Council—supported by West Midlands Police—executed warrants at Outermarch Road and Cheveral Avenue, in Coventry.

At one address, an occupant attempted to escape through a rear ground-floor window but was apprehended by police at the scene.

At the second address,

while no HMO was identified, officers discovered evidence of a cannabis grow and an occupant was arrested.

The landlord responsible for the Outermarch Road property was identified as a repeat offender—Coventry City Council having identified them operating an unlicensed HMO on two previous occasions—with outstanding unpaid financial penalties.

The council will now consider using additional powers against the landlord, including seeking a banning order and making an entry to the national Rogue Landlord Database.

The operation was part of ongoing work by the council's HMO enforcement team—alongside police partners—to disrupt criminality linked to poor-quality, unregulated accommodation.

Councillor Naeem Akhtar, cabinet member for housing and communities, said: "This is a clear signal that we will act—decisively and together—to protect our communities."

"Unlicensed and poorly managed properties put people at risk and we will continue to work with our partners to keep residents safe and hold those responsible to account."

Police appeal after gunshot heard

A GUN was fired near an industrial estate in Coventry.

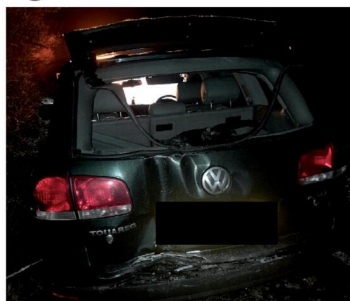
Police are appealing for the public's help following a firearms discharge—which did not cause injury—in Siskin Drive on January 9.

A dark-coloured Volkswagen Touareg left the location with significant damage to its rear window and boot. It was later recovered on the northbound M69 motorway.

Police would like to hear from anyone who has dash-cam footage from the Toll Bar End roundabout on the Coventry Eastern Bypass or the A46 northbound towards junction 2 of the M69, between 8.15pm and 9pm on January 9.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/yw7f6pfc> to report information or submit images or footage.

Alternatively, people can call 101 quoting incident number 20/108448/26, or can contact Crimestoppers, anonymously, by calling 0800 555 111.



This Volkswagen Touareg left the location with damage to the rear window and boot. It was later recovered on the M69 northbound.

Planning for Spring

with the garden lovers' garden centre



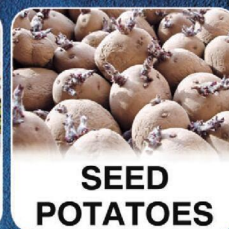
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Laptops help people onto the info super-highway

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

'GREATER opportunities' will be opened up for young people and others looking for work in Rugby after a community group received a donation of computers.

The Brownsover Community Association (BCA), which is run by volunteers, has been given five laptops by a National Highways project team which carried out maintenance at the nearby Junction 1 of the M6.

The laptops will enable users of the association's Buddy Club to search and apply for jobs, write CVs, apply for benefits online and send emails related to housing and health services.

Young people who attend the BCA On Track Youth Hub will also be able to use the laptops for their school homework and college coursework, or to apply for further education courses and part-time jobs.

Brian Clare, trustee and treasurer of the BCA, said many of the town's residents didn't always have access to computers or the internet at

home. He added: "So much of what we do now is online and lot of the people that we help don't have the right equipment at home or are at that age where they need help using them.

"The computers we had previously were so slow they were no longer useable and new equipment is expensive, so having this donation means we can spend our money on other vital services we offer instead, such as the warm food-and-drink hubs we run and community events."

The On Track Youth Hub, which runs structured sport and recreational sessions for 10- to 25-year-olds – as well as mentoring programmes and workshops – will download music software onto one of the laptops for its recording sessions.

Kevin Brookes, who runs the club, said supporting the creativity and education of young people in Brownsover was a large part of their work.

He said: "A lot of the young people are creative and want to express themselves with music, which they haven't been able to do previously.

"Having the laptops downloaded with the right software gives them a chance to develop their creativity



Brian Clare and Gita Natarajan, from the BCA (front and centre), receive laptops from Fiona McKenzie, of National Highways; and Steve Penn, right, and Bernie Ibekwem, from contractors Carnell.

with music and pushes them to try new things.

"Many of the youngsters haven't got laptops at home – or the support with homework – so our after-school homework club gives them an opportunity to do that with us, and we have seen their levels of detention at school reduced.

"These are all things that will open them up to greater opportunities in life."

National Highways carried out bridge repairs at M6 Junction 1, near Brownsover, throughout 2025,

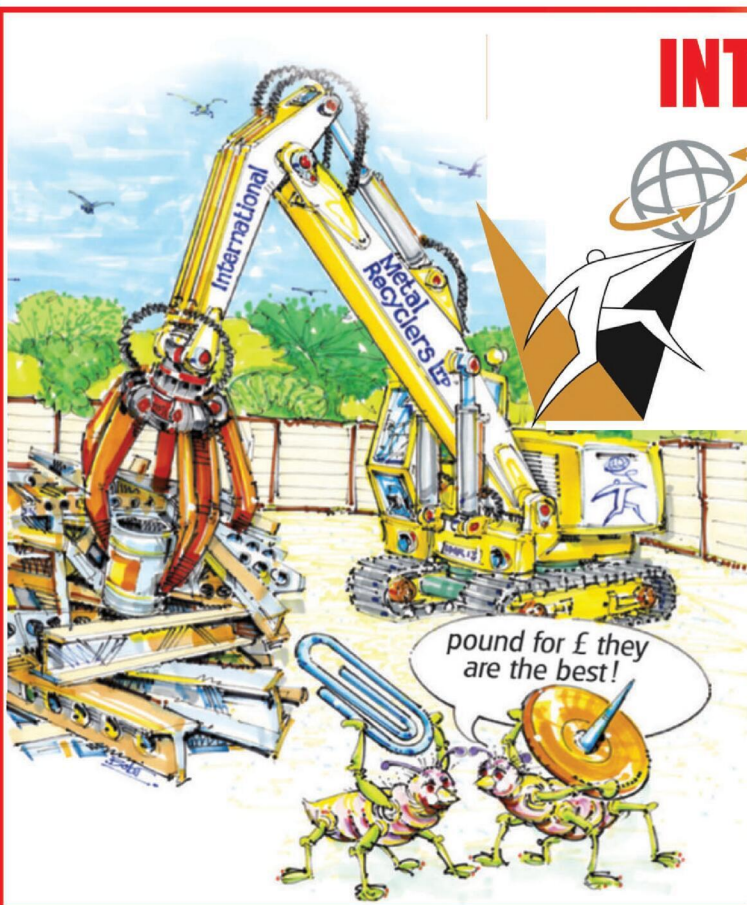
as part of a programme to extend the lifespan of the junction and improve safety. Additional bridge works are expected to start in April.

The laptops are refurbished National Highways equipment donated as part of the organisation's mission to create positive change and investment in communities close to its projects.

Project manager Simon Wagstaff said: "The M6 Junction 1 improvement work we carried out was not just about upgrading infrastructure within the Brownsover area. It was

also about creating lasting benefits for the local community and it's been a privilege to support the BCA and the invaluable work they do.

"The BCA is about building a strong community in Brownsover, providing a warm, welcoming space for residents and social interaction. Their programmes – like the Buddy Club and the On Track Youth Hub – provide vital digital access, skills and employment opportunities, empowering residents and young people to connect, learn, and thrive within their community."



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The divisive Kenilworth fence can stay.

Furious locals are not sitting on the fence

Surprise news for taxpayers

by Philippa Mingins
 philippa.mingins@bullivantmedia.com

A FENCE in Kenilworth that has proven divisive in more ways than one is set to stay after a dramatic planning row among council chiefs and a surprise ruling from a government inspector.

The 156m barrier, standing around six feet tall, was put up by Premier Garden Centre without permission in 2022 and was refused retrospective approval by Warwick District Council the fol-

lowing year, with planners branding it "incongruous" and "harmful" to the surrounding area.

But, after a hard-fought appeal and plenty of local grumbling, an inspector stepped in and overturned that decision, declaring the fence could remain on strict condition it be painted, to blend in.

In a sharply worded verdict, the inspector said the shiny metal posts and the plastic tape tied to them were an eyesore.

The report noted: "The galvanised finish to the fence posts and the tape tied to them draw the eye and appear incongruous in this setting."

However, repainting or powder coating the posts and removing the tape entirely would, the inspector said, soften the visual impact and extra landscaping would help the barrier assimilate into what was described as the "verdant setting" of the site and surrounding area.

The ruling means not only that the controversial stretch of fencing can remain but that a further 86m of the barrier, included in the scheme, can be added.

Premier Garden Centre has insisted the enclosure is essential for security and surrounds a wooded plot known locally as the Kenilworth Arboretum, opposite

Kenilworth Golf Club and beside newly built housing estates, which could one day become a garden centre and nursery.

Locals, however, remain deeply divided by the issue.

One nearby resident said: "It looks completely out of place. This used to feel open and green, now it is like something from an industrial estate. Painting it will not change the fact that it should never have been put up."

Another neighbour took the opposite view, adding: "I really do not see what all the fuss is about. If they tidy it up and plant some trees it will blend in."

NEW projects are on the horizon in Whitnash – without a rise in the town's share of the council tax bill.

Attendees of Whitnash Town Council's first meeting of 2026 heard the precept will not be rising for the next financial year.

That is despite the meeting outlining planned improvements across the town, including new play equipment, improved lighting in the park, proposals to enhance a community area in Washbourne Fields, repainting the Civic Centre and exploring a possible extension to the building.

Local council tax bills consist of money payable to Whitnash Town Council, Warwick District Council, Warwickshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner. At the time of the meeting, the other authorities had not agreed their budgets, although Whitnash councillors said it was likely residents would still see increases from those bodies.

Councillors welcomed the town's police community support officer, who delivered a crime update. While some offences had been recorded since the November report, levels remained low, particularly compared with neighbouring areas, which have experienced a rise in thefts from vehicles.

Council members also noted that traffic wardens are now being seen more frequently alongside police officers during school drop-off and pick-up times.

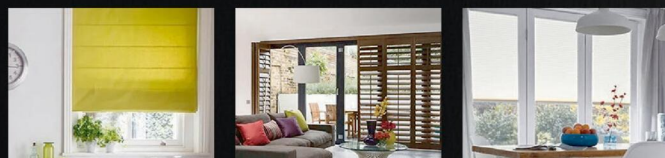
Concerns were raised, however, about the use of electric scooters on pavements and the behaviour of electric bike delivery riders.



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It's awards time again...



From left: Clive Brookes, Simon Tidmarsh, Laura Dunn, Ellis Ainsie-Huffer, Jules Hughes-Rowlands and Moz Baker, from Coventry Hospital Radio, pictured at last year's Hospital Broadcasting Association Awards. s

COVENTRY Hospital Radio (CHR) has been shortlisted for this year's National Hospital Broadcasting Awards.

The station is nominated for the Best Station Promotion award, for its on-air promotions which invite listener requests.

Public relations officer Simon Tidmarsh said: "We are over the moon that we have been nominated in Best Station Promotion this year, at the Hospital Broadcasting Association Awards.

"Coventry Hospital Radio prides itself on playing 'your choice, your music' and giving listeners a chance to hear their favourite song while either recovering here at UHCW [University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire] in Coventry, or from home.

"I would like to add a big thank you to our volunteers

who give up their free time to keep the station going and keep patients entertained."

At last year's awards, the station finished in the top 10 of the five categories in which it was shortlisted, including Station Of The Year.

The awards ceremony will take place on Saturday, March 21 in Bolton, to celebrate the exceptional standards demonstrated by hospital radio stations across the country. This year's ceremony also celebrates 100 years of hospital radio.

Coventry Hospital Radio broadcasts for free, 24 hours a day, seven days a week inside the UHCW NHS trust, online at www.coventryhospitalradio.org, on the Coventry Hospital Radio App, and on smart speakers.

Making his mark

by Andy Morris
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

A 'CALM and approachable' Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officer (HALO) for West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) has won an award from the Coventry hospital where he works.

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire (UHCW) NHS Trust named Mark Hayes their latest Making a Difference Award winner, for his exceptional contribution to patient care.

Mark was presented with his award by UHCW's deputy chief executive Susan Rollason.

As a HALO, Mark plays a vital role supporting timely and safe ambulance handovers, helping free ambulance crews to respond to emergencies while maintaining relationships between WMAS and UHCW.

The award nomination praised Mark's partnership working and described him as calm, approachable and solution-focused under pressure.

Mark's clear, effective communication was praised for helping de-escalate challenging situations, encouraging teamwork and ensuring patients, ambulance crews and emergency department colleagues all felt heard and supported.

Mark said: "I am extremely grateful to receive this award but it comes as a bit of a shock."

"Ultimately, it's a whole-team effort and I couldn't do what I do without the support of everyone at the hospital, the hard work of the ambulance crews and the other HALOs across



Mark Hayes, front, with his Making a Difference Award and colleagues at University Hospital Coventry. Picture by WMAS. s

the ambulance service. Ultimately, whatever our role and whichever organisation we work for, we all have the same goal, which is to provide patients with the best level of care we possibly can.

"That is why it is so important we all continue working together to try and ensure patients receive timely, safe and compassionate care, both in hospital and in the community."

Dan Peach, group director of operations for emergency medicine at UHCW, said: "Our team of HALOs provides a point of contact for the

emergency department and without their dedication and commitment, patient and staff experience would suffer.

"This award for Mark is fully deserved, and we look forward to continuing to deliver a quality service with colleagues from WMAS."

The Making a Difference Awards is a monthly recognition programme celebrating individuals who go above and beyond to enhance patient experience, support colleagues and strengthen collaboration across services.



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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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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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Residents savour live music



Rugby School students performed a selection of classic hits and their own compositions. s

TALENTED music students from Rugby School have entertained residents and guests at a nearby care home.

The students were invited to perform an afternoon of live music at Overslade House, including a selection of classic hits and their own compositions.

Andrew Davey – head of woodwind at Rugby School since 2012 and also a saxophone, flute and clarinet player and teacher in the Rugby and Coventry area – contacted the care home to see if his residents could play for the residents.

Following their multi-instrumental and vocal performances, the students sat and chatted with residents.

One resident said: "That was beautiful, wonderful music – the

students are so talented. Thank you so much for coming to play for us!"

Another added: "Did you know one of the students was mentored by Hans Zimmer, a well known German film composer and music producer? That's amazing!"

The hospitality team at the home also provided a spread of sweet and savoury treats for guests to enjoy during the show.

The home's acting general manager, Genoveva Tamasi, said: "Our residents and guests had a wonderful afternoon being entertained by the performers.

"We do our best to provide a wide range of activities and entertainment at Overslade House as part of the lifestyle enrichment programme for residents, and this was one of our favourites!"



Headmaster Grove du Toit (in pink tie); and, (wearing purple) Daniel Meredith (left) and Joe Shaw, from SIS Pitches; with pupils and other school staff. s

Pitch perfect aim

by Andy Morris
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

PUPILS and staff at Princethorpe College are celebrating the news that the school's all-weather pitch will be resurfaced.

Other improvements will also be made to the facility, all due in readiness for the start of the next school year, in September.

Nottingham-based SIS Pitches has been appointed as the main contractor for the project and will move its team onto the college campus to start work in late June.

The old surface will be removed and fully recycled before work

begins to install a new category-three rated, sand-dressed surface in line with International Hockey Federation standards.

New training areas and covered dug-outs for players and officials will also be installed.

Princethorpe headmaster Grove du Toit said: "This new project builds on our recent campus developments and is the first, exciting step in our 'vision for sport' at Princethorpe.

"A key investment in our sporting facilities, it has been kindly supported by the fundraising of our parent-teacher association and through generous donations to our annual fund by parents and former pupils.

The new pitch, suitable for local and national competitions,

will primarily be used for hockey training and the college's busy schedule of fixtures.

It will also be available for multi-sport hire by external clubs and organisations.

Foundation director of sport Lee Cassell said: "The new surface will dramatically enhance the playing experience for all our students and I have no doubt that it will inspire and transform the development and performance of our teams over the years to come."

Joe Shaw, commercial director of SIS Pitches, added: "We are looking forward to working in partnership with Princethorpe College to deliver what promises to be an exceptional addition to their sporting facilities."

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Josephine Rugg

Trivial matters prove popular

A BELOVED annual fund-raising quiz in aid of a local hospice charity returns to Rugby in March.

The Rugby Trivia Quiz will take place at the Benn Hall on Thursday March 5 to raise vital funds for The Myton Hospices.

The quiz was first held in 2002 and has been organised and presented every year by Quizmaster Dave Twynholm, supported by his wife Liz and other family members.

During that time it has raised tens of thousands of pounds for Myton, with many local quiz teams returning each year to take part.

The quiz regularly fills the Benn Hall to capacity due to strong community support, including long-standing involvement from the Rugby Myton Support Group, whose volunteers help to run the quiz evening.

The event has also benefited from the

backing of local businesses, who have sponsored prizes over the years.

The winning team will take home a £100 prize, with £60 for second place and £40 for third place.

The event will also feature a bar and a raffle.

Rachael Ryan, Community Fundraising Manager at The Myton Hospices, said: "Community events like the Rugby Trivia Quiz play an important role in sustaining our services."

"It's a fun, social evening that brings the community together while raising vital funds that help us continue providing our specialist care and support to local families when they need us most."

Dave Twynholm added: "It has been my great pleasure to compile and present the Rugby Trivia Quiz for so many years. It is an excellent example of local people supporting a local charity over such a long period."

"I sincerely hope that The Benn Hall is packed once again to celebrate this momentous achievement."

Tickets cost £30 per team, for teams of up to six people. Call 01926 838 892, email communityteam@mytonhospice.org or visit www.mytonhospice.org/Quiz for tickets.

The annual quiz regularly fills the Benn Hall.



Read Easy Mid Warwickshire coaching sessions are now available in Rugby.

Read all about it...

A UNIQUE charity which provides free, confidential, one-to-one reading coaching for adults has expanded into Rugby.

Since it was founded in 2023, Read Easy Mid Warwickshire has helped dozens of adults in Leamington, Warwick and Kenilworth with their reading - transforming their lives in the process.

Vicky Fletcher, Team Leader of Read Easy Mid Warwickshire, said: "I'm thrilled that we can now offer our service to adults in Rugby and I would like to encourage anyone who needs help to come forward."

"Learning to read as an adult can feel daunting, but Read Easy offers a welcoming and non-judgmental environment which enables people to learn at their own pace."

"With an estimated 2.4million adults in England struggling with reading, the need for support has never been greater. Many adults are held back in their work, personal life, and confidence due to poor literacy skills, yet help is available."

Tracy, who recently learned to read with Read Easy Mid Warwickshire, said: "It's a great programme and I am very grateful to the coaches."

"I now have a much better understanding of meaning and pronunciation as well as reading. I feel brave now when I speak to people and read. It has given me much more confidence."

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Vocal support



Patsy Rodenburg has been appointed the RSC's emeritus director of voice.

ACTORS at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) will be getting help voicing their roles.

The Stratford-based company has welcomed back internationally renowned voice coach Patsy Rodenburg as emeritus director of voice.

Patsy was head of voice at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama for 43 years and works extensively worldwide leading voice training. She previously worked with the RSC for nine years, from 1981, and with the National Theatre from 1990, founding its voice department.

Voice coach Patsy has worked with the Moscow Art Theatre, Complicite, Cheek by Jowl, and Comedie-Francaise and with actors including Daniel Craig, Orlando Bloom, Joseph Fiennes and Ewan McGregor.

In the honorary, unpaid position, Patsy will work closely with RSC co-artistic directors Daniel Evans and Tamara Harvey to help ensure the company remains a global beacon for classical voice training and performance.

Patsy said: "Voice is the foundation of all live performance – a craft that has to be so known that it becomes unknown, allowing the performer to become an artist that can engage, move and inspire an audience."

"We need Shakespeare to be fully heard and understood because he teaches us humanity under duress, the test of love, power, fairness and forgiveness."



Six of the best, from left: Pamela Carter, Vinay Patel, James Fritz, Laura Lomas, Karim Khan and Natasha Gordon. Picture by Nicola Young.

by **Ian Hughes**
ian.hughes@bullivantmedia.com

NEW voices are coming to the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC).

Six up-and-coming playwrights – Pamela Carter, James Fritz, Natasha Gordon, Karim Khan, Laura Lomas and Vinay Patel – will take part in the company's 2026 Cohort programme.

The artist-led scheme offers playwrights the chance to be commissioned by the company as part of a nine-month pro-

gramme of peer-to-peer support, in-person residencies and creative masterclasses.

Created by RSC writers-in-residence Zoe Cooper and Stewart Pringle, and inspired by Sir Peter Hall's founding vision of a 'company' of actors who share life and the experience of Stratford as they work, Cohort brings together six writers engaged in the distinct but shared endeavour of writing six new plays for the RSC's stages in a mutually supportive, non-competitive and creative environment.

RSC co-artistic directors Tam-

ara Harvey and Daniel Evans said: "From the earliest days of the RSC, under the visionary leadership of Sir Peter Hall, new writing has been an essential part of who we are as a company, where thrilling new works from the most exciting storytellers stand shoulder-to-shoulder with bold re-imaginings of classic texts."

"We are delighted to welcome such an inspiring collective of artists to Stratford-upon-Avon in 2026 and look forward to collaborating with them as they immerse themselves fully in the

creative life of the RSC, expand their knowledge of the theatre making process and forge meaningful new partnerships."

Across five-day residences in Stratford, the writers will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in RSC theatre-making practice.

During the residences, Cohort members will be invited to meet and develop relationships with artists from across the RSC and to participate in a range of masterclasses to help expand and enrich their research planning and writing process.



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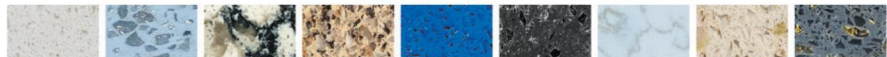
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Music Matters

Guitar maestros in town

MUSIC MATTERS!
Pete Chambers *BEM* writes for *The Observer*



Gwenifer Raymond. s

Independent venue week

Main Sheriff, tonight at The Tin

Welcome to independent venue week and, tonight The Tin presents, from West Coventry and the Greens of Arley: Main Sheriff.

The venue's big tells of a 'new old' sound. Melting the country flavours of melody, harmony and pedal steel plus a driving core of rhythm, no-blues and art rock, it's 'six pieces of different musical histories with a shared future'.

Drawing from a well of David Berman, Wilco and The VU, through a filter of English pop: an album is recorded, singles are slated and gigs booked.

It's a beautiful noise, anyway you look at it. New single *Right From Wrong* moves along, a l l

sort of country with an indie rock groove that threatens to take over but never does.

It's a heady combination that promises tonight to be something special.

Gwenifer Raymond and Hares, tonight at Just Dropped In FarGo Village

Calling Gwenifer Raymond a guitarist is a bit like saying Dali was a painter. It may sound clichéd but she makes the guitar come alive, always in control, taking those six metal strings to the next profound, beautiful level.

To watch her is to see an artist at work, her style is reminiscent of the great Roy Harper. Bottleneck and picks and harmonics and detuning – all the tricks perfectly executed. Like the above, tonight is a night for music lovers.

She signed to San Francisco's Tompkins Square Records in 2017 and released two albums. Her first proper g i g



Wreckless Eric. s

was at the Thousand Incarnations of the Rose Festival, in Maryland, where she hung with Glenn Jones, Marisa Anderson, Daniel Bachman and Peter Walker, and was presented by Henry Kaiser with a 1880s Joseph Bohmann guitar she feels may be possessed by some fingerpicking demon.

The Guardian has described her as a "profound talent" and *The Observer* praised her "awe-inspiring technique and intense musicality". *Uncut* magazine has championed her "fast-developing talents as a composer of eerie menace."

She has toured Europe, the US and Canada with Michael Chapman, Michael Hurley, The Handsome Family, Lankum, Charlie Parr, Richard Dawson, Ryley Walker, and Squid.

Wreckless Eric is Here, February 28

Just Dropped In will also welcome ever-charming pin up of the Stiff Records generation Wreckless Eric – Eric Goulden as it no doubt says on his passport.

For this show, Eric will be alone with electric and acoustic guitars, and his own electronics. He tends to do what he wants and he'll most likely play his big hit from the '70s, the enduring *Whole Wide World*.

He may play other songs from various stages of his career but the set will most likely focus on his new album, *England Screaming*, released on Tapete Records in November.

He plays on Saturday, February 28. Get your tickets now.

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Major cash boost aims to make buses faster, cheaper and more reliable for all passengers

BETTER bus services are on the horizon in the West Midlands thanks to a £3billion boost for bus funding.

The Government announces a £264.1 million boost for services and infrastructure so millions of passengers across the West Midlands can benefit from faster, cheaper and more reliable buses.

Multi-year funding will give councils the freedom to spend their allocations in whatever way they see fit, allowing local authorities to run schemes like Worcestershire's £2 bus fares.

This landmark funding follows the Bus Services Act becoming law in

October, which for the first time gave local authorities the power to run local services how they see fit and provides greater protection to socially necessary routes.

Transport Secretary, Heidi Alexander, said: "After years of decline, better buses are finally on the way. Our £3billion investment will give local authorities the long-term funding they need to deliver lower fares, more frequent services, and the reliable transport that communities depend on."

"We've already extended the £3 bus fare cap to help people with their everyday journeys, and now we're backing this with the funding councils need to transform their

local services.

"This is part of our wider plan to make public transport cheaper across the country - we've frozen rail fares for the first time in 30 years and we're building Great British Railways to deliver better value for passengers."

"Whether it's the bus to work, the train to see family, or getting to a hospital appointment, affordable transport is essential to bearing down on the cost of living and growing our economy."

The allocations bring together various bus funding streams into one source. Millions in funding will be allocated to local authorities in the West Midlands every single year

up to 2028/29 and can be spent however they want.

It means local leaders rather than Whitehall will decide how bus services should be run, continuing the Government's commitment to ensuring services are run for people, not profit.

Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "Thousands of people rely on our bus network every day to get to where they need to be, and I'm taking back control of our buses to ensure our network remains affordable and accessible."

"The government understands this and is backing my plans with this funding so we can keep fares low, improve services, and make sure

passengers are put first."

The announcement is part of the Government's wider commitment to making public transport cheaper and more reliable, bearing down on the cost of living for working people.

Freezing rail fares for the first time in 30 years will save commuters on more expensive routes more than £300 per year, meaning they keep more of their hard-earned cash.

The Government is also reforming the railways through Great British Railways, which will bring fares and ticketing into the 21st century with tap in tap out and digital ticketing, delivering better value for money for passengers.

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Reaping the benefits of 50 years together

by Ian Hughes
ian.hughes@bullivantmedia.com

A PARCEL of heritage seeds that has travelled across south and central England to highlight the importance of saving, sharing and sowing plants has found a home at the University of Warwick.

The Heritage Seed Library (HSL), based at Ryton charity Garden Organic, is celebrating 50 years of seed conservation with a unique 'seed relay' across the UK.

The seeds have travelled nearly 170 miles so far and staff at the UK Vegetable Genebank (UKVGB) – at the University of Warwick's Innovation Campus – have agreed to help preserve these heritage varieties in the centre's iced vaults.

Some 50 years ago, HSL founder Lawrence D Hills sent the first precious parcel of at-risk heritage seeds to the UKVGB for conservation, and five decades later the institutions are marking this special relationship at the UKVGB.

The HSL is the only living library of heritage vegetables in the UK and the only seed library that conserves food by sharing heritage seeds with

a range of volunteer seed guardians and library members.

By sharing and growing out the seeds with community partners across the UK, the seeds become much more resilient and better adapted to climate change and local conditions – safeguarding them for future generations.

Over the last 50 years, the UKVGB has been assisting the library by taking duplicates of its seeds as an insurance policy and freezing them in its cold vaults.

"We're delighted to be involved in the relay to celebrate the wonderful work of the HSL and our collaboration, which spans many years," said UKVGB head Dr Charlotte Allender.

"UKVGB and the Heritage Seed Library have a shared history in the conservation and use of vegetable crop genetic diversity. We use complementary approaches to ensure historic diversity in crops is not lost and assist the Heritage Seed Library by keeping samples of their collections backed up in our cold store.

"Diversity is the raw material used by plant breeders and, ultimately, by those growing crops on farms or in gardens. Making sure future generations have access to as much of the variation contained within



Sowing the seeds: UKVGB head Dr Charlotte Allender, former Garden Organic chief horticultural officer Bob Sherman and Garden Organic seed officer Lucy Shepherd.

old varieties is essential to ensure sustainable crop production."

Handing over the golden seed packets to the UKVGB were Bob Sherman, former chief horticultural officer at Garden Organic, the charity's chief executive Fiona Taylor and seed officer Lucy Shepherd.

The UKVGB will take varieties of radish and carrot from the golden seed parcel and hold them in its vaults.

"A changing climate and decline in insects, including pollinators, is making our food security more precarious," said CEO Taylor. "We need to conserve the widest variety

of vegetable seeds as possible to ensure the survival of homegrown food crops. Add to this worldwide food shocks caused by pandemics, wars and disrupted trade routes, and the urgent need to save our precious seed becomes a race against time.

"Our Heritage Seed Library holds the National Collection of Heritage Vegetables and we have a duty to ensure that this precious natural resource is conserved for future generations. By passing seed on and sowing it in a variety of places, we are allowing it to survive and thrive."

To help this effort, gardeners are encouraged to become members of Garden Organic and the HSL, as that raises funds to ensure its work can continue.

Members receive six free packets of heritage seeds from the newly launched, annual seed list.

They can grow the seeds in their own gardens and contribute to their future preservation by saving seed from the vegetables and passing them back to the library or to friends and family.

Visit gardenorganic.org.uk/join for further details.

ADVERTISEMENT

Slimming World - Another success story

Looking back frightens me to know just how big I got. I knew I was 23.5 stone, but at the time I had people telling me, you don't look like it, or you carry it well!

I can honestly say now I didn't carry it well, I still have some of the clothes! I was MASSIVE! But the biggest wake up call of all was going to see me GP. I'd started to lose weight, I was in the gym and getting close to 21 stone, but something wasn't right! I was passing out, getting dizzy spells, then the icing on the cake was one Sunday afternoon. I came home from Shipston on Stour Rugby Club, my son had just scored a hat trick, I was over joyed and decided to have a celebration whisky! I had two home doubles and I was wasted! I mean absolutely paraletic! I couldn't speak, I was slurring my words. Melanie Hk my beautiful wife thought I was secretly drinking. I wasn't and told her so the following morning when I'd sobered up.

I went to the doctors the next day and explained things and was sent for a blood test! I was diagnosed as a type 2 diabetic and had to start medication immediately to get my blood sugars under control. I was told I needed to lose weight and I may be able to reverse it. Also my blood pressure was up and I was at an increased risk of a heart attack. Again I was issued more medication! I was 37 years old and suddenly on medication to help me improve

my life. By the time I joined slimming world in April 2024, I was just below 21 stone (only just). Melanie said she wanted to lose weight too and she was going with or without me! I'll never forget the first night I walked into Fiona's group on a Wednesday evening, I felt embarrassed and ashamed! How had it come to this? How had I ended up here? What is everyone going to think of me? What if I'm the only man? God this is embarrassing! But I could not of met a nicer group of people, people who were willing to help me, support me, inspire me with their own stories. As the weeks went by, the



weight fell off and I started to feel so much more confident. Sadly due to personal reasons I stepped away from SW in November 2024 to focus on my business. However I rejoined in January 2025 in Marianne Wilkins group weighing in at 19 stone. Again what a lovely group, again the weight is coming off, currently down to 17st 3lbs. It leaves me wondering why did I leave it so long to receive help? In the past I've seen nutritionists to help with my diet when playing sport, I've had councillors supporting me after incidents in the prison service, and SW is like both of those



combined along with amazing people just like me, each with their own stories and amazing achievements who continue to inspire me, I'm in awe of everyone's achievements! To anyone that is thinking like I did, my advice don't be afraid to change your life, why take a pill when you can do it with a great culture and a wonderful support network.

I am now off my medication for diabetes and continually below the threshold for diabetics and getting further away every three months when I'm tested. I'm on the lowest dose for my blood pressure and this is under regular review, but my blood pressure is now normal. I'm playing badminton regularly, walking longer each day and sleeping so much better! I actually sleep less now, but I have a great quality sleep.

What's my target weight? I don't know yet but I know it will be about how I feel and I'll know when I get there, but I'm enjoying the journey. Coming to group is easy when the weight is coming off, but my advice is get to group when you've had a bad week, reset, listen to people in the room, listen to Maz. I've had ups and I've had downs but the downs would have been so much worse without the group!

Thank you to Fiona and Maz for this journey, but also to all the wonderful people in the room week in, week out achieving there goals and inspiring people around them! SW is amazing!

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New screening kits could help thousands get earlier bowel cancer warning



The faecal immunochemical test (FIT) is being offered to all people over 50 years old and the changes will see 600 more bowel cancers detected early each year. Picture courtesy of Bowel Cancer UK. s

THE NHS announced on Monday it is bringing in a new sensitivity screening for bowel cancer.

The NHS estimates this change will detect around 600 additional bowel cancers early each year in England - around an 11 per cent increase. It is also forecast to find 2,000 more people with high-risk polyps in their bowel, allowing patients to have preventative surgery before any cancers develop.

The home-testing kit, known as the faecal immunochemical test (FIT), is offered to all people over 50 years old and checks for blood in a small stool sample, which can be a sign of bowel cancer.

By reducing the level at which traces of blood in a FIT test would lead to further investigations, from

120micrograms of blood per gram of poo down to 80, the NHS will offer 35 per cent more screening colonoscopies each year to help diagnose or rule out cancer.

Stephen Lake, clinical director and lead colonoscopist of the screening programme said: "For a year we have lowered the threshold for home-screening kits to trigger more referrals for further testing."

"This has meant an increase in the number of people identified with tiny traces of blood in their poo and an increase in the number we see in Worcestershire and Herefordshire for further testing and treatment."

"The entire team is delighted to be at the leading edge of this very important, life-saving expansion."

The move comes as the NHS is set to launch new digital alerts

that a screening kit is on its way to people's homes in a bid to boost screening uptake.

It is part of a radical new National Cancer Plan to be published by the government next week.

'Major step forward'

Peter Johnson, national clinical director for Cancer at NHS England, said: "This is a major step forward in bowel cancer detection."

"Finding bowel cancer earlier can mean less intensive treatment, a better chance of recovery, and in many cases people can avoid cancer altogether by having dangerous polyps removed before they cause harm."

"Testing at the lower threshold provides us with a better early-warn-

ing system, helping us to spot bowel cancer earlier, often picking up problems before symptoms appear, when treatment works best."

"I would strongly encourage everyone who is sent a bowel screening test to complete it and return it as soon as possible - it really could make all the difference."

Once fully rolled out, testing at the lower threshold is expected to reduce late-stage diagnoses and deaths from bowel cancer by around six per cent, while detecting thousands more cancers earlier.

It will prevent more cases and save the NHS over £30million each year in treatment costs.

The Bowel Cancer UK charity has also welcomed the move.

Genevieve Edwards, the charity's chief executive, said it was

great news. "This change marks an important moment for bowel cancer screening in the country."

"Increasing the sensitivity of the test means more cancers will be prevented and found earlier, saving more lives from the UK's fourth most common cancer."






"This change may put extra pressure on already overstretched service, leading to more people waiting for tests that could either confirm a diagnosis or put their minds at rest."

"Therefore, it's vital staff across the screening pathway are fully supported and resourced to meet the extra demand for colonoscopy services." Visit nhs.uk/tests-and-treatments/bowel-cancer-screening/ for more on the NHS' bowel cancer screening.

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Gardening

Time for love in the garden

THOSE with a garden in a mild location will be seeing snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils will be showing their heads in February, but beware – the weather is changeable and can still be bring days that are extremely cold and full of frost.

Now is the time to give the garden a little bit of love with a quick tidy up as well as start sowing seeds and planting – weather permitting. Growing your own plants from seeds is one of the most rewarding and economical ways of getting your garden going after the winter months.

For grow your own gardeners February is all about cultivating and prepare seed beds (if the ground isn't frozen) and covering them with clear polythene, cloches or fleece to warm up the soil before sowing.

From mid-February you can sow tomato and cucumber seeds for growing in greenhouses, and plant out garlic and shallots in light soils.

This is also your last chance to winter prune apples, pears and autumn fruiting raspberries and to plant bare rooted raspberries.

Anyone growing edibles in containers should focus on planting hardy vegetables that are resistant to the cold, such as cabbage and broad beans. You can also plant root vegetables like carrots and



Camellias are in bloom during February.

parsnips.

Container gardening is an excellent option for limited spaces, and if you need to protect some outdoor plantings during extended periods of frost using covers like cloches or fleeces is easy.

For the romantics, camellias are in flower at this time of year, adding a splash of colour to gardens in the dark winter months.

They are a wonderful plant to grow in the garden or a container and tend to do best when planted

or positioned in a sheltered or shady position.

Depending on the variety, you can have them flowering from November through to April and the range of colours is vast, from light pinks to dark reds and stun-

ning whites with single, double and other flower forms.

Out in the rest of the garden it's time to think about getting ready from the main growing season – and if there is one job to be done this month it's applying organic fertilisers, such as well-rotted manure or organic chicken manure pellets, to your soil now.

Nutrients are released slowly, so last for the whole life of many crops and flowering plants. A mulch of well-rotted manure also improves topsoil structure.

Some of the other garden jobs for February suggested by the RHS are:

- * Prepare vegetable seed beds and sow some vegetables under cover
- * Chit potatoes
- * Net fruit and vegetable crops to keep the birds off
- * Prune winter-flowering shrubs that have finished flowering
- * Divide bulbs such as snowdrops
- * Lily bulbs can be planted in pots
- * Prune Wisteria, Buddleia and Hydrangea
- * Renovate overgrown hedges with pruning
- * Clear up weedy beds before mulching
- * At the end of the month, start cutting back deciduous ornamental grasses to allow new growth to come through

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

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'Seasons' magazine is brought to you by your local 'Observer' Newspaper team

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.

Perfect recipe for a great new kitchen look



Following the chaos of Christmas, when hosting and cooking are dialled to 11, the kitchen can be left feeling quite bland.

To refresh the space, **Kenny Aladenola**, owner of Kitchen Makeovers Coventry, has shared his top tips – none of which will break the bank.

Incorporate patterns

There are ways to embrace this on a permanent level, such as tiles; however, there are other ways to incorporate unique designs on a budget.

Adding a range of different soft furnishings, such as pillows and seat cushions with interchangeable covers, means you can adapt the design whenever you feel like it. You could also have some fun with larger items, such as rugs and framed abstract prints, if you want a standout feature without making a permanent change.

Curate your storage spaces

This kitchen trend not only makes things run more smoothly, but it can also be incredibly satisfying. This includes decanting goods into

matching jars, having dedicated spaces for products, using drawer dividers and creating custom solutions.

This quiet sign of luxury can make the heart of the home seem well put together. Purpose-built storage and larders take this tip to the next level – and are, incidentally, in the top two requests for every kitchen renovation we carried out in 2025.

Let it all out (well maybe just some of it)

Having glasses, plates or goods on display can give the space a more personal and lived-in touch.

There are multiple ways to do this – open shelving, glass-fronted doors or simply organising items on your countertop. Typically, our clients either choose everyday items, such as glassware and ambient fresh ingredients, or cookbooks and their most prestigious food mixer.

Tone into a trend

Sticking to outdated designs and colours will naturally date your kitchen, making it look older than it really is – something that nobody wants.

The Pantone Colour of the Year is 11-4201. Known as Cloud Dancer, it is described as 'a lofty white that serves as a symbol of calming influence in a society rediscovering the value of quiet reflection'. If you're someone who likes to keep up with trends, try dressing your kitchen in this calming colour – a great way to counter the chaos that typically happens in the heart of the home. This could include furnishings, kitchenware, ceramics and cloth items such as tea towels – simple changes with a variety of price points.

Lighting that illuminates your mood

Pendant lights over islands or kitchen tables with the option to replace light shades and bulbs give

you the flexibility to reinvent your space whenever you feel like a change.

Meanwhile, spotlights and strip lighting inside cupboards or underneath worksurfaces can make the space seem much brighter. You can even use battery powered options to simplify installation.

Love the planet while respecting your bank account

When giving your kitchen a facelift, consider using recycled materials, sourcing from ethical suppliers or purchasing from somewhere like Vinted to give unwanted items a new home. Better yet, if you fancy a fun DIY project, you could upcycle goods to fit your style.

For electronics and appliances, choose energy efficient options.

Not only will the earth thank you, but so will your bank account.

Dress for the season

Decorating your kitchen for special occasions can be a fun way to get that energy back.

I prefer having a dedicated space that you can change with the turn of the seasons so that friends and family can have some fun. This could include painted eggs for spring, a drinks station for summer or pumpkins during the autumn – all located in the same spot where your kids can help decorate and your guests can await your next creation.

When the time comes to take on a bigger renovation, you can check out more tips at <https://kitchen-makeovers.co.uk/>



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

Emma Thompson films

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

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

ACROSS

- Meeting place (10)
- Unit of weight (5)
- Curtail (7)
- Perplex (8)
- Opinion (4)
- Estimate (6)
- Concealed (6)
- Inactive (4)
- Refutation (8)
- Sincere (7)
- Once more (5)
- Colony (10)

DOWN

- Renovate (5)
- Unnecessary (8)
- Simpler (6)
- Old violin (4)
- Inexperienced (7)
- Patient (10)
- U.S. region (3,7)
- Feign (8)
- Stillness (7)
- Tranquil (6)
- Characteristic (5)
- Catalogue (4)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Type
- Painful
- Only
- Small mammal
- Unit of length



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.

- 36821** gives a flower;
- 8289** gives another flower;
- 7854** gives a fruit.

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

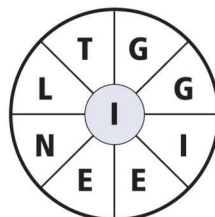
CODEWORD

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.

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

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.

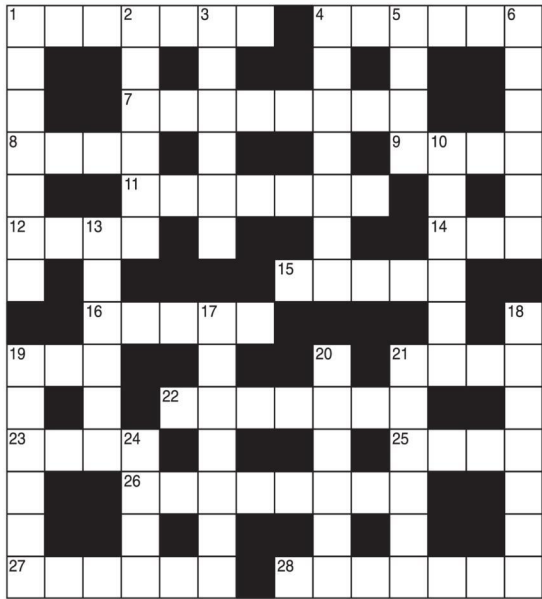


How you rate
 8 words: average
 12 words: good
 16 words: very good
 20 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- In music, any of the normally unaccented beats in a bar (7)
- Sea mammal, named from the Malay for 'Lady of the Sea' (6)
- George Formby's street corner support! (8)
- Seaside resort adjoining Brighton (4)
- North African and Eastern independent chieftain (4)
- See 6 Down
- Sheepskin leather for bookbinding (4)
- 14, 20 and 1 Down. Famous work by 16 and 22 (3,6,7)
- the Great, first Emperor of Russia (5)
- 16 and 22 Down. Russian writer and playwright born in 1860 (5,7)
- Pen name of Charles Dickens (3)
- 21 and 2 Down. The mother of Elizabeth I (4,6)
- See 16
- In composition, single or alone (4)
- Mother or father's sister (4)
- Scottish royal residence on the Dee (8)
- Another name for sea holly (6)
- Salt of hydrocyanic acid (7)



DOWN

- See 14 Across
- See 21 Across
- Tommy ---, the only one-eyed golfer to win the US Open (6)
- District under the pastoral care of a bishop (7)
- Any of the numbered exits leading to the aircraft in an airport (4)
- 6 and 11 Across. Secretary of State for Defence in Margaret Thatcher's government (6,7)
- One in charge of nursing in hospital (6)
- Great river of South America (6)
- Shakespeare's "Moor of Venice" (7)
- Roman god of the sea (7)
19. Surname of a workhouse official in Oliver Twist (6)
- See 14 Across
- Mythical land to which King Arthur was said to have been borne after his death (6)
- Small resort of the Western Highlands, on the Firth of Lorn (4)

SOLUTIONS

General Knowledge Crossword
 1 Bumble; 20 Cherry; 21 Avalon; 24 Obama; 4 Diocese; 5 Gate; 6 George; 10 Matron; 13 Amazon; 17 Othello; 18 Neptune; 26 Balmoral; 27 Eringo/Ernygo; 28 Cyanide. DOWN: 1 Orchard; 2 Boleyn; 3 Armo; 14 The; 15 Peter; 16 Anton; 19 Box; 21 Anne; 22 Chekhov; 23 Mono; 25 Aunt; ACROSS: 1 Offbeat; 4 Dugong; 7 Lamppost; 8 Howe; 9 Em; 11 Younger; 12 Roan; 14 Silence; 16 Serene; 19 Trait; 20 Lit.

Crossword
 Across: 1 Rendzvous; 7 Quince; 8 Shorten; 10 Bewilder; 11 View; 13 Assess; 14 Hidden; 17 Idle; 18 Rebuttal; 21 Genuine; 22 Again; 23 Settlement; Down: 1 Renew; 2 Needless; 3 Easter; 4 Viol; 5 Untied; 6 Forbearing; 9 New England; 12 Simulate; 15 Piteously; 16 Sensibility; Junior; Imagining Argentina; Carrington; Beautiful; 17 Tall Guy; An Education; Bridshred Revisited; Dead Again; Sense the Day; Howards End; Nanny McPhee; Stranger than Fiction; The Remains of the Boat That Racked; Love Actually; 20 Assess; 21 View; 23 Assess; 24=O; 25=I; 26=I

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

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

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

Hard
 Easy
Sudoku



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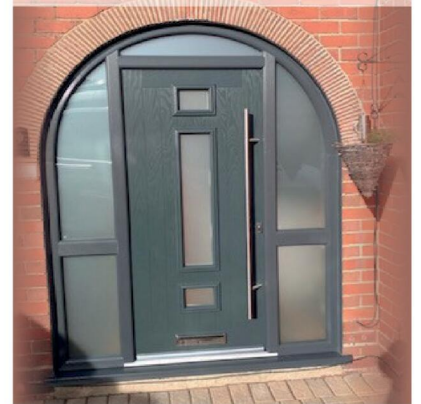
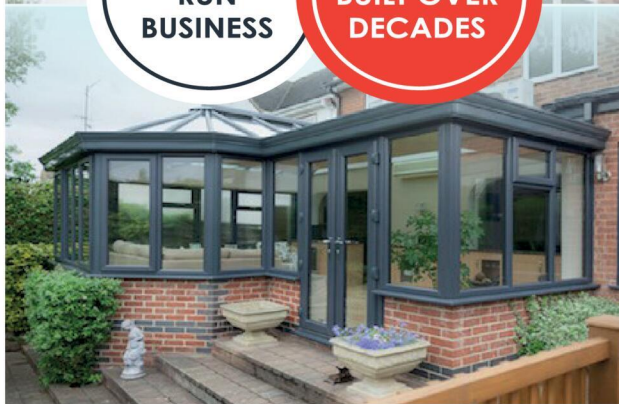


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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

CORD LANE, EASENHALL

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable duct laying work.
Order Commences: 6 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 11 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Rugby Road, Easenhall Road, Paillon Road, Cord Lane and vice versa.
Contractor: Callan Connect, Tel: 01213 275 167.

CALVESTONE ROAD, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic at the junction of Calvestone Road and Brocket Place.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of a manhole frame and cover.
Order Commences: 17 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 17 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Gold Avenue and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

C213 RUGBY ROAD, CLIFTON UPON DUNSMORE

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Station Road to Butlers Leap.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 2 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 2 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Houlton Way, Hillmorton Lane, Lilbourne Road, Main Street.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

MURRAY ROAD, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: For repair/replacement of defective manhole covers and frame.
Order Commences: 6 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 6 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Wells Street, Claremont Road, Tom Brown Street and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH FROM HAWLANDS TO GRASMERE CLOSE, RUGBY

Order Effect: Footpath closed to all traffic.
Reason for Order: Works to renew approx 220m of water mains in footpath and verge.
Order Commences: 2 February 2026 for up to 6 months.

Anticipated Completion: 8 March 2026.
Access & Diversion: Hawlands, Grasmere Close, Footpath from Hawlands to Grasmere Close and vice versa.
Contractor: Severn Trent Water, Tel: 08007 834 444.

SCHOOL LANE, HILL, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Sewer lining works, closed 07.00hrs - 19.00hrs.
Order Commences: 19 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 19 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: No diversion available.
Contractor: Sapphire Utility Solutions, Tel: 07775 714 473.

Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

D2142 LIMESTONE HALL LANE, CHURCH LAWFOORD

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from A428 Coventry Road to Ling Lane.
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs - 16.00hrs.
Order Commences: 15 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 15 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: A428 Coventry Road, Coranorion Road, Ling Lane and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

A426 LEICESTER ROAD & D6971 CENTRAL PARK DRIVE, RUGBY

Order Effect: Leicester Road closed, both northbound and southbound carriageways, including all roundabouts, closed from M6 junction 1 to D2571 Junction One Retail Park - 1900 - 0500hrs all days.
Central Park Drive closed from its junction with the A426 Leicester Road to Castle Mound Way/Coton Park Drive, including roundabout joining Castle Mound Way and Coton Park Drive - Sundays: 20.00hrs - 06.00hrs. In addition, a 30mph speed limit will be imposed effective 24th all days on A426 Leicester Road

northbound and southbound carriageways, including all roundabouts, from M6 junction 1 to D2571 Junction One Retail Park.

Reason for Order: Closures to enable carriageway resurfacing and associated works. Temporary 30 mph speed limit is required for the safety of all road users and workforce whilst works are in progress.

Order Commences: 15 February 2026 for up to 18 months.
Anticipated Completion: 30 March 2026.

Access & Diversion: Non-HGV Traffic - A4071, A45, B4429, A45, A361, A5, A426 and vice versa. HGV Traffic - A4071, A45, M45 from A45 (No access for HGV's through Dunchurch), A45, A361, A5, A426 and vice versa. D6971 Central Park Drive - no suitable diversion

Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.
MONTILO LANE, PAILLON & MONTILO LANE, HARBOROUGH MAGNA
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: To safely enable renewal of water mains within carriageway & verge.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 22 March 2026.
Access & Diversion: Lutterworth Road, Rugby Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Severn Trent Water, Tel: 08007 834 444.

EDGECOTE CLOSE, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the laying of underground ducting.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 18 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: No diversion is available.
Contractor: Core Highways, Tel: 07979 296 733.

LANCASTER ROAD, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic. In addition, vehicular traffic will be prohibited from making a Right Turn from Newbold Road into Lancaster Road.

Reason for Order: To enable repair/replacement of defective manhole covers and frame.
Order Commences: 21 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 21 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Newbold Road, Wood Street, Park Road and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 298 599.

LAWFORD LANE, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic one way from Bilton Methodist Church to a point outside property number 17.

Reason for Order: To enable gas disconnection works.
Order Commences: 18 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 20 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Lawford Lane, Bilton Lane, Rugby Western Relief Road, Lawford Road, Addison Road, Bilton Road, The Green, Main Street, Magnet Lane and vice versa.
Contractor: Cadent Gas, Tel: 0800 111 999.

B4109 HINCKLEY ROAD, WOLVEY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from B4114 Lutterworth Road roundabout to Hinckley Road leading to Burton Hastings.

Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 20 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: B4114 Lutterworth Road, Smockington Lane, AS Watling Street, B4019 Hinckley Road and vice versa. There will be no access/egress to/from Gipsy Lane via Hinckley Road whilst works are in progress.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

For all of the above temporary orders, pedestrian access to and egress from properties and land situated adjacent to the length of road to be closed will be maintained at all times. Vehicular access will be maintained where possible.

To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 29 Jan 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

D6379 LADBROKE ROAD, BISHOPS ITCHINGTON

Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from Fisher Road to The Greaves Way.
Reason for Order: Footway reconstruction and associated works, 08.00hrs - 17.00hrs.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 20 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Fisher Road, Chapel Street, Poplar Road, Old Road, Central Drive, Ladbroke Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

MILL STREET, HARBURY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between numbers 6 and 16 Mill Street.
Reason for Order: To safely enable works to underground gas services.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 19 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Chapel Street, Park Lane, Temple End, Farm Street and vice versa.
Contractor: Cadent Gas, Tel: 0800 111 999.

STOCKTON ROAD, STOCKTON

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: Tree works on overhanging branches.
Order Commences: 16 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 20 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Stockton Road, Southam Road, Coventry Road and vice versa.
Contractor: Shire Forestry and Fencing Ltd, Tel: 07584 132 926.

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.

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S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 29 Jan 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

OSTERLEA LANE, FILLONGLEY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repairs and replacement of a defective manhole frame and cover at the Coventry Road junction.
Order Commences: 1 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 1 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Meriden Road & Coventry Road.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

Warwickshire County Council proposes to make the following Temporary Traffic Orders:

HEATHER ROAD, BINLEY WOODS

Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic.
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of a defective manhole frame and cover.
Order Commences: 17 February 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 17 February 2026.
Access & Diversion: Ferndale Road, Rugby Road, Woodlands Road and vice versa.
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

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 29 Jan 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

Rugby Borough Council Town and Country Planning (local PLANNING) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice is hereby given of the publication of the Rugby Borough Council Proposed Submission Local Plan for public consultation under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The public consultation will run from Friday 30th January 2026 until 5:00pm on Friday 13th March 2026.

The Proposed Submission Local Plan, supporting Evidence, and Statement of Representation Procedure is available for inspection on the council's website: <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/local-plan-consultation>

In addition, hard copies are available for inspection at the following locations:

- Rugby Borough Council's offices, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR,
- Rugby Library and Information Centre, Little Elbowor Street, Rugby, CV21 3BZ
- Dunchurch Community Library, The Green, Dunchurch, Rugby, CV22 6PA
- Wolston Library and Information Centre, Warwick Road, Wolston, Coventry, CV8 3GX.

Consultation responses must be submitted using the Representation Form available to download from the Council website <https://www.rugby.gov.uk/local-plan-consultation> or in hard copy at the locations listed above.

The Representation Form should be submitted to the Council either:

- By email to localplan@rugby.gov.uk with "Proposed Submission Consultation" in the subject line or,
- By post to:

Submitted Submission Consultation Development Strategy Team, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR

If you wish to be kept informed about future stages of the local plan review, please state this in your consultation response. Further information is included in the Statement of Representation Procedure, also available at the above weblink and in the locations listed.

Consultation responses will be made available as set out within the Statement of Representation Procedure.

PUBLIC NOTICES

DOROTHY ALICE JACKSON (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 39 Marlott Road, Coventry, CV6 1BB, who died on 11/10/2025, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 31/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

GLAISIERS SOLICITORS,

3 Hardman Street, Spinningfields, Manchester, M3 3HF

PUBLIC NOTICES

SALLY HARRISON (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 5 Avonlea Rise Royal Leamington Spa, CV32 6HS, who died on 25/12/2025, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 31/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

DIXON ALDERTON LAW LIMITED,

Prospero House, 4a Dornier Place, CV22 5AE

PUBLIC NOTICES

MICHAEL JOHN JILLINGS (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 Clarendon House, Birmingham Road, Coventry, CV5 9BA, who died on 04/01/2026, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 31/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

ANGELS SOLICITORS LLP,

117-119 New Union Street Coventry, CV1 2NY

PUBLIC NOTICES

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

Application Number R25/1050
CLOCK HOUSE, FRANKTON ROAD, BIRDINGBURY, RUGBY, CV23 8EW
Listed building consent for proposed restoration of existing external sash windows.

This development may affect a Listed Building

Application Number R25/1085
37B REGENT STREET, RUGBY, CV21 2PE
Rear extension and a second floor extension above an existing two storey building Class E Office Building and change of use to Class C3 Residential for 2no. one bedroom flats and 1no. studio flat.

This development may affect a Conservation Area

Application Number R25/1126
53 HILLMORTON ROAD, RUGBY, CV22 5AE
Variation of condition 2 (Updated Plans) to build the boundary wall as a party wall of R25/0625.

This development may affect a Conservation Area

Application Number R26/0011
COLLEGE OF POLICING, LEAMINGTON ROAD, RYTON-ON-DUNSMORE, CV8 3EN
Variation of condition 4 of R22/1169 (Retention of one and two storey office, conference, dining and ancillary accommodation, car parking and internal site access road) to allow retention for up to 5 years.

This is a major development

Members of the public may inspect copies of the application, the plans and documents submitted with it online at: www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk or in an electronic form at: Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday until 20 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 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 householders or minor commercial applications, in the event of an appeal against a refusal of planning permission, deal with on the basis of representations in writing, any representations made will be sent to the Secretary of State, and there will be no further opportunity to comment at the appeal stage.

Nicola Smith
Chief Officer - Growth and Investment
MRTP1

JAMES CAIRNS
Deceased

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 anyone having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased, late of 52 Stamford Gardens, Rugby Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 6DX, who died on 28/09/2019, must send written particulars to the address below by 31/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

PAUL ROBINSON SOLICITORS

LLP
Regis House, 98 High Street, Billericay, Essex, CM12 9BT
Ref: Lee Hibell

PUBLIC NOTICES

PETER COWAN COCHRANE (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 Hawthorne House, Jardine Crescent, Coventry, West Midlands, CV4 9QS, who died on 19/08/2024, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 31/03/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

Band Halton Buttolts Solicitors,

Earlston Park, 35-36 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH



PUBLIC NOTICES
All your latest information on Planning Proposals, Traffic Notices, Goods Vehicle Operator Licences, Licences To Sell Alcohol and Probate Notices

Classified

TELEPHONE 01527 588688 FACSIMILE 01527 584371

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Contract Skips Ltd of Unit J, Princes Drive, Kenilworth CV8 2FD is applying for a licence to use Toldish Hall Farm, Parrots Grove CV2 1NR as an operating centre for 2 goods vehicles and 0 trailers.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centres who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representatives must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Bsidhu72 Ltd of 165 Woodway Lane, Coventry, CV2 2EH is applying to change an existing licence as follows to add 2 goods vehicles and 2 trailers at the operating centre at 1 Oban Road, Coventry, CV6 6HH

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

PUBLIC NOTICES

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

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GOOD Condition £80 ono (Whitnash) 07879015716

PANASONIC NS Vieta TV TXL32C3B £30 ono (Whitnash) 07879015716

MERCHANT exercise bike. Used once cost £130 sell for £75.01926 497598

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Paul (Albatross & Doomed Records)

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LADIES m & s classic fully lined lightweight jacket with detachable hood, light turquoise, hardly worn, size 12, £3.00. (1 can forward photos if interested) Tel: 07934132759

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BRAND new £5 for pair lns and rns unused 07977913225

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Cross-country gold for Godiva Harriers as Rainsley takes individual honours

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

ATHLETICS: SIAN Rainsley won individual gold representing Coventry Godiva Harriers at the Midlands Cross-country Championships at Mallory Park.

Rainsley took gold in the senior women's race after breaking clear at around the 3km mark to finish in a time of 28 minutes 47 seconds.

And impressive runs from Julie Emmerson in fifth, Amelia Starling in 14th and Sophie Hurst in 20th ensured Godiva also won team gold with a total of 40 points.

Godiva won the team prize for the first time since 1979 with the club to proudly display the shield and trophy in their clubhouse until the end of the year.

Further back, Alice Dalglish 46th, Rowena Ockenden 86th, Paige Zhang-Green 99th and Dewi Dankmeyer 101st also completed the course in Leicestershire.

Ockenden won a silver in her age category while Zhang-Green picked up bronze in her age category.

In the senior men's race, Joe McLeod 24th led Godiva home with Hossein Mohammadiha 38th, Scott Hudspith 45th, Ed Griffiths 48th, Clark Roberts 51st and David Cooper 56th.

Godiva's men finished on 262 points as the team finished in fourth place to just miss out on a medal.

However, Roberts claimed individual silver in his age category.

Further back, Matt Hadlum 68th, Pete Eccleston 81st, Liam Kincaid 90th, Iain Souttar 100th, Sam Katanda 103rd, Will Averill 115th, Michael Todd 119th, Chris Hurst 128th, Waising Yip 132nd, Lee Connelly 138th, Ed Sumner 150th, Kevin Otieno 163rd, Nick Bennett 173rd and Martin Gittins 182nd all finished the race.

Hadlum claimed individual bronze in his age category while Hurst also took bronze in his age category.

In the under-13 boys' race, Rocco Bynan and Olly Plumb finished 25th and 30th respectively.

And in the under-15 girls' race, Grace Deavy finished 15th with Philippa Warren 51st while Maksymilian Mydlkowski placed 53rd in the under-15 boys' race.

In the under-17 women's race, Matilda Taplin and Isabel Faulkner finished 30th and 31st respectively with Mohammad Mohammadiha and Seb MacGibbon 43rd and 53rd in the under-17 men's race.

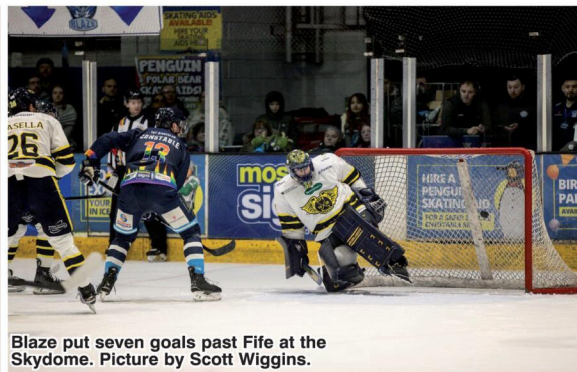
And in the under-20 women's race, Shona Murray finished 17th while Adam Jackson and Will Chalmers placed 17th and 28th in the under-20 men's race.



Godiva athlete Sian Rainsley became Midlands champion in the senior women's race. Picture by Zaneta Pochylska/Nick Bennett.



Coventry's senior women won the overall team prize. Picture by Zaneta Pochylska/Nick Bennett.



Blaze put seven goals past Fife at the Skydome. Picture by Scott Wiggins.

Blaze power past Glasgow and Fife to extend streak

ICE HOCKEY: COVENTRY Blaze extended their winning run to five matches with emphatic victories against Glasgow Clan and Fife Flyers respectively.

Blaze won 5-2 against Glasgow at Braehead Arena and then romped to a 7-2 victory against Fife at the Skydome Arena.

The results mean Coventry sit sixth in the Elite League table.

Blaze made a blistering start against Glasgow in Scotland as William Boysen struck just eight seconds into the contest after Elijah Barriga won possession from the centre-ice face-off.

However, Glasgow responded in the second period at 23.11 when Alex Forbes hit the puck out of mid-air and past Blaze netminder Mat Robson to score against his former side.

And Brett Neumann completed the turnaround for Glasgow at 27.49 when he finished on the rush to leave the visitors stunned.

Coventry levelled the game at 32.15 as Jere Vertanen finished on the powerplay with a point shot.

And Blaze went back in front at 33.49 with another powerplay goal as Grant Mismash redirected a shot into the net after Glasgow's Daniel Tedesco conceded back-to-back penalties.

The visitors extended their lead at 34.27 when Grayson Constable produced a clinical finish from Colton Saucerman's initial break.

Glasgow looked to respond in the third period only for Robson to make a total of 37 saves to finish the game with a 94.87 save percentage.

And Blaze completed the scoring at 52.03 when captain Kim Tallberg lashed a blue-line shot into the top corner.

Coventry then entertained Fife on home ice and duly put the struggling Flyers to the sword at the Skydome.

The game marked the club's dedicated Pride Night fixture, with the Elite League celebrating

inclusivity across the division's matches.

However, despite the final scoreline, Fife stunned Blaze at 1.53 when David Booth fired high past Robson on the powerplay after Mike Pelech committed a hooking offence.

Coventry responded at 12.34 as David Clements struck from the blue-line to beat Shane Owen in the Fife net.

And Blaze turned the game on its head at 16.29 when Jordan Power drove into the Fife zone and finished past Owen from a tight angle.

Fife equalised at 17.19 when Keaton Jameson finished from close range from Logan Neilson's feed.

However, Coventry reclaimed the lead before the end of the first period at 19.46 on the powerplay as Boysen converted with 14 seconds remaining before the first intermission.

Blaze opened up a two-goal lead at 26.44 when Vertanen unleashed a trademark one-timer during a four-on-four play.

And Coventry struck again at 28.45 as Matthew Gleason finished a loose puck to take the game away from Fife.

Blaze continued to blitz the visitors when Boysen scored his second of the game on the 31-minute mark as he tipped in Gleason's pass.

And Mismash completed the scoring at 38.46 when he deflected Adam Robbins' feed into the net after both teams spurned powerplay chances.

The third period ended goalless as Blaze comfortably saw out the final 20 minutes of action.

Coventry are next in action against Belfast Giants on Friday, January 30 with the face-off at 7pm at the SSE Arena Belfast.

Blaze then host Manchester Storm on Sunday, February 1 with the face-off at 5.30pm at the Skydome.

Winning run comes to end

RUGBY UNION: COVENTRY Rugby saw their five-game winning run come to an end following a 38-31 defeat away at Bedford Blues.

Returning to action for the first time since New Year's Day, Coventry surrendered a seven-point lead at Goldington Road but came away with two bonus points.

Tries from Senitiki Nayalo, Chester Owen, Jordan Poole and Allan Ferrie twice put the visitors 14 points ahead in the first period.

However, Bedford halved the deficit to seven points at the interval and completed the turnaround after the break.

The visitors registered just three points in the second period as Tommy Mathews kicked a late penalty to earn the away side a losing bonus point.

And the result means Coventry sit fifth in the Champ Rugby table.

Coventry are next in action against Chinnor on Saturday, January 31 with kick-off at 3pm at Butts Park Arena.

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

Valley end winless run with Lichfield victory in thriller

by **Aaron Sutcliffe**
 aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

FOOTBALL: GRANT Joshua felt Rugby Town looked like an 'attacking force' in their home win against Lichfield City.

Valley ended a four-game winless run with a 3-2 victory at Butlin Road as debutant Kobi Bivens scored a second-half winner.

A Callum Griffin own goal put Lichfield ahead only for Rivel Mardenborough and Caine Elliott to turn the game in Rugby's favour before Harvey Smith levelled the game for Lichfield.

The result means Rugby sit 16th in the Northern Premier League Midlands table, five points above

the relegation zone.

And Joshua praised his side's attacking intent but felt a more clinical display would have put the result beyond doubt.

Joshua said: "We spoke a lot with the players in the build-up about what a home performance should look like from a Rugby Town team.

"There are still bits to work on defensively, but as an attacking force, I'm really pleased.

"We looked a problem to deal with, and if we'd been more clinical in the last 10 to 15 minutes, it wouldn't and shouldn't have looked that close a game.

"I'm delighted for Kobi. This kid doesn't get flustered, he can really finish and his all-round game was quality too.



"We've played some really good football, but we know it's only three points and we'll have to work equally as hard in training and then deliver that same attacking performance against Basford."

Lichfield ended a five-game goal drought on 12 minutes when Griffin headed the ball into his own net under pressure from Joe

Haines at a free-kick.

However, Valley equalised seven minutes later as Mardenborough finished from close range after Lichfield blocked Jack Concannon's goalbound effort on the line following a 20-pass move.

And Rugby completed the turnaround on 31 minutes when Elliott scored from the penalty spot after Geoffrey Lundoloki drew a foul in the box.

Lichfield drew level four minutes into the second half as Smith found the net on the turn to restore parity.

However, debutant Bivens provided the game's decisive moment on 56 minutes with a cool dinked finish over Lichfield goalkeeper Brendon Bunn.

Next up for Rugby is a home

game against Basford United who head into the clash unbeaten in their last 12 matches which includes seven draws.

Joshua is sweating on the fitness of Lundoloki who limped off in the win against Lichfield.

Teenager Archie Murray replaced Lundoloki after the former joined Valley on a work experience loan from Northampton Town.

And former Loughborough Students and Anstey Nomads midfielder Drew Lowe has also signed to bolster Joshua's squad.

Rugby host Basford on Saturday, January 31 with kick-off at 3pm at Butlin Road.

Jack Concannon slides the ball past the keeper to set up Town's first goal. Picture by Martin Pulley.

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