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# Anti-social behaviour 'will not be tolerated' vow police



Police are cracking down on a spate of 'antisocial behaviour and criminality' in Rugby town centre.

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

A SPATE of 'antisocial behaviour and criminality' in Rugby town centre has 'forced' police to 'take more robust action' against a group of youths.

Last week, officers arrested three young people and searched their homes for evidence of crime – and said there would be 'more to follow'.

A Rugby Police spokesperson said a group of young people were linked to a spate of theft, assaults, public order offences and criminal damage in the town centre – with victims including young people, businesses, residents and visitors.

They added evidence of further crimes had been uncovered, meaning the offenders' parents are under investigation.

Ch Insp Angus Eagles, Eastern Area Commander for Warwickshire Police, said: "This behaviour will

not be tolerated. We're committed to safeguarding people and businesses, disrupting and detecting crime and resolving the situation as quickly and effectively as possible."

The police spokesperson added: "In response to the reports we have received, we have deployed additional resources in the town centre, with officers providing a more visible presence, engaging directly with the young people, and working closely with partner agencies, local

businesses, and the parents and carers of those involved to ensure the most effective multi-agency approach.

"We will always work with our key partners to try and divert young people away from the criminal justice system. However, when young people and their parents do not engage or they allow the behaviour to continue, we are forced to take more robust action.

"Our ask of parents and carers is to consider where your children are

throughout the day and evening, and what they might be up to – be intrusive.

"We know from speaking to some parents that they weren't aware of what their children were doing and have now stopped their behaviour.

"We have written to and visited several parents already to warn them of potential police action, as this behaviour can no longer continue and Warwickshire Police and partners will look at all available options to stop this."



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# Updated book tells station's story

A HERITAGE book telling the story of Rugby Radio Station has been relaunched – complete with an extra chapter – as part of 100-year commemorations for the historic Houlton site.

A raft of celebrations are taking place this year to mark what would have been the 100th anniversary of Rugby Radio Station.

The second edition of 'The History of Rugby Station' by local historian Malcolm Hancock is being released complete with a brand new chapter.

The original book, published in 2017 by Malcolm Hancock and Houlton master developer Urban&Civic, contains a wealth of information about the radio station's technicalities, the short wave revolution, the world's telephone exchange and even how it played a part in the Second World War, with proceeds going to the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance.

The second edition of the book also contains a brand new chapter written by Community Development Lead for Houlton at Urban&Civic, Elly Hemus, who has captured how Houlton has developed in a physical and

community sense since the book's original release.

Elly said: "It's been a huge privilege to contribute to what is a wonderful souvenir of this historic milestone for Houlton."

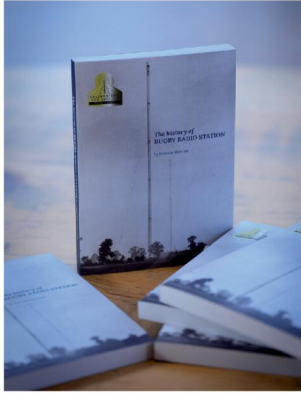
"Rugby Radio Station is a huge part of Houlton's history, and also its present thanks to the array of reminders across the site, so to have been able to add on nearly a decade of its most recent history is a wonderful moment."

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

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

To ensure the site's role in history lives on, Urban&Civic is supporting a range of celebrations throughout this year and next.

The celebrations kicked off with a transmission by Rugby Amateur Transmitting Society (RATS) from the former radio station site across the world to mark exactly 100 years



The station building is now home to Houlton School.

since Rugby Radio Station's GBR transmitter opened for service in 1926.

January also saw the unveiling of a digital tapestry created by thousands of images relating to the radio station submitted by members of the community and combined into an image for display by community artist Allan Levy.

The book is available to purchase from Hunts Bookshop, Rugby Art Gallery Museum giftshop and The Tuning Fork restaurant in Houlton for £15. Copies are also available at Rugby, Wolston, and Nuneaton Libraries.

Visit <https://rugbyradiostation.co.uk/> for more on Rugby Radio Station's history, and updates on the 100-year celebrations.

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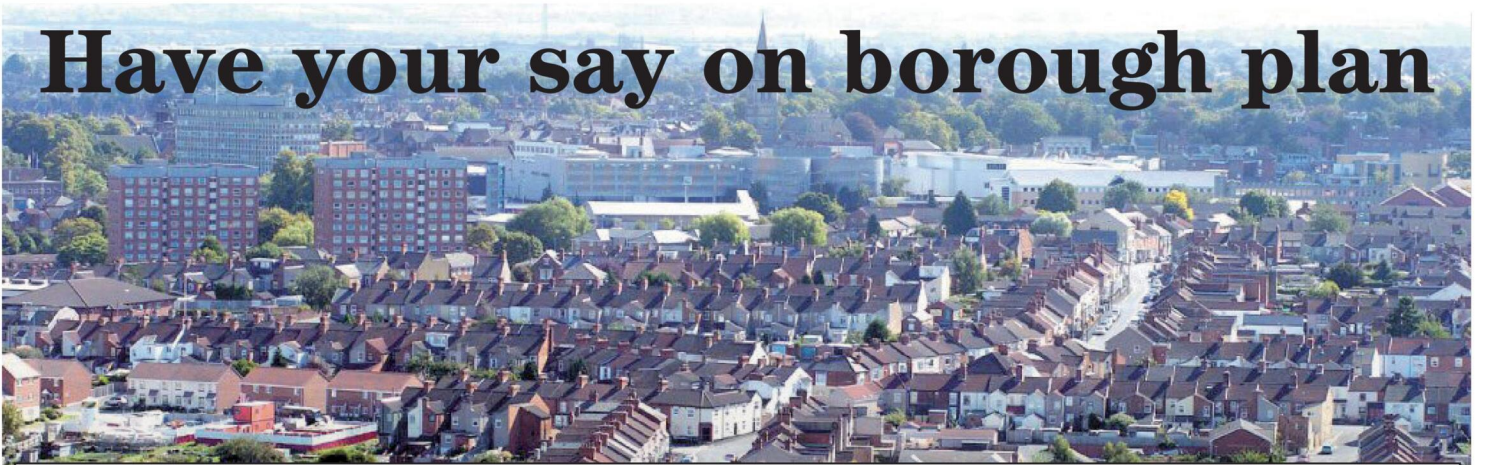
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# Have your say on borough plan

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

## THE NEW blueprint for Rugby's homes, jobs, infrastructure and green spaces for the next 16 years is out for public consultation.

Rugby Borough Council (RBC) has launched a final round of consultation over its new local plan, giving residents and businesses the chance to comment on the draft strategy for future growth of the borough.

The 'regulation 19' consultation is the final stage of public engagement before the plan is submitted to an independent planning inspector.

The new local plan will guide where new homes, jobs, infra-

structure and green spaces will be located across Rugby up to 2042.

The council has amended the plan since a 'preferred option' consultation round was held last spring.

Changes include the addition of further housing sites in Rugby town centre, Long Lawford, Wolston and Binley Woods.

Housing sites around Dunchurch; and in the Rainsbrook Valley, at Hillmorton, have been removed, and a new policy regarding the Rainsbrook Valley landscape has been introduced.

The number of houses allocated for Brinklow, Wolvey and Stretton-on-Dunsmore has been reduced.

And the employment allocation at Ryton-on-Dunsmore has been replaced by an alternative site at Walsgrave Hill, which includes a

blue-light route for ambulances to University Hospital Coventry.

The council says the plan will ensure growth 'in the right places and in a way that protects what matters most to communities'.

The plan has been shaped by extensive public feedback over the past two years, with the council prioritising the regeneration of brownfield land, strengthening protection for villages and key landscapes and removing sites that were found to be undeliverable or unsustainable.

An RBC spokesperson said: "The draft plan sets out a clear vision for a greener, healthier and better-connected Rugby, with new walking and cycling links and climate-friendly building standards. It focuses on directing most development towards Rugby Town and

other sustainable locations close to services and public transport."

Councillor Michael Moran, leader of RBC, said: "This is a vital moment for Rugby's future. The local plan gives us stronger control over where development goes, helps us protect our countryside and villages and ensures growth comes with the infrastructure communities need.

"Your feedback at this stage will be passed directly to the planning inspector and will help shape the decisions made at examination. We look forward to working together to shape the future of our borough."

Coun Jerry Roodhouse, chair of RBC's town centre working group, said: "A strong local plan is about more than meeting housing targets. It's about shaping places

where people want to live, work, shop and spend time.

"This draft plan sets out a clear framework for supporting sustainable growth [and] protecting what makes Rugby special while creating conditions for communities and local businesses to thrive."

An information session was due at Coton Park and Newton yesterday (Thursday) and further sessions will be held in Brinklow today, Wolvey on Tuesday, Clifton and Houlton on Thursday, Long Lawford on February 24, Wolston and Stretton on February 25, and in Rugby town on March 4.

Visit [www.rugby.gov.uk/proposed-submission-local-plan](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/proposed-submission-local-plan) for more details, to book places at information sessions, to review the plan and to join the consultation, which runs to March 13.

## Unsafe drivers handed bans



MOTORISTS from Rugby, Warwick, Leamington and Coventry were among 58 arrested by Warwickshire Police in December, for drink- or drug-driving, as part of Operation Limit, a national seasonal crackdown.

Those sentenced received driving bans ranging from 12 months to more than three years, plus financial penalties, unpaid work and abstinence requirements.

They included:  
■ A 44-year-old Coventry drink driver who crashed on his way home after a Christmas party.

■ A 65-year-old Rugby drink driver stopped on Christmas Eve after hitting the kerb.

■ A 54-year-old Bedworth woman who failed to provide

a breath test at an Operation Limit vehicle checkpoint.

■ A 33-year-old disqualified, uninsured Leamington drink-driver.

■ A 33-year-old Warwick man caught drink-driving in a supermarket car park in Stratford-upon-Avon.

■ A 20-year-old Solihull man found asleep behind the wheel.

A Warwickshire Police spokesperson said: "Drink- and drug-drivers face a significantly higher risk of causing serious collisions, which is why our officers carried out targeted patrols, checkpoints and engagement at pubs throughout December, to spot them and get them off our roads.

"Operation Limit also uncovered wider criminality,

with arrests for having no insurance, driving without a licence, possession of an offensive weapon, possession with intent to supply class A drugs, criminal damage and harassment."

Inspector Wayne Boulton added: "We make no apology for being tough on anyone who drinks, or takes drugs and drives. Everyone convicted can expect to be disqualified for at least a year, often much longer. The only safe option is not to drink or take drugs and drive at all."

Where appropriate, suspected drink- or drug-drivers were referred to local support services and those struggling with alcohol or drugs were also encouraged to self-refer.

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# £15 on your bill to improve policing

A FURTHER £15 a year will be put on Warwickshire residents' Council Tax bills after Warwickshire's Police and Crime Panel approved an £185million funding plan by Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Philip Secombe.

Warwickshire Police's share of the tax will go up by 4.94 per cent – the maximum permitted by law – from April, equivalent to around £15 extra for an average Band D property.

The PCC's office said the budget would fund improved response times, protect neighbourhood policing, strengthen investigations, improve call-handling, and deliver over £2million in efficiency savings.

Mr Secombe said not taking the maximum rise would have obliged the force to make additional savings worth millions.

He said: "The National Audit Office confirms that Warwickshire is the most disadvantaged force in the country in terms of grant funding per head.

"Not taking the maximum rise would have risked a clear reduction in service for communities, at a time when we know they want to see improvements in response times, visibility of officers and the quality of investigations.

"It's a decision that I take reluctantly, but the funding it unlocks does mean that the improvements



made by Warwickshire Police in recent years can be sustained."

**Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Secombe.**

# Tax rise 'not ideal' says Reform leader

A TAX rise of around £71 a year has been proposed by Warwickshire County Council (WCC).

The Reform-led council has proposed a 3.89 per cent rise in its share of council tax for the 2026-27 financial year – equivalent to an extra £71 a year for a Band D home.

The move has prompted some opponents to accuse the council's leadership of betraying Reform's election promise to reduce taxes, while others say taxes should be raised further to protect frontline services from cuts.

A WCC report said the cost of supporting families of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was a key reason behind the tax increase.

WCC said it would deliver £27.7million of budget reductions in 2026-27, increasing to £100.3million by 2031, through 'better procurement, improvements in efficiency, increased income and delivering reductions in demand'.

Speaking to *The Guardian*, WCC leader Coun George Finch (pictured) said: "It's not an ideal situation. We want low tax, low spend and we were always committed to that. It's just national pressures that the government is not solving.

"The people understand that taxes do have to go up now. I am dead against increasing taxes and I will do as much as I can to lower



that bill and that burden."

The council also plans to invest £37.8million in adult social care, £10.3million in children's social care services, and £11.2million in home to school transport 'to resolve pressures from previous years and ensure we continue to provide services in line with our policy'.

In December, WCC's board said anything below a 4.99% council tax rise – the maximum permitted by law – would threaten the medium-term sustainability of the council.

WCC's official opposition Liberal Democrat Group said Reform's proposals would put WCC's future financial ability 'at serious risk'.

The group's leader, Coun Jerry Roodhouse, said: "For the sake of not charging an extra 35p per week on a typical Band D Council Tax, the current Reform adminis-

tration – and any other councillors who want to support it – wants to cut now many vital services in our communities.

"In doing so, Reform will put at serious risk the future financial ability of the County Council, and whatever replaces it, to meet the needs of the county's residents.

"A small amount of jam today, but an awful lot of pain in the future is no way to govern."

WCC's Conservative Group said Reform's decision not to take the maximum 4.99 per cent increase would leave the council in a vulnerable position by removing money from financial reserves.

Coun Chris Kettle said: "While I understand their zeal to minimise tax increases, I do not admire Reform's plan to fund a smaller increase than is needed by dipping into the council's reserves to do so.

"The council's reserves are there to protect services from unplanned increases in cost, whether through inflation or increasing demand, not to fund unfunded political aspirations.

The people of Warwickshire will see through this reckless approach."

The council was due to vote on its proposed budget on Thursday (February 29), after *The Observer* went to press. Visit [www.rugbyobserver.co.uk](http://www.rugbyobserver.co.uk) or [www.leamingtonobserver.co.uk](http://www.leamingtonobserver.co.uk) for updates.



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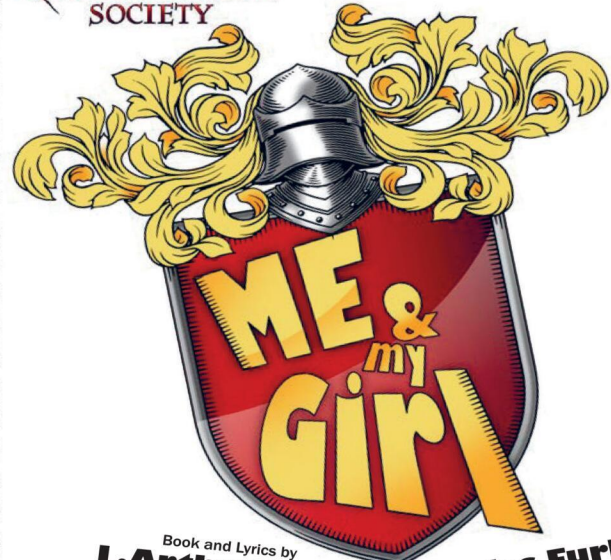
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# 'Rogue landlord' county council chair resigns

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

**THE CHAIRMAN** of Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has resigned after being exposed as a "rogue landlord".

Councillor Edward Harris has been found to be illegally running two unsafe rental properties in Tamworth, Staffordshire.

Tamworth Borough Council said it had issued closure notices on the homes after discovering "multiple serious safety failures", including a lack of central heating and hot water, no working fire alarms, inadequate cooking facilities and unsafe access to outdoor areas.

Coun Harris has resigned from his position as chairman and also said he would resign the Reform party whip and sit as an independent councillor while the matter is being looked into.

Tamworth Borough Council said it had issued two emergency prohibition notices after finding tenants living in unsafe conditions.

The six-bedroom detached buildings, which housed multiple tenants, failed to meet even the most basic of living standards and legal requirements, the council added.

In a statement, the authority



The houses were issued with emergency closure notices. s

said Harris had repeatedly failed to take action to address the problems it had found.

Coun Harris said: "It has been an honour to serve as chairman of Warwickshire County Council. A recent news story has been an unfair distraction of the great work of our council and its people.

"While this matter is looked into, I feel it is my noble duty not to allow my chains of office to be put through a process. Therefore, with immediate effect, I am resigning the office of chairman.

"I would like to thank colleagues across the chamber for their support and for electing me to office. I will continue to serve my residents in Baddesley and Dordon and support the council with all its work to improve the

lives of Warwickshire residents." Warwickshire's Labour MPs have written to WCC leader, Coun George Finch, calling for an urgent investigation.

In a joint letter, Rachel Taylor, John Slinger and Matt Western demanded to know whether Coun Harris fully declared his rental property interests, as required by the councillor code of conduct, and whether he had received housing benefit payments while renting unlicensed properties.

The MPs are calling on WCC to commission a full investigation and provide assurances all councillors who rent properties are compliant with housing and licensing regulations.

Coun Finch added: "I have been informed that Coun Edward Harris has tendered his resignation as chairman of Warwickshire County Council with immediate effect. Coun Harris will no longer sit as a Reform councillor and will be sitting as an independent member while this matter is investigated.

"I want to thank Coun Harris for the service given in the chairman's role. It would be inappropriate to comment on the details while the proper process is ongoing, and I would urge others not to speculate."



Coun Edward Harris was described as a "rogue landlord" by Tamworth Borough Council. s

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# New school opens its doors



The new OSG Ashbrook campus was opened at a ribbon-cutting ceremony led by Giles Bennett, regional director of education in the UK for OneSchool Global. s

A NEW school has opened in Coventry.

OneSchool Global (OSG) has opened its Ashbrook campus in Prologis Park, in the north of the city. The new site hosts around 200 students from years 3 to 13.

The three-storey facility has been converted from a former commercial unit on the industrial park into a purpose-built facility supported by a team of teachers and support staff.

It opened its doors with a ribbon-cutting led by Giles Bennett, regional director of education in the UK for OneSchool Global.

The site will become home to OneSchool Global's UK head office later this year, creating a central hub for leadership and collaboration across the organisation's 23 schools.

Mr Bennett said: "OneSchool Global's new Ashbrook campus epitomises our vision for modern education.

"It is a space where technology

and teaching combine to create an inspiring environment for students and staff."

OneSchool Global campuses follow a 'learning to learn' framework in which students are supported by teachers to take ownership of their learning and to develop the skills required for self-direction.

Harpinder Singh, the new campus principal at OSG Ashbrook, said: "We are thrilled to welcome students and staff to OSG Ashbrook and look forward to building a vibrant learning community where curiosity and collaboration thrive.

"This new campus is an exciting addition for OneSchool Global's campuses and provides a space that enables every student to take ownership of learning, develop confidence and build the skills they need to succeed in the modern economy."

OneSchool Global is recruiting educators for OSG Ashbrook. Visit [www.oneschoolglobal.com/campus/ashbrook](http://www.oneschoolglobal.com/campus/ashbrook) for more details.



by Andy Morris  
andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com

## A COMMITTED Coventry quantity surveyor has become the youngest recipient of a construction and development company's most prestigious award.

Tom Jeffrey, assistant quantity surveyor at Deeley Group, has been named the 16th recipient of the Gary Neville Award.

The award was created in 2012 in tribute to former contracts manager Neville, who died in 2011. It is voted for by colleagues and recognises the employee who has demonstrated the highest level of commitment to their role.

Tom, 22, from Earlsdon, was presented with the award in recognition of his professional devel-

opment over the past year, his dedication to Deeley Group and the positive impact he has on colleagues.

He said: "I really wasn't expecting it. It was a huge surprise, especially as it is such a prestigious honour within the business.

"Ever since joining the business I have been aware of this award. Gary was here long before I was but everyone knows the impact he had and the values he stood for, which are still very much at the heart of the business today.

"To receive this recognition from my colleagues is lovely and to become the youngest ever recipient of the award is something I'm incredibly proud of."

Tom joined the business as an apprentice - the same route taken by Gary before him - in 2020, after spending a week on work experi-

ence the previous year. He has worked across major schemes for the business, most recently supporting a £19.6million independent living scheme for Anchor in Peterborough, and for a £2.9million industrial project in Exhall, where he took on the responsibility of lead quantity surveyor.

Tom is in the final year of his degree apprenticeship, studying for a quantity surveying and commercial management BSc (Hons) at Coventry University.

Peter Deeley, joint managing director at Deeley Group, said: "Tom reflects the core values of the Gary Neville award and is a deserving recipient. It has been great to see Tom's progression, professionally and personally, and colleagues across the business consistently recognise his hard work, commitment and positive attitude."

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## 'Zombie knives' are handed in

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

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

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

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

"Over a recent three-months period, 1,036 weapons including knives, guns and

machetes were deposited into these bins. That means fewer dangerous weapons out on the streets of the West Midlands.

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

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

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

For more information, including the location of the bins, visit [www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/preventing-crime/knife-crime/weapon-surrender-bins](http://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/preventing-crime/knife-crime/weapon-surrender-bins).

# Another £36m for a greener way to travel



Active travel commissioner Beccy Marston and mayor Richard Parker.

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

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

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

As well as announcing the four-year funding package, Active Travel England has also given TFWM – which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority – a capability rating of three – the joint-highest rating achieved by any authority.

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

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

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

"This means more cycle lanes, road crossings, and better pathways to make it easier and safer for everyone to walk and cycle, especially for those shorter journeys, like the school run or a trip to the local shops."

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

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

Beccy said: "This funding allows us to further improve the safety and accessibility of walking, wheeling and cycling in our communities. I'm proud of the commitment demonstrated by our regional officers and the politicians who have championed this work, resulting in the retention of our capability rating."

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

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

## Planning for Spring

with the garden lovers' garden centre



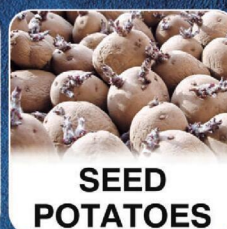
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# A song to say: We must stay vigilant

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

## THERE'LL be moshing in the stalls at the Swan Theatre in Stratford in April.

The Royal Shakespeare Company has announced that alternative British rock band Placebo will compose the music for its 2026 production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, starring double Olivier award-winning actor Mark Gatiss in the title role of the notorious gangster and small-time crook with big boss ambitions.

Directed by Seán Linnen, in a new version by Stephen Sharkey, Brecht's riotous 'gangster spectacle' - set in the back alleys of Chicago's criminal underworld - offers a blistering satire on Hitler's ascent to power and a chilling warning from history which continues to echo down the centuries.

The announcement marks Placebo's first major theatre collaboration to date and takes place in the year in which the band celebrate the 30th anniversary of their seminal, self-titled debut album.

Placebo are one of the defining alternative rock bands of the past 30 years, with 14 million albums sold to date worldwide. The band's eponymous debut album helped pave the way for a strong shift in British music, acting as an antithesis to Britpop and inspiring a generation of bands to follow them.

Placebo went on to claim their place in British music history with six top-ten albums in the UK, collaborating with music legends including David Bowie, Robert Smith and Michael Stipe. The group played sold-out tours and festival headline slots across the globe.

*The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* will play at the Swan Theatre in Stratford from Saturday, April 11 to Saturday, May 30, marking another historic first for the company, as the only staging of the play in the RSC's history.

Brian Molko and Stefan Olsdal, of Placebo, said: "We are very honoured and excited to be collaborating with the Royal Shakespeare Company for the first time, to create the soundtrack to *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, by Bertolt Brecht. Thematically, this cautionary tale from history feels more urgent and prescient than



This is the first time the RSC has staged *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*.

ever, and its relevance to today's world is very chilling.

"The creative process for this project was very different for us, sometimes akin to shooting arrows in the dark. So we tried to connect with the psychology of the outsider as well as taking inspiration from themes of power, alienation and moral decay - which are at the core of this play.

"We are elated by the thought that Placebo's newest music will be performed nightly at the Swan Theatre and we can only hope that we have done this great play justice."

Director Linnen added: "Placebo are one of the most daring, original and imaginative rock bands in history so it is unbelievably

thrilling they've come on board to write a brand-new soundtrack for our production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* this spring.

"As the threat from the far-right grows daily, at home and abroad, it is our job, as artists, to speak up and out. There is no other play that interrogates the political moment we are living

through more than this one, and I'm so lucky to have such fearless and formidable collaborators as Brian Molko, Stefan Olsdal and Mark Gatiss in bringing this production to life."



Placebo will be composing the music for the production.

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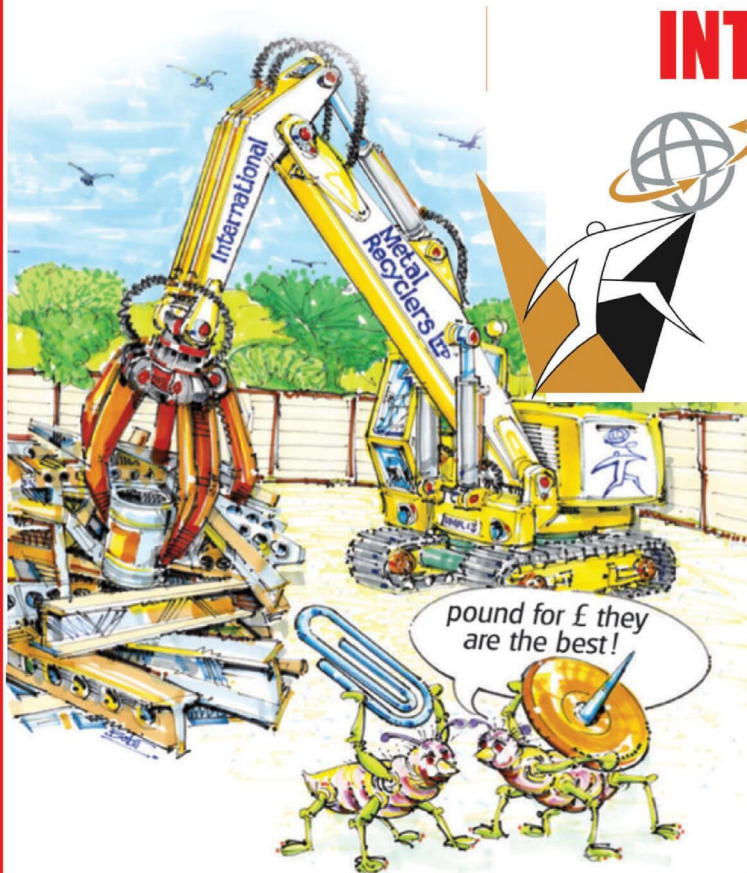
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# Traffic-free future plan is finalised

A MASTERPLAN to transform the Parade in Leamington has been finalised.

The Parade Public Realm Concept Masterplan has been brought about by the Leamington Transformation Board which comprises key stakeholders including Leamington Town Council, Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council.

The plan contains a range of adaptations and changes that, combined, will create a place that will boost the economy, create a safer and accessible environment for visitors of all ages and reinforce the town's Conservation Area status through its design.

These include exploring options to pedestrianise the Parade from Hamilton Terrace to Clarendon Avenue, a new Town Square adjacent to Town Hall extending to Livery Street and Hamilton Terrace, a water feature such as a fountain or mirror pool, integrating trees and planting, supporting cycle access, prioritising segregated cycle links on side streets along with secure cycle parking in the town, fully accessible seating, and prioritising safety with good lighting, natural surveillance and designs that consider neurodivergence and the safety of women and girls.

This is a conceptual starting point which will be further designed,

planned and implemented in phases, allowing improvements in line with budget availability.

The next step is for the Leamington Transformation Board to commission the next stage of design looking in greater detail at solutions for buses, accessibility and access for deliveries and services.

WDC's place spokesperson Coun Chris King said: "I'm really pleased to see the progress being made with this Masterplan. Our team is working really hard to bring forward a town centre that is again the vibrant beating heart in this area for students, retail, visitors and business."

"We've listened to the residents of the district who share their views on what they would like to see included and that has enabled us to work collaboratively to develop this robust plan for the future of the Parade. Being central to the connectivity of the town, it will now become an important focal point for a greener and more sociable event space for the district to enjoy."

Coun Carl Harris of Leamington Town Council added: "The Masterplan is an excellent starting point to look at detailed options for making the wonderful Parade an even more exciting and attractive place to be. I look forward to seeing further design work to identify more detailed proposals and address the issues that have been raised by the local community."

Visit [transformingleamington.co.uk](http://transformingleamington.co.uk) for more details.

# Things are picking up



Leam Trash Friends get busy cleaning up the town.

LITTER pickers are at the ready for a spring clean of Leamington.

Leam Trash Friends has launched its Spring Clean series, inviting residents, businesses, and organisations to get involved and help keep the town shining.

Community clean-up events will take place on February 14 in North Leamington, starting at St Mark's Church, February 21 in the Sydenham area, meeting at Asda, February 28 meeting at Morrisons and March 7 from Leamington Town Hall. All events will run from 10am until 12pm.

Volunteers will be provided with gloves, bags, and tools. Leam Trash Friends is also appealing directly to

businesses to sponsor their efforts by sending staff to join a session, donating supplies, or simply committing to keeping the immediate vicinity of their premises tidy and welcoming.

A Leam Trash Friends spokesperson said: "Every tag removed, every sack collected, and every needle safely cleared makes Leamington safer, prouder, and more beautiful. We relaunched because our town deserves better - and with community and business support, we can achieve a truly litter- and graffiti-free Leamington this spring."

Visit [facebook.com/leamtrashfriends](http://facebook.com/leamtrashfriends) for more details.



Pedestrianisation is at the centre of the Masterplan.

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# Name Rugby's rubbish lorries

CREATIVE kids in Rugby are being challenged to name the borough's new food-waste collection vehicles.

Rugby Borough Council (RBC) has started a competition inviting primary school children to name the new lorries, which will support the council's new food waste recycling service, which will start on July 6.

The competition will be judged according to creativity, originality and relevance to food waste, and will be judged by a panel of local leaders including council members and waste management experts.

Councillor Alison Livesey, RBC spokesperson for operations and traded services – and one of the judges – said: "I am thrilled to be judging this competition, giving the children of Rugby a chance to make a permanent contribution to our new food waste service."

"Getting them excited about recycling helps them to understand why going green helps the environment by reducing waste."

"Involving them in the launch of our new service is a great way of doing that."

Coun Livesey's Liberal Democrat counterpart, Coun Sam Edwards, said: "The new food waste service is a great opportunity to educate the next generation about recycling and why we all need to do our bit."

"Including children in the launch of our service, ahead of the rollout on July 6, is key to teaching them about the service itself and the difference they and their families can make."

Running from Monday until March 23, the competition is open to all primary school children in the borough and the winning entries will be announced on March 27.

Pupils can submit their entries by asking parents, guardians or their school to email their submissions to [foodwaste@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:foodwaste@rugby.gov.uk) on their behalf.

Alternatively, an RBC representative will collect entry sheets from schools on the closing date.

# Have your say on borough's future

by **Andy Morris**  
[andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com](mailto:andy.morris@bullivantmedia.com)

**A SURVEY has been launched, asking Rugby residents for their priorities to inform future discussions about the proposed reorganisation of local government.**

Rugby Borough Council (RBC) has opened its online resident engagement survey to hear what people feel makes Rugby unique, what matters most to them about local services, and how they would like decisions affecting their area to be made in future.

It encourages residents to share what they value most about the borough and their expectations for how council services and local decision-making should work, in the context of local government reorganisation (LGR) in Warwickshire.

An RBC spokesperson said: "The survey is an early-stage listening exercise designed to ensure Rugby's identity, needs and local voice are clearly understood as arrangements develop."

"The engagement is not a consultation on whether local government reorganisation should take place and does not ask residents to support or oppose LGR. Instead, it focuses on capturing local priorities and perspectives to help inform future discussions."

Council leader Michael Moran said: "As we prepare to rearrange local government services within Rugby, and the wider Warwickshire area, we have committed to ensuring any new authority maintains a significant presence within the borough."

"Understanding what matters most to our

residents will help us plan for this change, ready for when the government announces its preferred model of local government reform in Warwickshire."

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse, chair of RBC's town centre working group, added: "Rugby's town centre and local communities are at the heart of how residents experience council services and decision-making."

"This survey gives residents the opportunity to speak up on what makes Rugby Borough unique and what they want to see protected, as future arrangements are considered. I would encourage residents to take part and make sure their views are heard."

RBC and Warwickshire County Council have filed support for a single unitary council to represent Warwickshire.

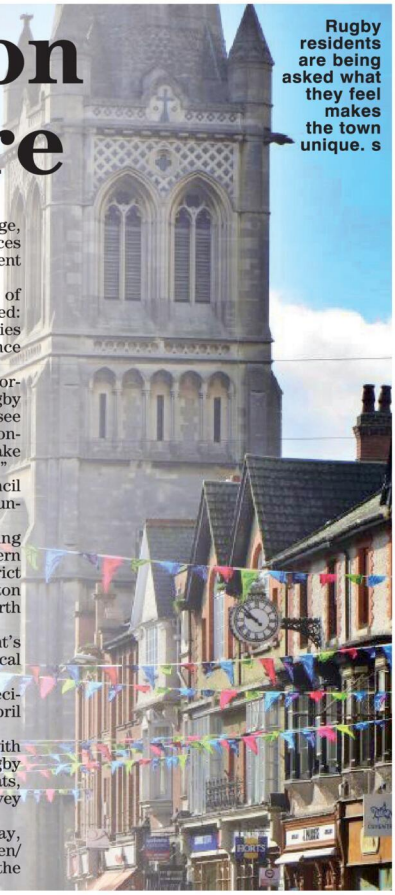
A 'two-unitary' proposal – splitting Warwickshire into northern and southern councils – is favoured by Stratford District Council, Warwick District Council, Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council, and North Warwickshire Borough Council.

The submissions follow the government's invitation to bring forward options for local government reorganisation.

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

The Rugby survey is available online, with paper copies also available from Rugby Town Hall reception. Alternative formats, and assistance with completing the survey can also be provided at the town hall.

The survey is open until Monday, February 24. Visit [www.rugby.gov.uk/en/lgr-engagement-survey](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/en/lgr-engagement-survey) to take part in the exercise, and for more details.



Rugby residents are being asked what they feel makes the town unique. s

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**Mammoth new range of mattresses now on show.**

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

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

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

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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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# MP's call for action on icy pavements

ICY pavements across Warwickshire are an accident waiting to happen without better gritting.

That is the concern of Warwick and Leamington MP Matt Western, after witnessing hazardous conditions on streets and pavements during the recent cold snap.

He said he had also been approached by residents and businesses who are worried that Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) gritters were giving their footpaths the cold shoulder.

Mr Western wrote to WCC's leader Coun George Finch to air his concerns and ask to what extent good quality gritting had been

undertaken.

The MP emphasised that the pavements were particularly dangerous for those with reduced mobility and those with greater risk of falling. He also stressed that the conditions could deter people from visiting town centres.

Coun Finch responded by sharing the standard response from WCC - that all main traffic routes, A roads, most B roads and one or two other strategic routes in urban areas are gritted when ice is predicted, along with accesses to hospitals and main industrial estates, and single routes into all villages.

Mr Western said: "I saw firsthand how icy

the local pavements were and the hazardous conditions they were creating, particularly for older residents and those with limited mobility.

"It seems the county council do not proactively grit pavements unless they are identified as specific concerns, something I fear may happen too late after someone has slipped and been hurt.

"There's no doubt we will get another sub-zero cold snap this winter and I will push the county council to do more on gritting our pavements. I'd also encourage residents to feed back to the council on which pavements are particularly bad and require gritting to help keep people safe."



Love Lutterworth events are taking place in the town centre throughout February.

## Spreading the love

A CELEBRATION of Lutterworth will offer arts and creativity, promote local shopping and bring the community together across the town throughout February.

Love Lutterworth is a new initiative driven by independent retailer group Lutterworth Town Team, with support from Harborough District Council and partners, to organise a busy calendar of events.

Activities include free half-term creative arts and crafts workshops for kids, which will run at The Wycliffe Rooms and The Archway Gallery, suitable for children aged five to 12.

The Love Lyrics Quiz Trail will challenge music lovers to identify lyrics displayed in shop windows around the town, with free treats on offer along the way, and a chance to win a £50 voucher to spend on food and drink at The Wycliffe Rooms.

Visitors to Lutterworth on Saturday February 14 can enjoy free car parking in council owned car parks and an afternoon of music from the Lutterworth Town Band performing a Love Themes Concert at the Wycliffe Rooms.

St Mary's Church invites the community to add a leaf to the Tree of Life to symbolise love and remembrance, and The Churchgate Community Centre Open Kitchen is offering love themed snacks at the Thursday Open

Kitchen.

A free Shared Reading taster event takes place at Lutterworth Library on Tuesday February 17 at 2pm, with selected titles and words all on the theme of love.

Meanwhile, the week-long LADAS Art Exhibition will showcase work from local artists, arts and craft workshops for adults will be held, and there will be a strong shop focus celebrating independent retailers, cafes and eateries.

Coun Jo Asher, Harborough District Council's Cabinet lead for Culture, Leisure, Economy and Tourism, said: "Vibrant town centres are important to our local economy.

"Love Lutterworth is a great way to celebrate the creativity and community that makes Lutterworth a valued place, and everyone is invited to join in."

This project has received £5,000 from the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Visit [www.visitharborough.com/love-lutterworth](http://www.visitharborough.com/love-lutterworth) for more information about Love Lutterworth. Residents and visitors are also encouraged to follow Visit Harborough District on Facebook and Instagram for updates. Visit Harborough District is part of Harborough District Council.

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Josephine Rugg



LEFT: A dancing dragon will lead the parade. RIGHT: Traditional Chinese dancers will perform at the event.

# New Year event promises spectacle

RUGBY town centre will welcome in the Chinese New Year later this month.

A free celebration to mark the event will take place in Market Place on Sunday February 22 between 11.30am and 3.30pm.

Visitors will be treated to traditional Chinese music, dance, crafts, food, face painting and lantern making, and will be invited to join in the parade.

Chinese New Year marks the start of the lunar calendar and is the most important festival in Chinese culture, featuring family reunions, festive decorations, and traditional customs that date back thousands of years.

The 15-day celebration includes

practices like giving red envelopes filled with money, lighting fireworks to ward off evil spirits, and enjoying symbolic foods that represent good fortune and prosperity.

In the Chinese calendar, each year is associated with a specific zodiac, and 2026 is the year of the horse, which symbolizes energy, passion and boldness.

At the Rugby event, there will be a full programme of music and dance, and a chance for attendees to try their hands at calligraphy, origami, face painting, lantern making and tea tasting.

Visitors will also be encouraged to try some traditional Chinese food and pick up a red envelope and coins – a traditional new year gift

symbolizing good luck and happiness.

The centrepiece of the day will be the procession, which will involve lion and dragon dancing, lanterns and drums. It will leave Market Place at around 11.45am.

The event is being organised by Rugby Warwickshire Chinese Society in partnership with Rugby First and Rugby Borough Council.

Amy Zhang, Chairperson of the Rugby Warwickshire Chinese Society, said: "The Chinese New Year celebrations are a very important annual celebration for the Chinese Community and I am really pleased that we have the opportunity to celebrate it with the wider community in the town centre.

"I have no doubt that the lanterns, colourful and enigmatic lion and dragon dancing, along with the brilliant music and dance will provide an amazing spectacle and fantastic atmosphere in the town centre.

"I would like to say a special thank you to the Chinese Communities, Rugby First, Rugby Borough Council and all those taking part for their support and enthusiasm in helping to bring this event to life in Rugby town centre. Finally, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Chinese New Year."

Linda Lowne, Rugby First Business Director, said: "It's fantastic that Rugby town centre will be hosting Chinese New Year celebra-

tions and I want to extend a special thanks to all those involved.

"The music and dance programme along with some traditional Chinese crafts looks amazing and I personally can't wait to see the lion and dragon dancing."

"The Chinese community in Rugby and the surrounding area continues to grow and we are looking forward to welcoming visitors from Coventry, Warwick and Leamington, many of whom are university students, to the town centre which can only be good news for the local economy."

Visit [www.rugbyfirst.org](http://www.rugbyfirst.org) for more information on the festival, including the full music and dance programme.



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# New fund set to help many at risk of becoming homeless

Mayor Richard Parker with Michelle Brown, Move On officer at The Gateway, former residents Steve, Dean, Ali and Maz, and Gail Cooper, Citizen housing support manager at The Gateway.



**H**UNDREDS of people at risk of homelessness across the region are getting help from a £1million cash boost.

West Midlands Mayor, Richard Parker, has been handed the funds by the government for the Rough Sleeping Prevention and Recovery Grant (RSPARG) programme.

The programme offers practical support for around 700 people either already sleeping rough, at risk of losing their home, or living in temporary and insecure housing.

The Mayor visited Coventry to meet a group of people who have recently been homeless and are now turning their lives around thanks to the Move On project, funded through the RSPARG programme and run by

housing association Citizen from The Gateway supported housing scheme.

Other projects supported by the region's RSPARG funding include targeted help for care leavers and women, as well as work with landlords and housing associations to identify tenants at risk before they reach the point of homelessness.

Steve, from Coventry, told the Mayor how he arrived at The Gateway after being evicted from a shared house. With support from Citizen, he has overcome personal challenges and is now living independently in his own flat.

He is also chairman of Gateway Link, a group of current and former Gateway residents who run social activities and use their skills to sup-

port each other, from decorating and DIY to helping with removals when they move into their own homes.

Mr Parker said: "Hearing Steve's story left me in no doubt about the devastating impact that being homeless can have on someone's life and how a safe, secure home underpins everything. Without it, health, confidence and opportunity can quickly unravel.

"That's why I'm using this funding to give more people like him and the others I met at The Gateway the hope they need to get themselves back on their feet. It's already changed their lives for the better and will do the same for many more."

There are currently 7,000 households living in temporary accom-

modation and the number of people sleeping rough across the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area remains at around pre-pandemic levels.

Citizen is using its funding to employ a dedicated Move On Officer, Michelle Brown, to work closely with residents at The Gateway, helping them move out of supported accommodation and settle into their own home and an independent life.

This project, which began in August, is showing great potential, having already helped 12 residents successfully move into their own homes, with four also now in work.

Public generosity continues to play a vital role alongside this work. Since its launch eight years ago, the region's year-round alternative giving campaign Change into

Action has raised over £350,000 and helped more than 2,000 people move away from rough sleeping towards a more secure future.

The campaign, run by WMCA's Homelessness Taskforce and local councils, encourages people to make an online donation rather than giving directly to those asking for money on the street.

Every donation goes directly to trusted local charities and street teams, helping people sleeping rough to access targeted support, including finding a home, essential household items and clothing, and boosting confidence, health, and wellbeing.

For more or to donate visit [www.changeintoaction.org.uk](http://www.changeintoaction.org.uk).



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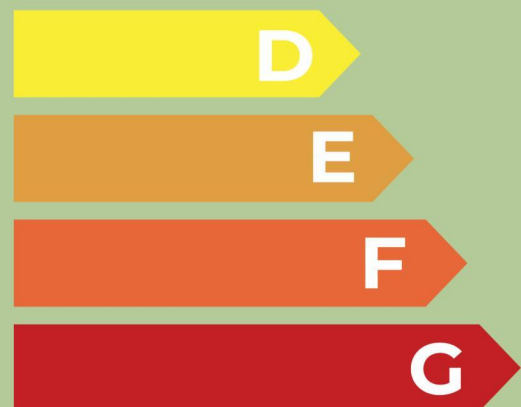
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Funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, this initiative is delivered by Warwick District Council in partnership with Broad Oak Group and local charity Act on Energy.



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- Have a gross household income of £36,000 or less per year **OR** live in an eligible postcode area **OR** someone in your home receives a means tested benefit; **and**
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## Region must get a fair deal

THE CALL for a reformed police funding formula has been echoed by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

Simon Foster has backed the parliamentary public accounts committee, which is urging the government to deliver a 'fair deal' for the West Midlands.

In a report, the committee concluded the government, "is relying on a hopelessly outdated formula to allocate [police] funding, despite repeated calls from this committee, and its predecessors, to reform its approach".

Mr Foster said: "It does not surprise me that the public accounts committee has called for the 'hopelessly outdated' police funding formula to be reviewed.

"The last review was in 2013 and successive governments have, inexcusably, failed to grip this issue. As a result, West Midlands Police will still have 520 fewer officers than it had in 2010 and we receive over £40million a year less than even the current formula says we should.

"This chronic failure is inexcusable. It means many forces, particularly in rural, low crime areas, have more officers than at any point in their history while the West Midlands is denied the officers it needs.

"I am concerned the new police reform white paper is yet another missed opportunity to address these problems. While the new government has already fixed local government funding, to the benefit of areas like ours, the white paper puts funding formula reform on the back burner, suggesting it might not start until 2034.

"This would mean that West Midlands Police will have been structurally underfunded for over 20 years. It is unthinkable that we should continue to be left in such a deeply iniquitous and unfair position.

"Police funding needs to be fixed, and it needs to be fixed now."

# Giving ill-gotten gains back to the public

by Sarah Mason  
sarah.mason@bullivantmedia.com

**A TOTAL of £330,000 that has been seized from criminals will be handed back to the people, says the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).**

Simon Foster made the announcement as he launched the latest My Community Fund, which reinvests the proceeds of crime back into communities across the region, empowering residents to deliver impactful local solutions to persistent crime challenges.

Community groups and charities are being encouraged to apply for grants of up to £5,000 for projects that align with the PCC's strategic vision for public safety.

Mr Foster, said: "I am pleased to announce that the My Community Fund is back for another year. This is about making sure that crime does not pay.

"There is a real sense of justice in taking money out of the pockets of criminals and putting it back into the hands of the people who are working tirelessly to improve their neighbourhoods.

"Local people know their communities best. This fund empowers them to lead from the front – whether that's by steering young



**The Birmingham Community Boxing Project used the My Community Fund to put on sessions in schools and to purchase new gloves and pads for youngsters. s**

people away from violence, preventing burglary or making our streets feel safer for everyone."

Previous rounds of the fund have supported everything from youth boxing clubs and anti-knife crime initiatives to mental health support and community patrols.

The Birmingham Community Boxing Project used the My Community Fund to put on sessions in schools and to purchase new gloves and pads for youngsters.

Keith Tucker, from the Birmingham Community Boxing Project, said the My Community

Fund helped it to deliver programmes to schools including Welsh House Farm Community School and Four Dwellings Academy.

He said: "Boxing is a proven sport to steer children away from the wrong path in life.

"Thanks to the My Community Fund, we've been able to deliver early intervention programmes in schools, with tremendous feedback.

"The funding even allowed us to purchase gloves and pads branded with the West Midlands PCC logo, creating a positive



link between the youth, the PCC and the force. Many of the children we worked with in schools are now attending our weekly sessions in south Birmingham, proving that this support creates a lasting legacy."

Applications are now open to community groups until March 13.

To find out if a project is eligible, and to submit a bid, visit the West Midlands PCC website.



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# Music Matters

## Turning the spotlight on Coventry's Hazel



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

Being Hazel - the new exhibition at The Coventry Music Museum

PROBABLY the most romantic song to come out of Coventry was Will You, sung by local legend Hazel O'Connor, so what better day to launch the latest exhibition at The Coventry Music Museum but on February 14 - St Valentine's day.

This new exhibition Being Hazel tells the story of this Coventry icon in her own words through a series of interviews, including a never-before-seen interview that centres on the Irish side of her life growing up in Coventry, and the often dark times of her school days.

Expect to see a collection of personal items from Hazel herself including stage wear, awards, rare posters and lots of Hazel memorabilia.

In my humble opinion, this will be a perfect way to thank one of

our own for all the joy her music and acting has bought us. Hazel is of course recovering from illness at the moment and this is our way of brightening her day and just thanking her and sending our love.

The exhibition is like a huge get well soon card. Those who saw the iconic film Breaking Glass know how it made Hazel a huge star, and as always our amazing team have created a very special photo opportunity based on the film at the museum. You won't want to miss this!

Hazel O'Connor was born in Coventry on May 16, 1955 in the Wyken area of the city, leaving Foxford Grange School in 1971.

She eventually found fame playing the punk princess Kate Crowley in the highly regarded film Breaking Glass, a film for which she wrote all the songs, which in turn gave her chart hits like Will You and Eighth Day.

She went on to be successful in film and TV, and of course in her musical career, easily presenting her body of work on the stage in a traditional Irish style (with Cormac de Barra), jazz style (The Bluja Project, with Sarah

Fisher and Clare Hirst) or as a full blown rock band (with The Subterraneans).

The Subterraneans famously backed her on her epic 2010 Christmas project Re-Joyce - effectively Hazel's catharsis to her mother's cancer journey - a collaboration that included Pauline Black, Neville Staple, Vince Hill, Toyah Willcox, Carol Decker and Ranking Roger. The song raised thousands for Myton Hospice and was produced by Roger Lomas.

The exhibition is sponsored by Sky Blue Archive.Com. On Sat February 14 there will be live music with the amazing Sarah Fisher and Clare Hirst who, of course, formed the Bluja Project with Hazel.

They will have a short live set in Knights at the 2-Tone Village at Coventry's 2-Tone Quarter at 1pm, presenting new singer Rose, plus the Breaking Glass movie on the big screen and Hazel merchandise from 12pm.

The exhibition runs until December 2026.

**Being Hazel opens at The Coventry Music Museum on February 14.**

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# Browse the Winter Edition of Seasons



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

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

Pick up a copy locally for free, or simply browse on line [www.seasons-magazine.com](http://www.seasons-magazine.com)

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

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

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



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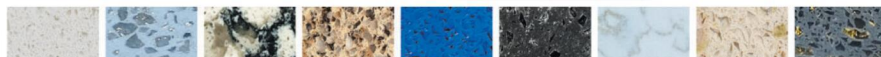


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## More help for those quitting

**SMOKERS** in Warwickshire are being encouraged to make 2026 their year to quit.

Alongside existing support provided by Smoke Free Coventry and Warwickshire, individuals can now access stop smoking support at their GP. Warwickshire County Council is working with Integrated Primary Care to provide the service, funded through the UK Government's Smoke Free Generation Grant.

The GP-led service is available free of charge to people aged 12 and over who live, work, study, or are registered with a GP in Warwickshire. It offers a tailored 12-week programme, including one-to-one support and practical tools such as Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) to help people quit smoking for good. Adults over 18 years of age may also be offered stop smoking medication and vapes where appropriate.

This new route to receive support is being implemented alongside the established stop smoking service from Smoke Free Coventry and Warwickshire, which is delivered by Fitter Futures in Warwickshire. If a GP does not yet offer the support directly, individuals will be provided support through another local practice or by Fitter Futures.

Using a stop smoking service makes it three times more likely that someone will quit successfully, making the start of 2026 an ideal time to access professional support and set a quit date.

WCC's health spokesperson Coun Anne-Marie Sonko said: "It is common for people to make several attempts to quit smoking before they succeed, and we know that having the right support in place can make a real difference. With support now available through Warwickshire GPs, it's easier than ever for people to get the help they need to quit smoking for good and lead happier, healthier, and more independent lives."

Visit [smokefreecw.co.uk](http://smokefreecw.co.uk) for more details.

# You've got to love the new reading campaign

by **Philippa Mingins**  
[philippa.mingins@bullivantmedia.com](mailto:philippa.mingins@bullivantmedia.com)

**LIBRARY-goers** across Warwickshire are being encouraged to read about what they love most in 2026.

Whether people enjoy music, sport, fashion or food, there's one thing that can take them deeper into what they are passionate about - reading. That's the philosophy behind Warwickshire Libraries' support for the National Year of Reading 2026, a nationwide campaign with the rallying cry 'Go All In.'

The goal is to reignite reading for pleasure across the UK by meeting people where their passions already live.

The National Year of Reading, headed up by the National Literacy Trust and sponsored by the Department for Education, operates on a simple but powerful idea: "If you're into it, read into it."

Schools across Warwickshire will also benefit from the National Literacy Trust's flexible, year-long programme featuring professional development and unmissable events for children and young people.

The full programme is still developing, with dates and venues to be confirmed soon.

Warwickshire County Council's customer spokesperson Coun Mike Bannister said: "Reading is key to so much development at all ages. It stimulates imagination much more effectively than watching films or television and, in turn, encourages the mind to be creative and to problem solve."

Warwickshire Libraries has also set bold targets for this year, including a five per cent increase in library registrations, more



Budding bookworms are being urged to read about what they love.

children completing the annual Summer Reading Challenge, and expanded uptake of the popular county read-along Book Bingo across all ages.

For book lovers of all ages, Warwickshire Libraries will host monthly free author events featuring everyone from debut novelist Karen Storey to international best-sellers Lee Child, Rosie Goodwin, Sophie Hannah and Sue Moorcroft. Genres span crime, romance, horror and more.

The annual read-along Adult Book Bingo is set to be popular in 2026, which saw

more than 800 readers follow 12 book themes in 2025.

Coun Bannister added: "We intend to bring about a significant, achievable increase in library attendance and use that as a building block so that reading becomes an integral part of the development of many more of our residents in the years ahead."

Visit [library.warwickshire.gov.uk/go-all-in-with-the-national-year-of-reading-2026](http://library.warwickshire.gov.uk/go-all-in-with-the-national-year-of-reading-2026) for more details.

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By Coach from Coventry, Rugby

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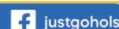
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# Safety bid targets new drivers

A NEW road safety scheme is geared at tackling young drivers speeding on rural roads in Warwickshire, particularly the Fosse Way.

With 41 per cent of all collisions occurring on rural roads, the danger often isn't breaking the speed limit, it's driving too fast for the conditions, particularly at bends and junctions where visibility and control could be compromised due to inappropriate speeds.

A key element of this Warwickshire County Council initiative is its targeted approach to young drivers, often the most at-risk road user group in rural areas, through tailored education and engagement efforts.

The scheme, developed in collaboration with behavioural science consultancy SoMoCo, is designed to address both illegal and inappropriate speeding, particularly among young and newly qualified drivers, who are statistically at higher risk of road traffic collisions.

Despite representing just eight per cent of Warwickshire's driving population, young drivers account for 21 per cent of crashes and a staggering 31 per cent of fatalities, with rural roads posing the greatest danger.

Warwickshire's historic Fosse Way is a 36-mile Roman road with a history of over 100 collisions in the last five years. It largely follows the modern B4455 road, passing near Stratford, Warwick, and Kenilworth.

WCC's transport spokesperson COUN Jennifer Warren said: "What sets our approach apart is that we are addressing the 'why' behind speeding and the 'how' we combat it, not just the 'what'.

"By using the data provided by the audit, we're combining traditional engineering solutions with advanced behavioural science to create an evidence-based strategy for changing how people drive in rural areas to tackle their speeding."

The audit identified key behavioural traits of speeding drivers and highlighted opportunities for targeted interventions. The result



is a scheme that not only improves physical road infrastructure but also influences driver behaviour at both conscious and subconscious levels.

Key features of the initiative include engineering upgrades including enhanced signage, road markings, and speed-reducing measures at high-risk junctions and bends, behavioural nudges including instinctive roadside cues designed to subtly guide drivers toward safer speeds, messaging to engage drivers, particularly younger ones, in adopting safer driving habits, and community engagement through digital campaigns and local outreach.

# County officer gets suspended prison term

A WARWICKSHIRE Police detective who pursued an inappropriate relationship with the mother of a child victim has been given a suspended jail sentence.

Independent Office for Police Conduct investigators found DC John Littlewood exchanged hundreds of messages, many of a sexualised nature, with a woman he met through one of his investigations.

Littlewood appeared at Birmingham Crown Court on Friday January 30 where he was given an eight-month prison sentence, suspended for 15 months, and ordered to carry out 100 hours of work in the community.

The 52-year-old, who worked in the force's Child Abuse, Trafficking and Exploitation team before his retirement, had pleaded guilty to one count of improper exercise of police powers and privileges by a constable, contrary to Section 26 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015, at an earlier court hearing.

He denied a second charge in relation to another woman. That matter will lie on file.

The IOPC investigation began in December 2023 following a referral from Warwickshire Police and ended in December 2024 when a file of evidence was sent to the Crown Prosecution Service who authorised the charges.

Littlewood met Female X in October

2021 when he was assigned to investigate a report of a sexual assault against the woman's daughter.

Between May and September 2023 investigators found he exchanged more than 300 messages with the woman, including many of an inappropriate nature.

CCTV enquiries and cell site mapping of his phone revealed he met the woman at a Coventry hotel in the early hours of October 1 2023 for around 50 minutes.

Littlewood also paid frequent visits to Female X's home which aroused the suspicions of a support worker who raised concerns with Warwickshire Police's Professional Standards Department.

IOPC Director of Engagement Derrick Campbell, said: "Female X is a vulnerable woman who has clearly been manipulated by DC Littlewood. He met her while on duty and used that contact to start up a friendship which led to inappropriate contact including sexualised messages.

"The officer clearly knew his behaviour was improper as he told her to delete messages, some of which were sent while on duty, as they would get him into trouble at work.

"Police professional standards are clear that officers should never use their position to establish or pursue improper relationships with any victims, witnesses, offenders or other vulnerable person and never enter into inappropriate communication."

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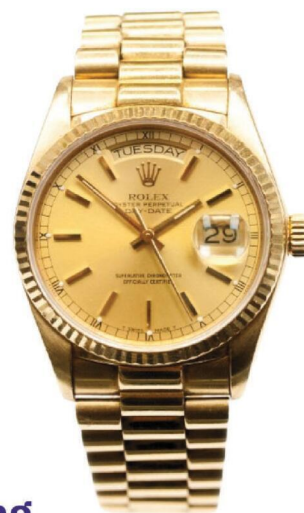
**Thursday 12th February 2pm to 4pm**

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# Public ownership brings 'new era' for rail services



Picture by Tristan Harris, Bullivant Media Group Ltd.

RAIL SERVICES operated by West Midlands Trains were transferred to public ownership on Sunday, in line with government plans for a simpler and more unified railway.

The historic change tomorrow saw West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern initially being taken over by the government-owned DfT Operator Limited until new public-body Great British Railways is fully established.

West Midlands Trains will be the fourth operator to enter public ownership under the government's Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act, joining Greater Anglia, C2C and South Western Railway.

More than 8,500 publicly owned rail services are now running daily, helping over 660million passengers get where they need to go each year, and at a time when the government has frozen rail fares for the first time in 30 years.

Transport secretary Heidi Alexander, said thousands of passengers who travelled with West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern were now using services owned by the public and run with their interests at heart.

"We're working hard to reform a fragmented system and deliver a reli-

able railway that regenerates communities, rebuilds the trust of its passengers, and delivers the high standards they rightly expect."

## The services

Services operated by West Midlands Railway include routes across Worcestershire and to Hereford and Birmingham. Among them are the Cross City Line from Bromsgrove and Redditch to Lichfield via Birmingham New Street. There are also routes to Worcester and Kidderminster and other West Midlands areas, including to Coventry, Solihull and Dorridge and across Warwickshire to Stratford, Leamington, Warwick and Rugby.

London Northwestern Railway operates between Liverpool and Birmingham and along the West Coast Main Line to and from London Euston.

West Midlands Trains managing director, Ian McConnell, said: "We are proud to be one of the fastest-growing train operators in the country with millions of passengers travelling on West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services every month.

"We've introduced more than 100 new trains and upgraded our depots

and station facilities.

"We're looking forward to opening five brand new stations this year and we're also rolling out 'Pay-As-You-Go' ticketing across 75 locations to enable seamless tap-in, tap-out travel.

"Public ownership is an exciting opportunity to build on this success through a strong culture of collaboration and integration with the wider family of publicly owned operators."

West Midlands Railway is jointly managed with the West Midlands Rail Executive led by Mayor Richard Parker, through a Collaboration Agreement with the DfT - that was also renewed on Sunday.

Mr Parker said: "For too long passengers have had to put up with unreliable and overcrowded trains and a confusing ticket system run by companies who put profit before people.

"Now we have a government which is delivering on its pledge to take public ownership and fix our broken railways."

'More needs to be done'

Although this is a positive step, Johnbosco Nwogbo at public ownership campaign organisation We Own It, said there was still a long way to go to improve services for passengers.

"Bringing train operating companies like West Midlands Railway into public ownership hardly gets us a quarter of the way to delivering the experience passengers really expect.

"With the company seeing the second highest growth in unreliability across the railway in the year to March 2025, public ownership will be a powerful tool to unite incentives for the benefit of passengers in the region. But it will not be a panacea.

"So much will come down to the broader reforms that the government's Railways Bill will create, and on that front their approach to that is scattershot.

"On the one hand they want to remove private interests from train operations, but the bill leaves private profiteering intact in train, or rolling stock, ownership."

Over the past 100-years the structure of railway ownership in the UK has changed since the Railways Act introduced privatisation in 1921. That lasted until 1947 when the Transport Act established the government-owned British Rail, which remained in place until 1993 when privatisation re-emerged.

Finally, in 2025 the Railway Bill was introduced bringing about the demise of the current privatisation status, and the creation of Great British Railways.



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Happy to help!

# Volunteers can help people in food poverty and reduce waste

by Ashleigh Osborne  
ashleigh.osborne@bullivantmedia.com

**THE positive power of sharing a simple meal together for boosting mental wellbeing, happiness and healthier diets, has been highlighted in new findings from community dining charity FoodCycle.**

The organisation is a national community-dining charity that brings people together to share nourishing good food and conversation across the country, including in Coventry and Worcester.

Each week, local volunteers serve up wholesome community meals made using surplus food that would otherwise have gone to waste, served free to anyone who wants them.

The charity aims to create a cycle of positive change, helping to reduce food waste, tackle loneliness and support mental health while encouraging healthy eating and sustainable living – nourishing communities, plate by plate and chat by chat.

In a national survey of guests attending its community meals around England and Wales, the

charity found high levels of food insecurity and loneliness – with 75 per cent of its visitors skipping meals, 74 per cent feeling lonely, and 67 per cent eating most or all of their other meals alone.

The results highlighted the impact of the high cost of living, with most respondents unable to afford a healthy diet.

Only 15 per cent of FoodCycle's attendees had £35 or more to spend on food each week, per person in their household – way below the cost of a healthy diet of £52.36 per person, per week (or £7.48 per person, per day).

By contrast, FoodCycle found the benefits of sharing weekly community meals went far beyond simply providing access to free food.

Around 92 per cent of its visitors agreed eating with others is good for wellbeing and mental health.

FoodCycle CEO Sophie Tebbetts said the survey highlighted how community dining can benefit health and wellbeing at a time when 7.5 million UK people are in food poverty, and less than 1 per cent of the population eat a healthy diet.

Sophie said: "It shows things are not getting better for people and the need is quite multi-faceted – a



Volunteer Nicole at a FoodCycle event.

lot of people are struggling with a lot of different things, from the high cost of living to low income, to feeding their families, housing insecurity, loneliness and mental health challenges.

"People are skipping meals; many simply cannot afford to eat healthily, and some are surviving without even basic equipment to cook.

"People come to us from lots of backgrounds and are facing different challenges. One clear uniting factor is that sharing community meals is overwhelmingly beneficial.

"It's clear that action is needed to help people in lots of different ways. Our results demonstrate the need for sustained investment

in community 'third spaces', so projects like our community meals can continue to nourish those who need us."

Anyone over 18 can volunteer with FoodCycle, with roles cooking, hosting, pot washing and delivering surplus food.

Visit [volunteer.foodcycle.org.uk/westmidlands](http://volunteer.foodcycle.org.uk/westmidlands) for more details.

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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:

**C88 LAWFORD LANE, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Main Street/Coventry Road to Calvestone Road.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30-15.00hrs.  
Order Commences: 11 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 13 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Calvestone Road, B4642 Coventry Road and vice versa.  
Access/egress to/from Frobisher Road and Nelson Way to be via Addison Road direction only whilst works are in progress. Access/egress to/from Cheshire Close and Winwick Place may be restricted whilst works are in progress.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**CONSUL ROAD, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of manhole frame and covers.  
Order Commences: 8 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 8 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Glebe Farm Road, Old Leicester Road, Brownsover Road, Leicester Road and vice versa.  
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

**C34 FRANKTON LANE, STRETTON ON DUNSMORE**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Fosse Way to Princethorpe Road.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 08.00hrs-16.00hrs.  
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 13 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** B4455 Fosse Way, B4453 (Rugby Road, Princethorpe Road) and vice versa.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**D3584 NELSON WAY, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from Lawford Lane to Wheatfield Road/Blackwood Avenue.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.  
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 10 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Lawford Lane, Frobisher Road, Fremantle Road, Blackwood Avenue and vice versa.  
Access/egress to/from Ditton Close, Franklin Close, Queensferry Close, Montgomery Drive, Plover Close and Holyoak Close may be restricted whilst works are in progress.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**REGENT STREET, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic and temporary suspension of turn from Church Street onto Regent Street.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable the undertaking of a high-level roof and building survey.  
Order Commences: 8 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 8 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Church Street, North Street, Park Road, Regent Place, Albert Street, Bank Street and vice versa.  
Contractor: Paragon TM Ltd, Tel: 08006 980 267.

**MAIN STREET, WILLY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of a manhole frame and cover.  
Order Commences: 10 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 10 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Coal Pit Lane, Watling Street, A5 and vice versa.  
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

**HOLBROOK AVENUE, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic near Holbrook Avenue.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable the repair or replacement of a manhole frame and cover.  
Order Commences: 10 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 10 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Park Road, Manor Road and vice versa.  
Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918 389 363.

**ST EDITHS CLOSE, MONKS KIRBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from the junction on Bond End to outside number 9, St Ediths Close.

**Reason for Order:** To safely enable the renewal of approximately 80m of water mains within the carriageway and verge, plus other essential works to ensure complete reinstatement of water supply.  
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 8 March 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** No diversion is available.  
Contractor: Severn Trent Water, Tel: 0800 783 444.

**HUDSON ROAD, RUGBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic to junction with Marlborough Road.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable pipe repairs.  
Order Commences: 9 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 11 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Hudson Road, St Annes Road, Lytham Road, Marlborough Road and vice versa.  
Contractor: Chevron TM Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

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

**D2128 FREEBOARD LANE, STRETTON ON DUNSMORE**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from A45 London Road to A423 Oxford Road.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works, 09.30hrs-15.30hrs.  
Order Commences: 23 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 26 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** A45 London Road, A445 Leamington Road, A423 Oxford Road, B4453 Rugby Road, B4455 Fosse Way.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**MAGDALEN ROAD, WILLOUGHBY**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable the laying of new gas services.  
Order Commences: 23 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 3 March 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** No diversion is available.  
Contractor: Cadent Gas, Tel: 07831 706 512.

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

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

**WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**NOTICE OF MODIFICATION ORDER**  
**Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**  
**The Definitive Map and Statement for the County of Warwickshire 1998**  
**The Warwickshire County Council Definitive Map Modification Order**  
**PARISH OF FRANKTON SHEETS SP46NW and 47SW ORDER No. 01/2025 Path No. R209**  
The above Order made on 9 September 2025 was confirmed as made by Warwickshire County Council on 3 February 2026, and will modify the Definitive Map and Statement for the area by:  
Upgrading Public Bridleway R209 to a Restricted Byway R209, shown as a broken green line on plan reference AL225/MEB/Order Plan, starting at A423 Oxford Road (grid reference SP 4049 6973) running generally Northeast for approximately 955 metres to E2251 The Dingles (grid reference SP 4131 7006).  
The width of the route at its 3 metres. Surface type: part ash, grass and padded track.  
A copy of the Confirmed Order and Map may be seen free of charge during normal office hours at the office of Warwickshire County Council, Shire Hall, Warwick, CV34 4SA and may be bought there at the price of £5.77. Copies may also be seen during normal office hours at the office of Rugby Borough Council, Planning Department, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR, the Rugby library and on the following website: [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pathorders](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pathorders).  
Any person who wishes to question the validity of the Order on the grounds (that it does not fall within the powers of Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, or that the requirements of Schedule 15 have not been complied with) may, before the 27 February 2026, make an application to the High Court.  
S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 5 Feb 2026

### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### Warwickshire County Council

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

**C36 WELSH ROAD EAST, SOUTHAM**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from A425 Daventry Road to Spitfire Road.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway resurfacing & associated works, 09.00hrs-15.30hrs weekdays.  
Order Commences: 23 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 2 March 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** A425, Butt Hill, Vicarage Road, Hackwell Street, High Street, New Street, Chapel Green Road, Thorntons Lane, Napton Holt Road, Holt Road, Welsh Road East and vice versa.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

**WORMLEIGHTON ROAD, PRIORS HARDWICK**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: Removal of overhead electrical lines and poles.  
Order Commences: 23 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 9 March 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Wormleighton Road, Welsh Road, Church End and vice versa.  
Contractor: A Star Traffic Management, Tel: 08007 076 646.

**HARDWICK ROAD, PRIORS MARSTON**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between Welsh Road and Main Road.  
Reason for Order: To safely enable the installation of a boundary box and water meter.  
Order Commences: 23 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 24 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Hardwick Road, Main Road, The Green, Southam Road, Welsh Road and vice versa.  
Contractor: Chevron TM Ltd, Tel: 03300 080 820.

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

To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website [warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap) or call us 01926 412515.  
S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 05 Feb 2026

### PUBLIC NOTICES

#### Warwickshire County Council

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

**COMMON LANE, STONELEIGH**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.  
Reason for Order: To enable safe removal of a dead tree.  
Order Commences: 25 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 25 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Stoneleigh Road, Chantry Heath Lane, Bubbenhall Road and vice versa.  
Contractor: Traffix Ltd, Tel: 08008 199 001.

**D1818 PARKFIELD ROAD, KERSELEY NEWLANDS**  
Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between Exhall Road and Shaftsbury Avenue.  
Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and works, 09.30hrs - 15.30hrs.  
Order Commences: 26 February 2026 for up to 18 months.  
Anticipated Completion: 26 February 2026.

**Access & Diversion:** Parkfield Road, Somers Road, Beaumont Road, Exhall Road and vice versa. Vehicular access & egress will be maintained where possible and safe to do so for businesses and residents only.  
Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415 302.

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

To report any problems with these works or for further details of our current & planned roadworks visit our website [warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap) or call us 01926 412515.  
S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 05 Feb 2026

### PUBLIC NOTICES

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

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

**Application Number R25/0863**  
**THE COTTAGE, COOMBE ABBEY FARM, COMBE FIELDS ROAD, COOMBE FIELDS, COVENTRY, CV3 2SX**  
Proposed refurbishment of 2 no existing Grade II Listed dwellings and conversion of existing outbuilding to a dwelling.  
This development may affect a Listed Building. This development may affect a Conservation Area. This development may affect a Public Right of Way

**Application Number R25/0864**  
**THE COTTAGE, COOMBE ABBEY FARM, COMBE FIELDS ROAD, COOMBE FIELDS, COVENTRY, CV3 2SX**  
Listed Building Consent for proposed refurbishment of 2 no existing Grade II Listed dwellings and conversion of existing outbuilding to a dwelling.  
This development may affect a Listed Building. This development may affect a Conservation Area. This development may affect a Public Right of Way

**Application Number R25/1037**  
**LAVENDER FURLONG, COVENTRY ROAD, DUNCHURCH, RUGBY, CV22 6RE**  
Retrospective application for the erection of a yurt for short-term holiday let (Airbnb) (Use Class SU Generis) and ancillary shed which comprises a kitchen and bathroom  
This development may affect a Listed Building

**Application Number R26/0061**  
**LAND OPPOSITE DRAYCOTE WATER, SOUTHAM ROAD, RUGBY**  
Reserved matters application for layout, scale, appearance, access and landscaping following outline planning approval (R22/0771) with all matters reserved for the construction of up to 18 no. holiday lodges.)  
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](http://www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk) or in an electronic form at: Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR between the hours of 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Monday to Friday until 27 February 2026. Please note a planning application will not be presented 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](http://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](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/speakingatplanning)

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

Nicola Smith  
Chief Officer – Growth and Investment  
MRTP1

**Licensing Act 2003 Notice of Application to Vary Premises Licence**  
Notice is hereby given that **Rosearc Pub Company Ltd** has applied to the Harborough District Council to vary the premises licence for: **The Shires Inn & Restaurant**, Main Street, Peatling Park, Lutterworth, LE17 5PU. The application is to: • update the Annex 4 plan to include an outside server • extend the licensed area to enable alcohol sales from the server. The application and Public Register may be viewed online at: [https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/2009/licenses/57/licensing\\_register](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/2009/licenses/57/licensing_register) or by appointment at Harborough District Council, Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7AG. Any person wishing to make representations must do so in writing, stating the grounds for objection, to the address above or by email to [licensing@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@harborough.gov.uk). Representations must be received no later than: 25/02/2026. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application for a premises licence and the fine on being convicted of such an offence is unlimited. Date: 28/01/2026.

### PUBLIC NOTICES

**LICENSING ACT 2003 - Public Notice**  
Coal Pension Properties LTD is applying for the new grant of a Premises Licence for Royal Priors Shopping Centre, Warwick Street, Leamington Spa, CV32 4XT.  
If granted the application will allow the following licensable activities to take place: **Provision of regulated entertainment and provision of facilities for regulated entertainment**.  
Any person wishing to make representations in relation to this application may do so by writing to the Licensing Authority: Warwick District Council, Town Hall, Parade, Royal Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4AT. [licensing@warwickdc.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@warwickdc.gov.uk)  
Representations may only be made for 28 consecutive days from the date of this Notice.  
A copy of the application for the grant of the above licence is kept by the Licensing Authority at the above address. The application can be viewed Monday to Thursday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, and 9.00 am to 4.30 pm on Fridays, except Bank Holidays.  
It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application. The maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for making a false statement is a Level 5 fine on the Standard Scale.  
03/02/2026

#### Rugby Borough Council Planning and compulsory purchase act 2004 Town and country planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

Notice is hereby given of the publication of the South West Rugby Design Code Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation between 6 February 2026 and 5pm on 6 March 2026.  
A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared to guide future redevelopment of the Rugby Central Shopping Centre to ensure a high quality design and enhanced public realm on the largest catalytic site in the town centre. The document can be accessed on the council's website [www.rugby.gov.uk/RugbyCentralSPD](http://www.rugby.gov.uk/RugbyCentralSPD) and at the following locations:

1. Rugby Borough Council's offices, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR.
2. Rugby Library and Information Centre, Little Elbow Road, Rugby, CV21 3BZ.

Consultation responses can be sent via

- 1) email to [regeneration@rugby.gov.uk](mailto:regeneration@rugby.gov.uk) with 'Rugby Central SPD Consultation' in the subject line or
- 2) by post to: Rugby Central SPD Consultation, Major Projects & Regeneration Team, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR

Consultation responses will be made available for public inspection.

**Licensing Act 2003 Notice of Application to Vary Premises Licence**  
Notice is hereby given that **Cooper Phillips Enterprises Ltd** has applied to the Harborough District Council to vary the premises licence for: **The Crown**, Lutterworth Road, Gilton, Lutterworth, LE17 5NY. The application is to: Replace the plan Annex 4 to reflect internal changes to the layout and include all details of the premises and outdoor areas. Details of the application and Public Register may be viewed at: [https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/2009/licenses/57/licensing\\_register](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/info/2009/licenses/57/licensing_register) or by appointment at Harborough District Council, Council Offices, Adam and Eve Street, Market Harborough, Leics, LE16 7AG. Any person wishing to make representations must do so in writing, stating the grounds for objection, to the address above or by email to [licensing@harborough.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@harborough.gov.uk). Representations must be received no later than: 25/02/2026. It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application for a premises licence and the fine on being convicted of such an offence is unlimited. Date: 28/01/2026.

### PUBLIC NOTICES

**MARGARET ANN YEOMAN (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 Bablake House, Birmingham Road, Millons Wood, Nr Coventry, CV5 9AZ. Previously of 10 Congleton Close, Foleshill, Coventry, CV6 6LH, who died on 03/04/2024, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 07/04/2026, after which date the above Estate will be distributed having regard to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.  
**Band Halton Buttolts Solicitors**, Earlson Park, 53-55 Butts Road, Coventry, CV1 3BH

# Classified

TELEPHONE 01527 588688 FACSIMILE 01527 584371

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### PUBLIC NOTICES

**GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE**  
Weaver Transport Ltd of 3 Chestnut Street Ruskington Steaford NG34 9DL, is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To add an operating centre to keep 4 goods vehicles and 8 trailers at Vulcan Siskin Parkway East 6020 Coventry CV3 4UP. 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 office of the Traffic Commissioner, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing>.

**BARRIE JOHN VINTEN (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 10 The Kent, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV21 4NQ, who died on 09/01/2026, are required to send written particulars thereof to the undersigned on or before 07/04/2026, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

**Co-op Legal Services Limited, Aztec 650, Aztec West, Almondsbury, Bristol, BS32 4SD (Ref:KAT17439152P/Vinten)**

### PUBLIC NOTICES

**GOODS VEHICLE OPERATOR'S LICENCE**  
Nowack Transport Limited of Brooklands Nuneaton, Road Mancetter, Atherstone CV9 1RF, is applying to change an existing licence as follows: To add an operating centre to keep 6 goods vehicles and 25 trailers at Vulcan Siskin Parkway East 6020 Coventry CV3 4UP. 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 office of the Traffic Commissioner, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing).

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CV application to Gill Bloxham [gbloxham@hattonworld.com](mailto:gbloxham@hattonworld.com)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### DEATHS

## McGLINCHEY

### Helen Margaret (Eileen)

Passed away on Wednesday 14th January 2026. Aged 82 years.

Mum to Nigel and Stewart, Mother-in-law to Michele.

Loving Grandma to Phoebe and Lottie, Wife to Eddie, Sister to Kathleen, Peter, Marion (RIP) and Patsy (RIP)

Eileen's funeral service will take place on Friday 13th February at 11am at Rainsbrook Crematorium.

Family flowers only. Donations if desired can be made to Myton Hospice.

Wilf Smith and Son Funeral Directors, 25 Main Street, Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7NQ.  
Tel: 01788 814 157

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## Bees boss explains Onyeka's City switch

**FOOTBALL:** BRENTFORD head coach Keith Andrews admits a lack of game time ultimately led to Frank Onyeka securing a move to Coventry City.

The Sky Blues signed the midfielder on loan with an obligation to buy on transfer deadline day.

Onyeka will join Coventry on a permanent basis if the Sky Blues achieve promotion to the Premier League at the end of the season.

The Nigeria international made just six substitute appearances for the Bees in the Premier League this campaign.

And Andrews has no doubt Onyeka will impress for the Sky Blues and believes the midfielder deserves a chance to play at Coventry.

Andrews said: "He's someone who has been a big part of our journey although he hasn't had the minutes or game time that he would have liked."

"I feel it's right that he goes on to pastures new because he's a really good professional and a really good person."

"I wish him the best and I have no doubt that he will do really well."

Onyeka helped Nigeria reach the semi-finals of this year's AFCON where they lost to hosts Morocco on penalties.

He spent the 2024/25 campaign on loan at FC Augsburg in the Bundesliga.

The central midfielder for Brentford is the Premier League across five seasons.

## Grimes backs Sky Blues to find form again after R's loss

MATT Grimes insists Coventry City can rediscover their early season form after letting a 10-point lead slip at the top of the Championship table.

The Sky Blues slipped to a 2-1 defeat against Queens Park Rangers last weekend which leaves Coventry top of the table on goal difference.

Coventry lead Middlesbrough on goal difference with Hull City four points further back in third.

And Grimes insists Coventry must show what they are made of if they are to achieve promotion to the Premier League.

Grimes said: "We're in a bad spell. We're not picking up enough points away from home."

"But we're top of the league. It was never going to be plain sailing."

"We started the season really well and we're a team that can replicate that form."

"We're in a tough period and we have to show character to get out of it now."

"We've given ourselves an incredible opportunity and we're more than capable of getting it done."

"It's on us to keep fighting and to show why we are where we are."

A header from Josh Eccles put the Sky Blues ahead early in the second half.

However, goals from Richard Kone and Nicolas Madsen turned

the game in QPR's favour.

The Sky Blues could not find an equaliser to suffer a third straight defeat away from home.

Frank Lampard's side have not won on the road since November.

And Grimes admits he and his teammates must embrace the challenge of starting games at the league's summit.

Grimes added: "We won 11 out of 12 at the start of the season so there's absolutely no reason why we can't do that again."

"Because we're top of the league, we have a target on our back and we have to embrace that challenge."

"The squad is chock-full of talent, it's an incredible squad to be part of. We're so close-knit and so together. Now is the time to show it."

"Things aren't quite going for us. Maybe at the start of the season we were getting the rub of the green a little bit more."

"It's where we are at the moment. We're in a tough moment but it's up to us to get ourselves out of it."

Coventry host Oxford United this weekend with the U's five points from safety in the Championship relegation zone.

The reverse fixture ended in a 2-2 draw back in August.

All of Coventry's last four matches have ended in a 2-1 scoreline.

# Red-hot Blaze claim dramatic overtime wins to continue run



by Aaron Sutcliffe  
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

**ICE HOCKEY:** COVENTRY Blaze stretched their winning run to seven matches after recording overtime victories against Belfast Giants and Manchester Storm.

Blaze won 4-3 against Belfast at the SSE Arena after the Giants staged a dramatic late comeback to take the game to overtime.

Coventry beat Manchester by the same scoreline after Elijah Barriga scored two late goals to force an extra period at the Skydome Arena.

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

On the road against Belfast, Blaze made a fast start and earned a powerplay chance just 12 seconds into the contest with Josh Roach called for slashing.

And Coventry broke the deadlock at 8.19 as Jere Vertanen finished a slick passing move to open the scoring.

Blaze quickly doubled their lead at 9.53 when Barriga produced a clinical finish past Belfast netminder Jackson Whistle.

Belfast killed a second penalty later

in the first period with Carter Hamill penalised for hooking.

However, the home side halved the deficit at 28.18 as Mike Lee intercepted a Blaze chance with Belfast short-handed and skated up the ice to finish past Mat Robson.

Belfast almost caught Blaze out while short-handed a second time with David Goodwin sent to the box for slashing as Lee saw his attempted pass intercepted following another break.

And Coventry killed a Belfast penalty late in the second period after Jordan Power was called for slashing.

Blaze spurned a fifth powerplay chance in the third period as Mathew Gleason's spinning effort came back off the crossbar.

However, the visitors appeared to seal the points at 54.22 when Gleason finished on the rebound from Colton Sauerman's initial effort.

Belfast reduced the deficit at 56.39 as Brandon Whistle redirected Ryan Smith's shot into the net as the home side pulled netminder J Whistle for an extra skater.

And the Giants forced overtime at 58.41 when Lee grabbed his second of the game following a video review

to check if the puck had crossed the line.

However, Coventry scored the winner just 40 seconds into the extra period as Power found the net to earn Blaze a sixth straight victory.

Blaze then hosted Manchester on home ice at the Skydome as Kevin Moore's side produced a remarkable late turnaround.

After a goalless first period, Blaze opened the scoring at 23.33 as William Boysen pounced on a rebound to put the home side in front.

Blaze spurned two powerplay opportunities to double their lead before Manchester drew level at 35.56 courtesy of Brandon Cutler on a powerplay of their own.

The goal was awarded after a video review confirmed the puck crossed the line before the net was dislodged.

And Storm turned the game on its head at 37.24 with a second powerplay goal as Kaleb Ergang finished from close range.

The visitors extended their lead at 42.37 in the third period when Kyle Locke's speculative effort slipped through the legs of Robson in the Blaze net.

Coventry pulled Robson for an extra skater with four minutes remaining and cut the deficit at 56.44 as Barriga buried the rebound following Vertanen's initial strike.

And Blaze pulled Robson again soon after as Barriga levelled the game at 57.48 to send the match to overtime in a thrilling finale.

Coventry carried a powerplay chance into overtime with Manchester's Stephen Johnson penalised for tripping.

And Blaze needed just 56 seconds of the extra period to win the game as Grant Mismash blasted home a one-timer.

Coventry are next in action against Nottingham Panthers on Saturday, February 7 with the face-off at 7pm at Motorpoint Arena.

Blaze then host Belfast on Sunday, February 8 with the face-off at 5.30pm at the Skydome.

**Blaze secured an overtime win against Manchester Storm. Picture by Scott Wiggins.**

## Cov stunned by Chinnor in rare home defeat as hosts surrender early 14-point advantage

**RUGBY UNION:** COVENTRY Rugby lost at home for just the second time this season following a 19-14 defeat against Chinnor.

A brace of tries from Jordan Poole put Coventry into a 14-point lead after just five minutes at Butts Park Arena.

However, the home side failed to register a single point in the remaining 75 of the match.

And Chinnor scored 19 unanswered points to stun Alex Rae's side who lost at home for the first time since October.

The result means Coventry sit sixth in the Champ Rugby table.

Coventry made a blistering start as Poole forced his way over for the game's opening try after just three minutes and Josh Thomas converted.

And Poole dotted down again two minutes later as he ran a strong line to finish next to the posts as Thomas added the extras.

However, Chinnor responded on nine minutes when Will Cave broke through the Coventry defence following a series of powerful carriers as Callum Pascoe converted.

Coventry twice conceded possession at their own lineout later in the first half as Chinnor continued to grow into the contest.

And the visitors crossed for their second try on 34 minutes when Pascoe sold a dummy and dove over but could not convert his own score.

The home side lost Senitiki Nayalo to the sin-bin for a high tackle six minutes before the interval.

However, Coventry spurned a

chance to increase their lead before the break as Thomas missed his penalty attempt.

That meant Rae's side took a narrow two-point lead into the break while Josh Barton's try-saving tackle just past the hour mark kept Coventry ahead.

Chinnor completed the turnaround on 72 minutes when Scott Hall struck from a lineout maul and Nick Smith converted.

Handling errors proved costly for the home side in the closing stages as Rae's side failed to make the most of a late penalty chance to slip to a rare home defeat.

Coventry are next in action against Ealing Trailfinders on Saturday, February 7 with kick-off at 3pm at Trailfinders Sports Club.

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

## Valley edged out by Basford in thriller

by Aaron Sutcliffe  
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

**FOOTBALL:** RUGBY Town suffered a narrow 3-2 defeat against high-flying Basford United in a five-goal thriller.

Town rallied in the second half as Will Harris and Sam Tye twice reduced the deficit for Valley at Butlin Road.

However, goals from Jordan Hallam, Tyler Dacres and Nyle Blake helped Basford to victory as the visitors stretched their unbeaten run to 13 matches in the league.

The result means Rugby sit 16th in the Northern Premier League Midlands table, three points clear of the relegation zone.



Basford broke the deadlock on 12 minutes when Hallam found the net from outside the penalty area with a fine strike from distance.

Valley's best chance of the first half saw Rivel Mardenborough guide a shot wide of the target when well-placed.

However, Basford doubled their

lead just past the hour mark on 62 minutes as Dacres finished on the turn.

Rugby halved the deficit on 69 minutes when Harris headed in after Kobi Bivens' initial header appeared to cross the line.

However, the visitors restored their two-goal cushion seven minutes later as Blake finished off Jack Thomas's cross.

Valley kept themselves in the contest when Tye turned home Bivens' cross from close range on 79 minutes but the home side could not find an equaliser in the remaining time.

Rugby are next in action against Colehill Town on Saturday, February 7 with kick-off at 3pm Park Meadow.

**Goalkeeper Charlie Woods made his debut for Valley. Picture by Martin Pulley.**

## Waite nets winner to end losing run

**TYRELL** Waite's late goal helped Rugby Borough to a 1-0 victory away at Bourne Town as the club ended their three-game losing run.

Waite smashed in the winner eight minutes from time at Abbey Lawn as Borough won for the first time since the turn of the year.

And the result means Rugby sit 14th in the Northern Premier League Midlands table.

The game's only goal arrived on 82 minutes when Bourne goalkeeper Will Lakin could only save a shot into the path of Waite who turned the loose ball home from point-blank range.

Rugby are next in action against Shepshed Dynamo on Saturday, February 7 with kick-off at 3pm at Kilsby Lane.

### BOROUGH CONFIRM TRIO OF SIGNINGS

Goalscorer Waite recently joined Borough from Barwell after spells at Ilkeston Town, Notts County, Kidderminster Harriers and Tamworth.

Defender Lathaniel Rowe-Turner has also joined Rugby and scored on his debut for the club against Boldmere St Michaels before Christmas.

The centre-back counts Leicester City, Torquay United and Luton Town amongst his former clubs.

And right-back Gary Stohrer has signed for Borough following his departure from Corby Town.

He made more than 250 appearances for Kettering Town and also scored on his debut for Borough on Boxing Day.

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