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Government backing for roundabout upgrade bids

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

'VITAL' and long-awaited traffic congestion-busting schemes in the Rugby area have been backed by the government.

Proposed upgrades to Gibbet Hill roundabout on the A5 and the Avon Mill roundabout on the A426 have been included in the government's road infrastructure strategy.

The Gibbet Hill upgrade – which would see capacity increased – is set to be developed and included in the pipeline of schemes for delivery in the 2030s as part of wider improvements to the A5 corridor.

The Department for Transport has instructed National Highways to develop the scheme so that construction can start in the next 'Road Period' - 2031-36.

The Department will also continue to support the A426/A4071 Avon Mill/Hunters Lane Improvements Scheme and its development, subject to the usual business case and approvals process. Warwickshire County Council (WCC) will be responsible for progressing the scheme through the business case process for formal consideration.

Rugby MP John Slinger said: "I know just how long and frustrating the queues of traffic can be towards the Avon Mill roundabout. The junction desperately needs unblocking, and I welcome this government's continued support for the scheme."

He offered his full support to WCC in progressing the plan, and hoped to be kept informed of developments.



Warwickshire County Council says the A426/A4071 Improvement Scheme will reduce congestion at the Avon Mill roundabout (ABOVE). The Gibbet Hill junction between Rugby and Lutterworth (LEFT) is a notorious bottleneck.

He added: "The Gibbet Hill roundabout is in an area of high growth, and when the M1/M6 are blocked, it becomes particularly congested. Its upgrade being included in the road strategy is welcome news for my constituents."

"I have repeatedly met with ministers and written to them to raise this upgrade scheme. The government's commitment to investing in our road infrastructure has meant some positive news for our area, for our people, our businesses and economy."

"I have worked with others, including my neighbouring MP Alberto Costa regarding Gibbet Hill, and worked with councillors from both Rugby Borough Council and Warwickshire County Council as well as members of the public who have contacted me."

The long-gestating A426/A4071 Improvement Scheme aims to ease traffic flow by replacing the Avon Mill roundabout with a new one which would connect to the Avon Mill junction via a short dual carriageway on a new bridge to be built over the River Avon.

A second new bridge would be built for a new footpath and cycleway connecting the A426 Leicester Road to Wood Street, and crossings on the A426 Leicester Road would be improved to provide safer access to Avon Valley School.

Midlands Connect, the transport body for the region, has been building a case for government funds to improve the Gibbet Hill roundabout on the border between Warwickshire and Leicestershire, which it says is at 'critical mass' and needs 'urgent attention' to prevent increasing congestion.

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Dance show part of celebration to mark 40 years of popular library

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

COVENTRY'S Central Library has celebrated its first 40 years of learning, reading and community.

Central Library first opened its doors in Smithford Way in 1986, converting the former Locarno ballroom building from a dance hall.

Within 15 minutes of its opening, more than 100 people were browsing the shelves, which contained 125,000 books and a host of records and cassette tapes.

To mark its 40th anniversary, a special celebration event was hosted at the library, where visitors enjoyed poetry readings, a

silent disco, a Moving Space Co-Contemporary dance performance, a story time session with Lady Godiva, performances by a Ukrainian choir and more.

Councillor Dr Kindy Sandhu, Coventry City Council's cabinet member for education and skills, said: "It is incredible to mark 40 years of Central Library and the vital role it has in our city, bringing people together to learn, read and grow."

"Although it has changed over the years, it has remained an important part of the city centre and part of people's lives, ensuring that all residents have a space where they can pick up a book, use a computer or even do things like learn different languages."

"It is even more special that

we celebrate Central Library during this year, the national year of reading, which is all about encouraging people to read more in their daily lives so it feels especially important that we celebrate the wonderful libraries we have here in Coventry as part of that."

The national year of reading is a campaign designed by the Department for Education and the National Literacy Trust which aims to help more people discover the joy of reading and make it part of their lives.

Visit www.coventry.gov.uk/centrallibrary for more information on Central Library, or www.coventry.gov.uk/libraries for information on all libraries in the city.



Dance performances took centre stage at Central Library's 40th anniversary celebration event. s

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29






A similar fire in North Warwickshire earlier this month caused extensive damage to the bin lorry concerned. s

Bin-lorry crew prevented fire from spreading

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

A BIN-lorry fire near Rugby has prompted a warning about batteries and vapes.

A fire broke out in a recycling lorry after a battery ignited inside the vehicle.

The collection crew was forced to make an emergency stop at a bus stop in Wolston, where they ejected the load to prevent the fire from spreading.

Rugby Borough Council is reminding residents batteries and vapes must not be placed in household rubbish or recycling bins.

A Rugby Borough Council spokesperson said: "Thanks to the quick actions of the crew and support from the fire service, no one was injured and damage was limited."

"However, the incident was completely preventable.

"Fires like this can happen when batteries, including those hidden inside disposable vapes, are crushed during the collection process. The pressure from the vehicle's

compactor can cause them to overheat and catch fire."

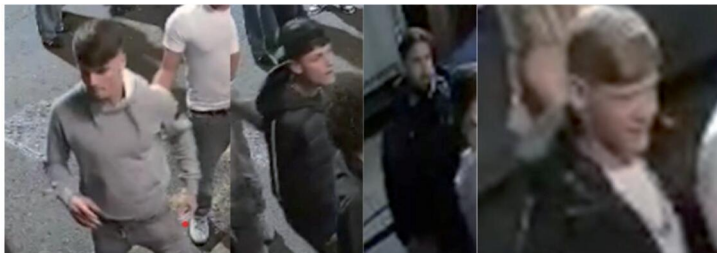
Batteries and vapes should be taken to designated recycling points at supermarkets, or to a local household waste recycling centre. Vapes can be returned to the shop where they were bought.

Claire Owen, assistant director for operations and traded services at Rugby Borough Council, said: "This was a serious incident that could have had much worse consequences. I want to thank our crews for their quick thinking, which helped keep everyone safe."

"Fires caused by batteries and vapes are becoming more common but they are completely avoidable. Something as small as a discarded battery can put our crews, residents and the public at risk."

"We are asking everyone to take a moment to dispose of these items safely. Using the correct recycling points helps protect our staff and prevents dangerous incidents like this from happening again."

Visit www.rugby.gov.uk/whichbin to check how to dispose of household items.



Police want to speak with these people as they may have information about an assault in Rugby town centre. s

Can you help locate these people?

THREE men suffered facial injuries – including a broken jaw – in an assault in Rugby town centre.

The altercation took place outside a restaurant in Bank

Street at around 1.50am on Sunday, March 8.

Police want to speak with the people pictured above as they may have information about the incident.

Those pictured, or anyone who knows who they are, should contact police via www.warwickshire.police.uk/ro/report, quoting crime reference 23/10328/26.

ICE staff make Rugby arrests

ILLEGAL vapes, cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco worth £15,000 have been seized by police in Rugby.

Police officers from the Rugby safer neighbourhood team visited businesses across the town during a pre-planned initiative known as operation helford.

They were joined by partners including trading standards, Rugby Borough Council, Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service, Immigration Compliance and Enforcement (ICE), the mobile enforcement team from His Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and specialist search dogs from The Nose Knows K9 team.

One person was arrested for overstaying their visa, £36,000 in unpaid VAT was identified across the seizures and one business was issued a notification of a £45,000 civil penalty.

Rugby Town north beat manager PC James Bonsor, who led the operation, said: "We're committed to addressing community concerns and will continue to work closely with our partners to tackle those involved in the illicit sale of these products and other immigration-related offences."


"The day of action was a great opportunity for us to speak to local businesses and remind them that hiring people without the right to work in the UK can result in serious financial and legal consequences for them."

"We also reiterated their responsibility to comply with appropriate health and safety regulations to protect not only their staff but also members of the public."

"If you see anything that doesn't look right, or you have information that can help us, please report it via our website or 101."




Officers from the Rugby safer neighbourhood team joined forces with specialist search dogs from The Nose Knows K9 team for operation helford. s



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Female students from across the borough met the Mayor and female councillors from across the political spectrum.

Enjoying a closer look

FEMALE students from across Rugby borough were given a unique insight into civic life and leadership when they attended a special reception hosted by Mayor Barbara Brown to mark International Women's Day.

Students from Year 11 to Year 13 had the opportunity to meet and speak with influential female politicians from across the political spectrum.

Held at the Town Hall, the reception included a visit to the Council Chamber, giving students a behind-the-scenes look at where key decisions affecting their community are made.

The visit aimed to demystify local government and encourage more young women to consider roles in public service and leader-

ship. Throughout the event, students heard directly from female councillors about their experiences in politics, the challenges they have overcome, and the importance of representation and diverse voices in decision-making.

Coun Brown said: "I was delighted to welcome these students and give them the chance to meet women from across the political spectrum who are making a difference in our borough.

"Encouraging young women to take an interest in politics and public service is vital. I hope this experience has shown them that their views matter and that there is a place for them in local decision-making."

MP calls for a culture boost

CULTURE should have equal billing alongside sport in the UK's news bulletins – so says Rugby's MP as he launches a new campaign.

John Slinger is calling on broadcasters to give the creative arts regular, dedicated space in their news programming, similar to sports bulletins.

Mr Slinger (pictured) has launched a public petition, is building cross-party support for the idea, and will introduce a Ten Minute Rule Bill in the House of Commons on April 15.

He said the campaign did not seek to replace sports bulletins, but to elevate creative arts coverage to the same level – arguing that the arts are as much a part of British life as sport is.

Mr Slinger said: "Sport gets a bulletin every hour, and rightly so. But the creative arts are just as important to individuals, to communities, and to the country. They improve physical and mental health. They build skills. They hold communities together.

"The creative arts receive coverage when something wins an award or when a major production opens, but there is no regular, recognisable space for creative arts news."

According to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the creative industries generated £145.8 billion in gross value added in 2024, dwarfing the £20.6 billion generated by the sports industry.

And the creative industries support 2.4 million jobs across the UK, nearly five times the 500,000 jobs in the sports sector.

Mr Slinger's campaign is a public case,

backed by evidence, that he intends to take to the leadership of key broadcasters for TV and radio including BBC, Sky News, ITV News and others.

He said: "Millions of people attend theatres, galleries, concerts, and cinemas every week. Cultural institutions across the country host newsworthy events every day. Yet audiences have no consistent place to find creative arts news in broadcast programming.



"Nobody did an audience assessment before they started broadcasting sport. They assumed it was important and gave it airtime.

"The creative arts generate seven times more economic output, employ five times as many people, and are just as important to the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. I am asking broadcasters to consider whether they deserve the same regular coverage."

Visit www.change.org/p/creative-arts-bulletins-should-feature-in-news-broadcasts to sign the petition.

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The house in Chestnut Avenue. Picture by Marcus Mingins 132608MMR1

Murder accused get new court date

THREE people charged with murder following the death of a man at a house in Kenilworth, are set to reappear in court in May.

Lewis Dowling, aged 24, of Yarnfield Road, Birmingham; Patricia Dowling, aged 49, of Chestnut Avenue, Kenilworth; and a 16-year-old boy from Kenilworth, who cannot be named for legal reasons, were charged on Monday, March 23, following the launch of a murder investigation.

All three appeared at Warwick Crown Court on Wednesday, March 25 and were remanded to appear in court again on May 20.

A 72-year-old woman has been arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender.

Police and paramedics responded to a call to a house in Chestnut Avenue just before midnight on Friday, March 20 where a man in his 40s was found in cardiac arrest. He died.

Anyone with information that could help police with their enquiries can call 101, quoting incident 491 of 20 March 2026. Alternatively, information can be provided anonymously to the independent charity Crimestoppers, on 0800 555 111.

Builder jailed for ripping off client

by Philippa Mingins
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A ROGUE builder from Warwick has been jailed for ripping off customers.

Luke Wilson, also known as Sam Memetovic, of Lodge Crescent, charged a Leamington resident six times the value of the work he carried out.

The 37-year-old would introduce new contract conditions to customers at short notice, demand additional costs and set increasingly urgent payment deadlines.

His victim had initially agreed a price of just over £14,500 to carry out plastering, electrical work, the removal of walls and a bathroom refurbishment.

Within 20 days, however, Wilson had sent his victim six further invoices, increasing the cost to more than £20,000.

Not only was that £5,000 more than the original quote but an expert surveyor from Warwickshire Trading Standards concluded the value of the work carried out by Wilson was just £3,240.

The homeowner found Wilson on the trustatrader.com site, where he was advertising as HR Building, Plumbing and Heating.

On sentencing Wilson at Warwick Crown Court, the judge called the case a classic example of rogue trading.

Addressing Wilson, he described him as an arrogant and deceitful bully who had swindled his customer in an unscrupulous way and had only shown remorse because he didn't wish to go to prison.

Fraud

The judge said the case involved an appalling set of offences that were tantamount to fraud and a clear and deliberate attempt to deceive and obtain money.

The victim said he was forced to borrow substantial amounts of money from a relative to rectify the work and said Wilson's activities had had a significant impact on his mental health and wellbeing.

Warwickshire County Council's communities executive director, Mark Ryder, said: "Rogue traders are warned that if they try to operate in Warwickshire, our trading

standards service will tackle them and hold them to account. Our officers work tirelessly to investigate reports, gather evidence and pursue those who breach consumer protection laws. We know that it is often older and vulnerable residents who are preyed on and we are committed to supporting and protecting them.

"Warwickshire residents deserve honest, professional services and we will continue to ensure that those who flout the law are held fully accountable."

In mitigation, Sarah Turner, representing Wilson, said her client found himself in over his head, producing contracts with no training, and didn't take advice, while accepting he should have done.

Wilson was sentenced to 10 months in jail and was handed a three-year criminal behaviour order. He had pleaded guilty to three counts of making misleading omissions and engaging in aggressive commercial practices.

A proceeds of crime act investigation has begun and the matter will be back in court on June 24, when compensation, confiscation and costs will be considered.

Ten-year stretch for bathroom rape

A RAPIST who attacked a 17-year-old girl in Stratford has been jailed for 10 years.

The victim was using the bathroom at a friend's house in 2024 when 22-year-old Mohammad Tawfiqi forced his way in, locked the door and attacked her.

Warwickshire Police shared an appeal to trace Tawfiqi, who had told people at a gathering at the house he was called Papino.

A member of the public from Hereford called the police to identify Tawfiqi, an Iranian national who was living in Stratford, and he was arrested at work.

He attempted to give a false name to officers and, in interview, he offered a pre-prepared statement denying any wrongdoing.

Thanks to the bravery of the victim, a strong case was built against him and at Warwick Crown Court he was found guilty of rape and jailed.

Det Con Ella Stewart said: "The victim has shown incredible bravery throughout this process and I want to publicly thank her for all she has done.

"Tawfiqi has shown no remorse for his appalling attack and, though no sentence will take away what happened, we are glad he is off the streets."



Rapist Mohammad Tawfiqi has been jailed for 10 years. s

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COUN Kamran Caan (sixth from left) with representatives from Grapevine, Friends of Willenhall Brookstray, Sky Blues in the community, CV Life, West Midlands Police, Soccerrocks and the Positive Youth Foundation.

New pitches for community sites

by **Andy Morris**
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NEW SPORTS play areas are set to come to parks and open spaces in Coventry.

Six new Football Foundation 'PlayZones' will aim to transform neighbourhoods into vibrant hubs for sport and physical and community activity.

PlayZones are modern, safe and accessible spaces for club and community use, designed to encourage year-round sport and physical activity.

Designs for six PlayZones have now been finalised, including a '2G' multi-sport surface for football and

netball, with integrated goals, at Willenhall Brookstray.

Other proposed PlayZones include a new 2G football and cricket PlayZone at Edgwick Park; a 2G multi-sport surface for football and netball with goals at Jardine Crescent; and a 3G all-weather football pitch with goals and coded access, at Longford Park.

Plans are being drawn up for a 3G football pitch at Moat House and a refurbished, tarmac, multi-use PlayZone for football, basketball and netball at Virginia Road.

Each has been designed based on engagement with residents and more than 70 community partners.

Delivered by Coventry City Council and the Football Foundation, plus community partners, the propos-

als are now progressing, subject to planning permission, and are expected to open this year.

The work will revitalise five existing multi-use games areas (MUGAs) across the city, transforming them into modern, high-quality spaces for community sport and activity.

Councillor Kamran Caan, the council's cabinet member for Public health and sport, said: "The Football Foundation PlayZones are a key part of our strategy to support grassroots sport, tackle physical activity inequality and increase participation in movement across the city."

"By working closely with the Football Foundation and community partners, we're making sure the designs meet local needs and

can be used for a range of activities - from football and netball to cricket and basketball.

"This is about building a lasting legacy for community sport in Coventry and giving every resident the chance to lead a more active, healthier lifestyle."

COUN Abdul Salam Khan, deputy leader and cabinet member for policing and equalities, said the PlayZones would breathe new life into Coventry's parks and community spaces.

He added: "We know how important local parks and green spaces are to residents - they're the heart of many neighbourhoods."

"By investing in these upgrades, we're not only improving sporting opportunities but also making our

community spaces more vibrant, better maintained and easier to access."

Robert Sullivan, chief executive of the Football Foundation, said: "The new facilities in Coventry have been shaped by the local community so that they'll be able to step out onto the pitch and get active in a way that suits them."

Work on the sites at Edgwick Park and Longford Park is set to start this month while construction at Virginia Road, Moat House and Jardine Crescent will start later in the spring.

If planning permission is granted, work on the PlayZone at Willenhall Brookstray is set to start in the summer.

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Lindsay Woodward helped to develop the Rugby Literary Festival.

A PROUD Rugby-based marketing strategist has been shortlisted for two awards in recognition of her business work and her contribution to the local community.

Lindsay Woodward has been named a Finalist for a Woman Who Achieves Award 2026 – and also shortlisted for the Inspirational Individual Community Person of the Year at the Coventry and Warwickshire Business and Community Awards.

The latter nomination is in recognition of Lindsay's role in helping to develop the Rugby Literary Festival, which held its second successful year in 2025.

Judges were impressed that the festival brought together writers, readers, families and local businesses, and created opportunities for local authors while contributing to Rugby's cultural life.

Lindsay runs Lindsay Woodward Marketing, and is also a Chartered Marketer

and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing.

She is also an author and has published nine novels and one non-fiction book.

Lindsay said: "It's been a fantastic start to the year. Building my business and supporting projects like the Rugby Literary Festival takes a huge amount of work, so to see that recognised in this way means a great deal to me.

"The festival in particular is something I'm incredibly proud of. Seeing writers, readers and businesses come together to celebrate creativity has been wonderful."

The Coventry and Warwickshire Business and Community Awards will take place on April 23 at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry.

Winners of the Woman Who Achieves Awards – which celebrate women who are making a significant impact in business and their communities – will be announced at a ceremony on May 8 at the National Conference Centre in Solihull.

New fleet will have names far from rubbish

LIGHTNING McClean and Bindiana Jones will soon be taking to the streets of Rugby as two of the town's ten new food waste collection lorries which have been named by local primary school children.

Rugby Borough Council invited children across the borough to come up with creative names for the new lorries, which will collect food waste from homes across Rugby from Monday July 6.

Over 100 entries were received from more than 25 local schools, and a panel of judges – including Mayor Barbara Brown – chose the winners.

- They are:
- Dump up the Jam – Michael, Year 4, Oakfield Primary School
- Peels on Wheels – Shameer, Year 4, Long Lawford Primary School
- Wastey McTastey – Kriyansh, Year 6, Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School
- Lightning McClean – Harry and Jonny, Year 6, Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School
- Justbin Bieber – Scarlett, Year 6, Eastlands Primary School
- Scraps Scoffer – Rodney, Year 4, Cawston Grange Primary School
- Bin Appetit – Alex, Year 5, Ryton on Dunsmore Primary School
- Dave the Devourer – Jasmine, Year 3, Rugby Free Primary School
- The Omnivore – Samarth, Year 6, Clifton upon Dunsmore Primary School

- Bindiana Jones – Jack, Year 5, Cawston Grange Primary School

The winners each received a Lego prize, and will be invited to a special event where they will meet the judges and see their name printed on the new lorries.

Coun Brown said: "I was thrilled to judge this competition, allowing the children of Rugby an opportunity to contribute to our new food waste service.

"It was great to see so many entries across so many schools, and I am delighted to announce our winners. Well done everyone."

Claire Owen, Assistant Director for Operations and Traded Services at Rugby Borough Council, said: "It was great fun to read and judge the entries for this competition, and choose the winners from a very tough list.

"Congratulations to everyone who took part, and well done again to our winners."

Rugby Borough Council is introducing weekly food waste collections as part of the government's Simpler Recycling programme.

Residents will be able to recycle their food waste – including cooked and uncooked food, bones, fish, dairy, and leftovers – in their caddy for weekly collections, to be taken and turned into energy and compost. Caddies will be delivered from May onwards.

Visit rugby.gov.uk/foodwaste or email foodwaste@rugby.gov.uk for more information.

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Kineton Church of England Primary School's bicycle bus hits the road.

All pushing together

MUSIC, bubbles and a fleet of bicycles are transforming the school run at Kineton Church of England Primary School.

Thanks to a project funded by the Ampa Foundation – an independent charity founded and funded by Ampa Group – the school's bicycle bus is officially on the road, giving pupils and parents a safe, structured and fun way to cycle together every Friday morning.

Part of the school's 'Let's Go Zero' initiative to shrink its carbon footprint, the bicycle bus encourages families to pedal instead of park.

Each week, families can join a lead cyclist along a planned route, complete with pick-up points, music pumping and bubbles floating through the air.

Headteacher Jenny Mitchell-Hilton said: "We're over the moon to see our pupils cycling into school with such excitement. The bicycle bus fits perfectly with our environmental goals and gives families a fantastic way to get active together."

Founded during lockdown, the bicycle bus concept has already transformed school runs across Warwickshire, providing a safe, sociable and eco-friendly alternative to driving on ten different routes to 12 schools in the county.

The Ampa Foundation's donation made the launch possible, funding essential kit like high-vis jackets, a GoPro, sound system and bubble machine.

Express wish is a £20k charity boost

A RAILWAY enthusiast from south Warwickshire has left a £20,000 legacy to the charity that saved his life

Richard Periam was airlifted to hospital by The Air Ambulance Service (TAAS) following a serious accident in the garden of his Wilmcote home in November 2011.

The then 76-year-old was enjoying his large-scale model railway when the train veered off its tracks and fell on top of him, leaving him with a broken back and multiple fractured vertebrae.

Richard received urgent care at the scene before being flown to University Hospital Coventry & Warwickshire where he spent seven weeks recovering from his injuries.

Despite the severity of his injuries, Richard never lost his sense of humour and remained deeply grateful to the crew who came to his aid. He was slightly embarrassed and more than a little disappointed that his first ever helicopter ride was one he was unable to properly enjoy.

After the accident, he became a committed supporter of the charity, donating £39,850 over several years before leaving a further £20,000 gift in his will.

Richard died aged 88, leaving behind a legacy of kindness, community spirit and quiet generosity – and a gift that will help save countless lives.

His son, William, said: "He was really grateful to the crew that went



Railway enthusiast Richard Periam left a £20,000 legacy to The Air Ambulance Service which saved his life in 2011.

out to him and after his accident, he realised how essential it was to everyone. My father and our family were and are forever grateful to The Air Ambulance Service. They saved his life."

Lynda Copson, legacy fundraising executive for TAAS, said they were saddened to hear of Richard's passing and extended their condolences to his family and friends.

She added: "We are incredibly grateful for the generosity he showed to the service. Gifts like Richard's help ensure that we can be there for others facing their darkest and most unexpected moments."

The Air Ambulance Service operates helicopter emergency medical services under 'Your Local Air Ambulance' serving Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and Rutland. It also runs the National Children's Air Ambulance, a unique helicopter transfer service across the UK. It receives no government funding for its daily operations and relies entirely on public donations and support.

Visit theirambulance.org.uk to find out more about donating and including a gift in a Will.

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Council's bold idea which may just grow

NEW COMMUNITY growing spaces are set to open in Coventry.

Coventry City Council (CCC) has announced plans to open up underused council-owned land across the city, giving residents new opportunities to create community growing spaces.

Under the new policy, residents will be able to apply to access disused or underused council land for planting, growing food, wildlife gardens and other community gardening projects.

The initiative builds on the 'Coventry Grows' pilot project, which began in 2024 and has involved more than 58 volunteers.

The first community garden is being set up in Heath Road in Stoke, with three additional sites being developed in areas deprived of green space in Hillfields, Foleshill and Tile Hill.

Coun Jim O'Boyle, the council's Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for residents to transform unused spaces into something positive for their communities."

"Growing food locally or creating nature gardens helps improve health, supports wild-



Gardening volunteers from E.ON, led by John from Garden Organic.

life and brings people together. We're excited to see this expand across Coventry."

Guidance will be provided for groups to help get started, including an online map of available sites, growing advice and other resources to support the sites.

The council estimates it will cost around £100,000 a year to deliver the scheme, including the cost of a full-time Community Growing Coordinator to support resi-

dents with site surveys and legal agreements.

A CCC spokesperson said: "Community growing brings a wide range of benefits to the city and its residents, including improved mental and physical wellbeing, more wildlife friendly spaces, opportunities for people to grow their own produce, builds stronger community connections, and creates a welcoming space for locals to enjoy."

Community groups may be

asked to contribute a small fee to support with application processes, but the council will explore ways to reduce or waive fees for low-income groups.

Visit www.coventry.gov.uk/climate-change/coventry-grows for more information on the Coventry Grows pilot programme.

Email GreenforAll@coventry.gov.uk to register interest in applying to access land for growing.



Left to right: Dan Sambell, Laura Tidmarsh and Simon Tidmarsh at the HBA Awards.

IN TUNE: 'DELIGHTED' volunteers from Coventry Hospital Radio have celebrated being recognised at a national award ceremony.

Coventry Hospital Radio finished in the top ten of the Best Station Promotion category at the Hospital Broadcasting Association (HBA) Awards ceremony in Bolton.

Volunteers from Coventry Hospital Radio joined stations from across the country for a weekend of celebration, including an opening address from former BBC and ITN News Reporter and Presenter Nicholas Owen.

The station was shortlisted for the award for its campaign encouraging patients, staff, and volunteers to get in touch and request songs during Friday shows.

Coventry Hospital Radio PR Officer Simon Tidmarsh said: "We are delighted with the results of the Hospital Broadcasting Association 2026 Awards. This year's competition was tougher than ever, with a record number of stations entering each category."

"We have an exciting 12 months ahead and look forward to sharing news on air and across our social media and website very soon."

"I would like to say a big thank you to all our volunteers who give up their free time every week – whether presenting shows, collecting requests on the wards, or supporting fundraising events. It's these daily efforts that keep our station thriving."

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Bio waste service to start this year

WEEKLY food waste collections are being introduced in Lutterworth, to improve recycling and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill.

Harborough District Council (HDC) will begin the service from November 3 – subject to the delivery of its new food waste vehicle fleet – as part of national government reforms.

Under the scheme, food waste will be collected every week while general waste and recycling will continue to be collected fortnightly.

The council's current waste collection contractor will operate the new food waste service and will manage the distribution of food waste caddies, via a third party, to all eligible properties for the next 12 months.

Arrangements for service delivery beyond that date are currently being progressed through the procurement of a new environmental services contract.

As part of the service launch, households will receive food waste containers and one roll of bin liners. There will be a seven-litre caddy for indoor use and a 23-litre one for presentation on the kerbside each week.

The food waste collected will be sent to an anaerobic digestion plant where it will be converted into biofertiliser and renewable energy.

Coun Darren Woodiwiss, HDC's cabinet lead for climate change and neighbourhood services, said: "The introduction of weekly food waste collections is an important step forward in helping residents to recycle more and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill."

Biofertiliser

"By separating food waste, we can ensure it is put to good use, generating renewable energy and valuable biofertiliser while also supporting our wider environmental and climate objectives."

"We are committed to making this new service as straightforward as possible and will provide the support needed to help households make the most of it."

Visit www.harborough.gov.uk/info/20007/environmental_services/621/food_waste for more information about food waste collections in Lutterworth.



Visitors can take woodland and lakeside walks in the scenic grounds designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. s

Enjoy the daffodils and raise church funds

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

SPRINGTIME will be ushered in at an annual fundraising event near Rugby and Lutterworth next weekend.

'Daffodil Sunday' takes place in the grounds of Newnham Paddox country house – the estate of the Earl and Countess of Denbigh – near Monks Kirby on Sunday, April 12, from 11am to 4pm.

Visitors can take woodland and lakeside walks in the scenic grounds designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown.

Attractions will include a new vintage car and tractor show, alpacas, pet-ferret, woodturning, and entertainment from the Dunchurch Silver Band, the Ocho Rios Steel Band, The Sax Man, the Jill Bartlett School of Dance and Evolve Theatre Academy.

Stalls will sell plants, chocolates, woodcrafts, hand-made and knitted goods, ceramics, jewellery, jam and preserves, gin and more. The food and drink available will include hotdogs, samosas, a hog roast, brownies, locally made ice cream, tea and homemade cakes.

Daffodil Sunday is the main fundraiser for the Friends of the Revel Coffe

Churches group, comprising St John the Baptist, in Brinklow; Holy Trinity Church, in Churchover; All Saints Church, in Harborough Magna; St Edith's, in Monks Kirby; St Denys', in Pailton; and St Leonard's, in Willey.

An spokesperson for event sponsors Brownsover Hall Hotel, TG's Dental Suite and Ashton Lodge Country House said: "We are all really proud to be supporting this year's event. There will be plenty to do for all the family, so pay a visit."

Admission costs £8 for adults and is free for under-16s. Parking is free.

People can visit www.revelgroup.org/DaffodilSunday for more information.



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On the Easter trail

FAMILIES are encouraged to hop along to Draycote Water for an Easter egg hunt.

Visitors can pick up an activity sheet and head out on a scenic walk around the site to find hidden egg symbols and answer Easter-themed questions. Those who find them all will win an easter egg or a non-dairy alternative.

Donna Marshall from the site's owner Severn Trent Water, said: "Our Easter trails make for great days out for the family, offering the

chance for children to explore their inquisitive side while being out in nature.

"Aside from the trail, there is so much more that Draycote Water offers, from long walks to cycling and wildlife spotting – you really can get lost in it all at Draycote."

Taking part costs £4 per person, including an Easter egg. Booking is not required. Parking charges apply.

The trail runs daily from 10am to 4pm until April 12.

Miller's classic is next up at theatre

A POWERFUL revival of a classic Arthur Miller play highlighting the dangers of polarisation and mass hysteria is next up at Rugby Theatre, performed by talented young actors from local youth group In The Round Theatre.

The Crucible is a re-telling of the Salem witch trials of 1692 in the Puritan town of Salem, Massachusetts, where those accused could either make a false confession of witchcraft to survive, or maintain their innocence and be hanged.

Rob Sloan, who is co-directing the show with Darren Pratt, said: "The Crucible feels very right for what's going on in the world right now."

"It speaks to our abandonment of the importance of truth, and to cancel culture. To polarisation – you are either with us, or against, there can be no in between. But at the heart of all of this is a tragic story, beautifully written. Arthur Miller is up there as one of the greatest, most articulate playwrights of the 20th century."

The play centres on a group of teenage girls who are caught dancing in the woods, which sparks rumours of witchcraft. To avoid punishment, they begin accusing others in the community, leading to widespread hysteria, arrests and trials.

Arthur Miller wrote the play in 1953 as a response to Joseph



Left to right: Hazel Sloan, Aimee Marriott, Alice Guard, Evangeline Parker and Nyasha Usiku. Picture by Archie Parker.

McCarthy's hunt for communist sympathisers, and it continues to serve as a powerful allegory for political persecution.

Featuring local young actors aged between 10 and 18, the production – a collaboration with In The Round Theatre – is set in the modern day rather than the 1600s, to bring the look and feel more up to date. All music used in the play is original and written by local composer James Grady.

Rob added: "In the Round Theatre focuses on the craft of acting, and in terms of acting challenges, they really don't get much bigger than The Crucible."

"We wanted to give our young people something to really sink their teeth into, and everyone has risen to the challenge."

"We have the same highly creative production team working on this that worked on our sell-out run of A Christmas Carol at Rugby Theatre in 2024, so our staging will be like nothing you have ever seen."

"It's full-on drama, and by the end, there shouldn't be a dry eye in the house."

The Crucible runs from April 11-18. Visit www.rugbytheatre.co.uk or call the Rugby Theatre box office on 01788 541234 for tickets.

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Josephine Rugg



Volunteering openings are being put on display

COMMUNITY-spirited Rugbeians are being encouraged to spring into action as a new display at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum showcases the wealth of volunteering opportunities in the borough.

Warwickshire and Solihull Community and Voluntary Action (WCAVA) has joined forces with the Little Elborow Street venue to host the display, which includes information on organisations which offer volunteering opportunities, together with how WCAVA can support voluntary organisations to grow.

Organisations featured in the display include Myton Hospice, Warwickshire Vision, Rugby Eco Hub, Garden Organic and Overslade Community Centre – with information leaflets available for visitors to take home.

Amy Muzyka, WCAVA's volunteering co-ordinator for Rugby, said volunteering brought benefits beyond making a difference to people's lives – including improved self-confidence, meeting new people and learning new skills.

She added: "No matter who you are, how much time you have or what your reasons for volunteering are, there's a volunteering role that's right for you."

"You can choose to volunteer on a regular or short-term basis and even do voluntary work at home. Just visit the WCAVA website and click the 'volunteering' tab to register."

The WCAVA display runs at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's community space – located in the venue's foyer – until Tuesday April 7.

Phoebe Hilton, Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's senior learning and engagement



Phoebe Hilton (left), Rugby Art Gallery and Museum's senior learning and engagement officer, and Amy Muzyka, WCAVA volunteering co-ordinator for Rugby, at the display in the venue's community space.

officer, said: "Our team of volunteers at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum make such a massive difference, so we know only too well the benefits volunteering can bring."

"With so many varied volunteering opportunities on offer in the borough, you can find a role which fits around you and gives you

the chance to support the community you live in."

Visit www.wcava.org.uk to register for volunteering opportunities in Rugby.

Visit www.ragm.co.uk for more information about exhibitions and events at Rugby Art Gallery and Museum.

More helpers are needed

NEW volunteers are wanted to help families in the Lutterworth area.

Home-Start South Leicestershire is looking to expand its team, which helps families with young children across Harborough District.

The charity's annual eight-session preparation course starts on Wednesday April 15, taking place during school hours.

The charity supports families facing difficulties as new parents, or coping with complex life situations – such as financial crises, isolation and loneliness, managing mental or physical ill health, or living with disabilities and long-term conditions.

Charity Manager Stella Renwick said: "The help given by volunteers is bespoke to each family based on their individual circumstances. You could be going for a play in the park with the children, helping the family get out to the library or be a listening ear to a parent feeling stressed."

"We need volunteers from a range of backgrounds because we reach lots of different families, and a suitable match of family to volunteer is crucial."

"We're hoping to attract more male volunteers this year, as they are currently under-represented in our charity and an absent positive role-model in many families."

The charity wants to hear from anyone who has a couple of hours a week to spare, personal experience of parenting, and is interested in making a new connection to help a local family.

The charity provides full training, practical support and occasional social events.

Visit www.home-startsouthleics.org.uk, email info@home-startsouthleics.org.uk or call 01858 467982 for more information.



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PCC checks on election safety

AS COVENTRIANS prepare to head to the polls next month, the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has sought formal assurances regarding the safety and security of the upcoming local elections.

The PCC, Simon Foster questioned West Midlands Police on Operation Applegreen – the dedicated policing plan designed to protect candidates, staff and voters from harassment, intimidation and electoral malpractice.

He said: "Free and fair elections are fundamental to our democracy. It is essential that candidates can campaign without fear of harassment and intimidation and that every voter feels safe when attending their local polling station."

"I have asked the force for clear assurances that Operation Applegreen is robust and that the lessons learned from previous elections are being applied. We must ensure that the 2026 local elections are safe, secure and accessible for everyone involved."

West Midlands Police confirmed a comprehensive security operation was under way.

Assistant Chief Constable Mike O'Hara, gold commander for Operation Applegreen, said: "We are currently working with local authorities to understand and assess around 1,270 polling stations ahead of this year's elections."

"Following national and local learning from the 2024 General Election – particularly in relation to anti-social behaviour, harassment and intimidatory behaviour – we have a team for electoral malpractice, we also have a team for broader crime and anti-social behaviour to ensure a swift and appropriate response to any issues that arise."

The force confirmed a specialist Sergeant and PC were working with councillors, MPs and elected officials to provide bespoke security advice throughout the campaign period.

Local elections will take place across the West Midlands on May 7.

Bold plan aims to give thousands new skills

PLANS to equip 12,000 young people with skills needed to fill construction roles is at the heart of West Midlands Mayor's new plan.

Richard Parker launched his Building Growth Action Plan, aims to bridge the skills gap by creating more training placements in construction, and by strengthening transition from full time study into work through high quality industry placements.

The West Midlands has seen a surge in construction activity with the Deloitte Birmingham Crane Survey 2026 recording 23 new starts on site in 2025 the highest number in five years and more than double the previous year.

The Mayor was joined by key stakeholders and partners, including the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), for the launch of his Building Growth Action Plan.

CITB estimate the region needs 12,000 construction workers over the next three years.

He said: "While the future feels uncertain for many, construction offers a well-paid, stable career for life. Whether you're working with bricks and mortar or in engineering and design, there are huge opportunities."

"We are now seeing a construction boom across our region and I am determined to make sure



West Midlands Mayor, Richard Parker (centre) launches his Building Growth Action Plan.

local people are at the front of the queue to secure the vital jobs this is creating – jobs that are quite literally building the West Midlands and building Britain.

"My Building Growth Action Plan will bring together investment and partners to deliver the skilled pipeline of talent that the industry needs, powering new jobs, building new homes and creating new opportunities to drive investment, growth and prosperity across our region."

It follows the Mayor's announcement of £75million additional funding for construction training along with plans to unlock fur-

ther private investment.

The plan is to be led by key partners and businesses in the Construction Sector, who will work together to grow a sustainable pipeline of emerging talent and will build on the success of the recently launched Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC) – led by Dudley College.

Tim Balcon, chief executive at CITB said, "The launch of the Building Growth Action Plan for the West Midlands marks an important step towards building a more joined-up regional construction skills ecosystem."

"The plan will help inform a

new partnership and regional action plan between CITB and the WMCA, ensuring the West Midlands develops the skilled workforce needed to deliver ambitious housing, retrofit and infrastructure programmes.

"Later this year, CITB will also launch a new National Construction Mayoral Network, designed to strengthen alignment between national and regional government priorities while enabling mayors and regional leaders to share best practice and innovation across the construction sector."

Local Mum Overcomes Challenges to Launch Rekha Salon in Radford Coventry. Radford -19th March 2026

A new beauty salon has officially opened in Radford as local entrepreneur Rekha celebrates the launch of Rekha Salon — a business built on passion, resilience, and years of hard work.

Rekha's journey to opening her own salon has been far from easy - *While living with her in-laws and raising her children*, she worked tirelessly to build her career in the beauty industry. From taking on makeup and beauty jobs to travelling with her children in a pram, she remained committed to her dream of one day owning her own space.

That dream has now become a reality with the opening of Rekha Salon, **located at CV6 3BU**

The salon offers a range of beauty treatments like threading, waxing, advance facials, hair and wedding makeup alongside professional training courses.

What makes Rekha Salon unique is its personalised approach — focusing on each client's individual preferences, **whether they are looking for a soft, natural look or full glam.**

Speaking about her journey, Rekha said: "It hasn't been an easy journey, but I never gave up. I've always believed in working hard and staying focused on my goals."

She added: "Every client is different, and I love working closely with them to create a look that suits their personality and style."

Beyond offering beauty services, Rekha is also passionate about supporting the next generation. Through her training courses, she is helping young girls gain valuable skills, build confidence, and create opportunities for their future.

The grand opening was celebrated with friends, family, and members of the local community, marking an important milestone in Rekha's journey.

Rekha hopes her story will inspire others to pursue their dreams, **regardless of the challenges they may face.**



Photo: courtesy of Parm @kahlonKreation

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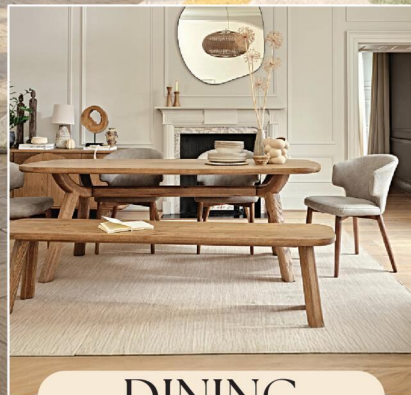
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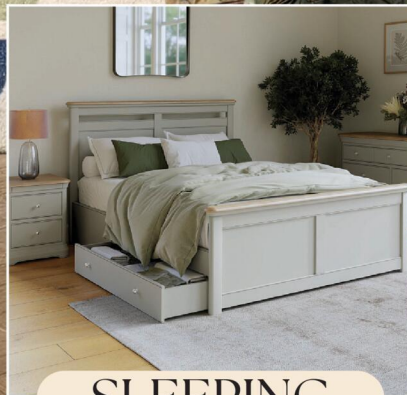
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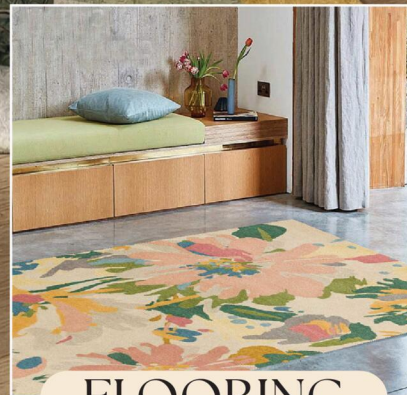
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Orbit staff put the kettle on in honour of John with his guide dog Barrett.



A CAFFEINE-fueled fundraiser at a Leamington later living scheme raised cash in honour of its new, four-legged resident. The coffee and cake morning was held at Orbit's Queensway Court following the arrival of resident John Elrick's new guide dog Barrett. It raised £360 for Guide Dogs UK. After John's sight worsened recently, Barrett moved into Queensway Court with him. Residents and colleagues have got to witness first-hand how guide dogs help those with sight loss and

vision impairments and were keen to show their support for the sight loss charity. John said: "Barrett is such a huge help to me every single day and I'm so grateful to everyone living and working at Queensway Court for supporting this amazing fundraiser for the Guide Dogs, and Barrett absolutely loved the event with all the attention he was getting. "I'd also like to thank Orbit for everything they've done to support me through this transition and for welcoming Barrett into the scheme with such open arms."

Podcast offers a look behind the scenes

A SPECIAL podcast goes behind the scenes at The Myton Hospices.

The episode of 'Wild Card - Whose Shoes?' has been created as part of Podcastthon, a global initiative where thousands of podcasts dedicate one episode each year to a charity close to their hearts. The campaign aims to raise awareness, spark conversation and celebrate organisations making a difference in communities around the world.

Podcast host Gill Phillips chose to support The Myton Hospices for this year's Podcastthon after her mother received care at the hospice's Warwick site before she died in 2017. The experience helped shape Gill's understanding of compassionate, person-centred end-of-life care.

The episode brings together voices from across the organisation to share insight into the many ways Myton supports patients and families.

Olivia Bowskill, community engagement manager and registered nurse, discusses how hospice care can begin much earlier than many people expect, helping people live well for as long as possible. Julie Cooke, senior staff nurse at Warwick Myton Hospice, shares how small moments of compassion can make a lasting difference for patients and their loved ones. Volunteer Kay Rhodes explains the vital role volunteers play, often



Julie Cooke from Warwick Myton Hospice and Gill Phillips chat for the podcast.

being the first friendly voice someone hears when they reach out for support.

The conversation also explores the wider community that helps make hospice care possible. Anil Gupta, head of retail, highlights how Myton's network of charity shops supports the funding of care, while Holly Kerrigan, director of marketing and communications, discusses the importance of raising awareness so more families know support is available when they need it.

Stories shared in the episode highlight how hospice care focuses on the whole person, not just their medical needs. From meaningful conversations and moments of laughter to special experiences such as themed celebrations, the episode captures the compassion and creativity that define hospice care.

Gill Phillips said: "The care my mum received from The Myton Hospices was extraordinary. It was compassionate, thoughtful and deeply human. Recording this podcast episode with members of the Myton team felt like a small way to say thank you - and to help more people understand the incredible difference hospice care makes to families."

By sharing these stories, the podcast aims to help more people understand what hospice care really looks like and the many ways the community supports Myton's work, whether through volunteering, donating items to shops, taking part in fundraising events or leaving a gift in their will.

Visit www.buzzsprout.com/1838805/episodes/18803091 to listen to the podcast.

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Following on from the fantastic response to our debut 'Winter' edition of **Seasons**, we're delighted to announce that **Seasons** 'Spring' edition is about to be sprung.

As the days grow longer and our towns, villages and the countryside emerge from the long dark days of winter, we are all enjoying the arrival of the 'Spring' of 2026.

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

The 'Spring' edition of **Seasons** will celebrate everything uplifting, inspiring and quintessentially local across the three counties of Warwickshire, Worcestershire and the West Midlands.

The beautifully glossy A5 magazine will once again be freely available in print, from a major supermarket near you - and, the 'Spring' edition of **Seasons** will also be available 247 on line and will be showcased across all of our local Observer and Standard Newspapers, websites and social media platforms for the next 12 months.

So you'll be able to enjoy the exclusive, evergreen, editions of **Seasons** by logging on to www.seasons-magazine.com where you can browse the 'Winter' edition of **Seasons** 247 and soon, you'll be able to enjoy the 'Spring' edition of **Seasons** too!

If you'd like your business to be featured in the next edition of **Seasons**, or if you'd like more details - just call **01527 588688** and speak to Kelly, Caroline, Roisin, Paul, Gareth or Sharon.

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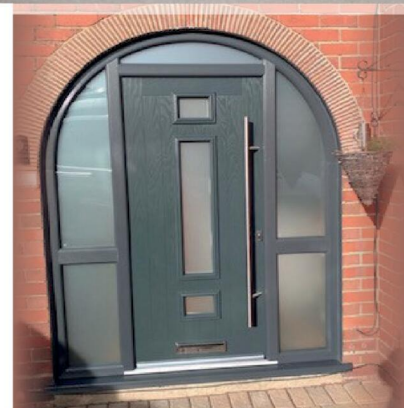
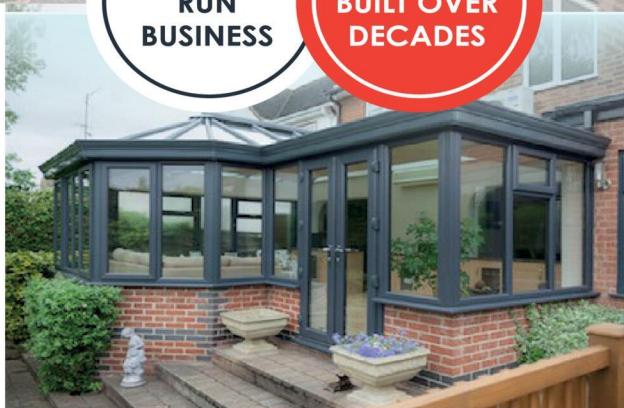


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Still time to check your ID

LESS than a month remains for residents to apply for free voter ID.

Residents voting in the local elections in May are now required to show a valid form of ID which include a passport, driver's licence, older person's or disabled person's bus pass.

However, some people who are entitled to vote this May might not have a valid form of ID.

A Voter Authority Certificate means people without another accepted form of ID can still vote.

Data released from the Electoral Commission revealed 55 per cent of people were not aware they can get free voter ID from their local authority and only 38 per cent of people without photo ID said they were confident in how to apply.

Jackie Killeen, director of Electoral Administration and Regulation at the Electoral Commission, said: "Voters will be required to show photo ID at polling stations in May. Though most people already have an accepted form of ID, those who don't should be aware that they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for free."

"The certificate can be applied for through your local council, and it means people won't miss the chance to vote because they don't have photo ID. The deadline to apply is fast approaching, so don't delay."

Applications can be made online or by completing a paper form and sending it to your local council.

Voters will need to provide a photo, their full name, date of birth, the address at which they are registered to vote and their National Insurance number.

Applicants must be registered to vote before applying.

The registration deadline is 11.59pm on Monday 20 April and applications can be made online.

Cash injection should be a boost for innovation

THE WEST Midlands has been handed £50million from the government to back a new generation of pioneers to develop and scale up new technologies to improve people's lives, create jobs and grow the economy.

The Local Innovation Partnerships Fund is set to support the growing cohort of innovative businesses in advanced manufacturing, health and life sciences, and creative immersive technologies.

Businesses, researchers and entrepreneurs in these clusters will get the support they need to turn big ideas into new cutting-edge products and processes.

Richard Parker, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "This record amount of funding shows government recognises what we've always known - that this is the home of innovation."

"You can see it everywhere. Two centuries on from Watt and Boulton's steam engine, a new generation of trailblazers here is at the forefront of a tech revolution that's unlocking smarter healthcare, better diagnostics and the transition to cleaner energy."

"My job is to keep that spirit alive by backing their talent and investing in cutting-edge research to turn bold ideas into real-world solutions. All while creating the jobs, opportunities and growth



Mayor Richard Parker welcomes the funds.

that will improve people's lives across the West Midlands and beyond. That's exactly what my Growth Plan is about and with government backing we're making it happen."

The Local Innovation Partnerships Fund is funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and brings together academic, business and public sector leaders to deliver projects to accelerate regional economic growth, scale up high-potential innovation clusters, and

bridge the gap between research and commercialisation.

This record amount of investment in innovation in the region will support the West Midlands Growth Plan and the government's Industrial Strategy by unlocking another £190million of private investment, creating or safeguarding 2,000 jobs, and growing the regional economy by £700million.

It comes on top of a £282million investment in the economy approved last week by the Mayor and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board.

Science Minister Lord Vallance said: "This £50million investment is backing the West Midlands to take its proud history of innovation to the next level and improve lives, from unlocking new medicines to helping businesses cut their energy bills - all while creating new jobs for local communities."

"By bringing together UK Research and Innovation's R&D investments and local expertise that knows where best to invest, we can move faster from great ideas to products, jobs and growth."



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Over Easter, our Conservation Team will be championing native species and raising awareness about the amazing animals that call Britain home. Learn more about what native species you could spot on your journey around WMSP earn a sticker and find out what you can do to help in your garden.

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For your chance to win a 'Summer' WMSP Family Ticket, so you and your family can pop into Summer-time fun at West Midlands Safari Park, just answer the following question:

What is the name of the Professor who is searching for the most elusive butterfly in the world?

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Function wins the day in stylish historical battle

Alfred Enoch as Henry V. Picture by Johan Persson (RSC).



Henry V

Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford

Theatre review

The brutal numbers game of field warfare takes centre stage in a Henry V long on committed military effort but slightly lacking in noteworthy medal-winning exploits.

A bare stage and a construction somewhat like the wooden framework for a triple decker Routemaster carry all the build-up, violent reality and grim aftermath of this touchstone moment in the history of this island's monarchy.

Great use is made of the space available, particularly the height, but the performances on the whole, good as they are, stay on one level.

Alfred Enoch is a very considered Henry, confident in every exchange and applying the same self-assuredness to browbeating recalcitrant English nobles as he does to winning reluctant French princesses when that challenge arrives.

And perhaps here lies the suspicion of a disappointment. While not wishing to call on Hamlet depths of doubt and anger, a touch more light and shade might have been worth it. The speeches which set the bar for stirring

the blood pass at a level well below tub-thumping with the odd thrown-in funny moment preventing any real chance of outright and unashamed inspiration.

Some relief from the tightly-controlled does come in the form a few of the theatre's trademark audience asides and the completely irrelevant use of the front row to keep hold of the crown at one point.

The bold move to dispense with the Chorus and give the scene setting lines to the King himself is an intriguing touch. Here we have a King who seems not content with bestriding his world, he wants to create it too.

Henry aside, this is steadfastly a company piece and there are few performances which seem to want to break out of the supportive, ensemble formation. There are no disastrous weak links certainly, but by the same token there are no scene-stealing gems to write home about.

The comic characters are characterful without ever really being downright comic. Clearly, this is a prediction predicated on the physical rather than the verbal.

The fighting, of which there is understandably a lot, is predominantly well-handled. There's the

usual crouching and grimacing out front but the choreography includes plenty of dance elements bordering on the balletic and no end of racing around with some sort of intent. Pace is the key ingredient here and director Tamara Harvey never lets the urgency flag even when the ground is thick with the fallen.

There's a fair measure of doubling up across the opposing armies with areas of confusion not helped by a costume design which really feels ad hoc rather than curated and which, at times, fails to lift the stage picture above the drab.

As has come to be expected the RSC makes a few changes aimed perhaps at modern relevance. On the whole the changes don't make a great deal of difference - genders are swapped without any significant effect. Other than expediency there doesn't appear to be an underlying reason for such alterations.

There's enough about this production to enjoy and the whole feel is one of efficiency and dependability. It's a well-crafted, visually impeccable reading of the play. But, like the awful mundanity of war on any battlefield, perhaps what will be remembered is less than was lauded at the time.

Matthew Salisbury

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Report your knife concerns

RESIDENTS are being urged to report any concerns they have about someone carrying a knife.

Warwickshire Police is backing new campaign 'Through Behind Every Blade' which is encouraging people – particularly young men – to report anonymously in a bid to cut to cut knife-crime in the county.

Insp Ryan Walker from Warwickshire Police said: "If you are concerned someone is carrying a knife the information you provide could save a life - it could save their life."

"We will act on all information provided. People who carry knives are often scared and trapped. They might be being exploited by criminal gangs and are pressured to carry a knife."

"The information you provide means they could get help before they get hurt or arrested. We can address the reasons they feel the need to carry knife and maybe help to move them away from a life of crime."

"It comes down to a simple choice, if you know someone is carrying a knife you can ignore it and hope for the best or you can report it and potentially save a life."

"Ask yourself, could you live with the consequences?"

For more information about the campaign go to www.optalkative.co.uk. There's advice for people worried about carrying knives or knife crime, and resources for parents, schools and youth groups to use to have conversations about the risks of carrying a knife.

Concerns about someone carrying a knife can be reported directly to Warwickshire Police by calling 101 or visiting www.warwickshire.police.uk/report

Those who want to remain anonymous can report to Fearless - run by independent charity Crimestoppers - by calling 0800 555 111 or www.fearless.org. When making a report quote 'Op Talkative'.

Grants set to help boost the fight against crime

CRIME fighting initiatives across Warwickshire are set to receive a major boost.

Community groups, charities and local organisations will receive a share of £324,000 from the Police and Crime Commissioner's grant pot for 2026/27.

The investment supports a wide range of initiatives to help prevent crime, divert people away from offending, and improve community safety across the county.

Funding has been awarded to 37 projects, selected through a competitive process that attracted 73 applications seeking more than \$960,000 in total.

Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe said the strong interest demonstrates the commitment of local organisations to improving safety and wellbeing in their communities.

He continued: "Warwickshire has an exceptional network of community groups, volunteers and frontline organisations whose work makes a real difference to people's lives. I am pleased to support these projects, which reflect the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan and offer real benefits to residents across the county."

"Each of the successful applications brings something valuable, whether that is helping young people make positive choices, supporting victims of harm or



Police and Crime Commissioner Philip Seccombe prepares to hand out his grants.

improving road safety. I am grateful to every organisation that came forward and to the teams who help deliver this work throughout the year. While I would have loved to be in a position to fund every project that applied, I have taken a balanced approach to ensure that we get the widest support across the county possible."

A total of \$250,341 has been allocated to prevention and diversion projects, including Safeline's early intervention work in Warwickshire schools, detached

youth work led by Young People First and the Stratford Youth Collective and arts, sport and wellbeing programmes such as Aspire in Arts' support for young people not in education, employment or training.

A further \$33,837 has been awarded to organisations whose work supports key Police and Crime Plan priorities. Funding includes support for Warwickshire and North Warwickshire Neighbourhood Watch, Rugby and Leamington Street Pastors

and the Sydni Centre's youth work offer in Leamington.

The PCC has also awarded £19,670 in road safety grants from the county's ring-fenced reserve. Funding will support advanced rider training delivered by ROSPA Coventry Riders and South Warwickshire Advanced Riders, helping to reduce casualties on Warwickshire's roads.

Visit www.warwickshire-pcc.gov.uk/what-we-do/commissioning-and-grants/grants for more details.

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HOP INTO SPRING: Easter Home & Garden Ideas to Brighten the Bank Holiday Weekend

Spring has officially sprung, and with Easter upon us, there's no better time to freshen up your home and garden with a seasonal touch.

Whether you're hosting family for an Easter Sunday roast, planning a garden egg hunt for the little ones, or simply want to embrace the joys of spring, we've gathered the best tips to help you celebrate Easter in style – without breaking the bank.

Bring the Outdoors In

Easter and spring go hand in hand with fresh blooms and greenery. Now is the perfect time to liven up your interiors with floral arrangements – think tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, and narcissus. A

simple jug of yellow daffodils on the kitchen table is instantly uplifting and costs less than a fancy takeaway coffee. If you're after something longer-lasting, potted primroses or violas make charming indoor centrepieces and can be planted outside later.

Top Tip: Add a sprig of rosemary or thyme to your arrangements for a subtle scent and an Easter twist.

A Touch of Pastel

Easter décor doesn't need to be fussy. Soft pastels like duck egg blue, blush pink and mint green can freshen up your space. Try swapping out cushion covers or adding a pastel runner to your dining table. Even a few painted eggs in a basket can add an easy seasonal touch.

Crafty types can get the whole family involved with DIY decorations. Blow out

hen eggs, paint them in soft tones, and hang them from willow branches for a stunning Easter tree.

Set the Perfect Table

Planning your Easter meal: Whether it's roast lamb with all the trimmings or a veggie tart with spring greens, a beautifully set table makes everything feel that little bit more special.

Layer white crockery with a pastel-coloured tablecloth or runner. Napkins tied with raffia and a sprig of lavender or rosemary are an effortless but classy touch. Scatter chocolate mini eggs or foil-wrapped treats across the table for a fun, edible flourish.

For an extra bit of fun, write guests' names on hollowed eggs and use them as place settings.



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Garden Glory: Ready for Guests (or the Easter Bunny!)

After months of rain and frost, your garden might be in need of a little TLC. Start by clearing leaves and debris from beds and borders. A quick trim of the lawn and a sweep of the patio can make a huge difference. Now's the time to plant hardy spring flowers like pansies, primulas, and marigolds – ideal for instant colour. You can also sow wildflower



seeds in sunny spots to attract bees and butterflies later in the season. If you're hosting an Easter egg hunt, create zones in the garden using bunting or plant pots. Hide eggs in flowerbeds, behind trees, and among the shrubs for a fun challenge. For a magical touch, hang ribbon-tied eggs from branches to guide younger children on the hunt.

Top Tip: If the weather isn't playing ball, move the egg hunt indoors! Use post-it clues and hide treats around the house for a rainy-day version.

Spring Clean with Purpose

Easter is a natural time to tackle a bit of spring cleaning. Open windows wide to air out rooms, and don't forget neglected spots like skirting boards, behind furniture, and window sills. Natural cleaning solutions using vinegar, lemon and bicarbonate of soda work wonders – and leave a fresh scent behind. Decluttering is key: clear out winter bits, pack away heavy throws and make space for lighter, brighter spring vibes. If you're switching to summer duvets, pop a lavender sachet into your linen cupboard to keep everything smelling fresh.

Sustainable and Stylish

Easter doesn't have to mean piles of plastic and waste. Choose foil-wrapped or cardboard-packaged eggs and avoid single-use decorations. Craft your own bunting from fabric scraps, or decorate reusable jars with ribbon to use for treats or table settings. Plantable seed cards or eco-friendly wooden



decorations make thoughtful, low-waste gifts, and can be reused year after year.

In Bloom and In Style

Easter is a season of renewal – not just in nature, but in our homes too. Whether you're adding a few daffodils to a windowsill or

throwing a full-blown garden party, a little creativity goes a long way. Celebrate this long weekend with warmth, colour, and a touch of spring magic and don't forget to save a chocolate egg for yourself.

Happy Easter!

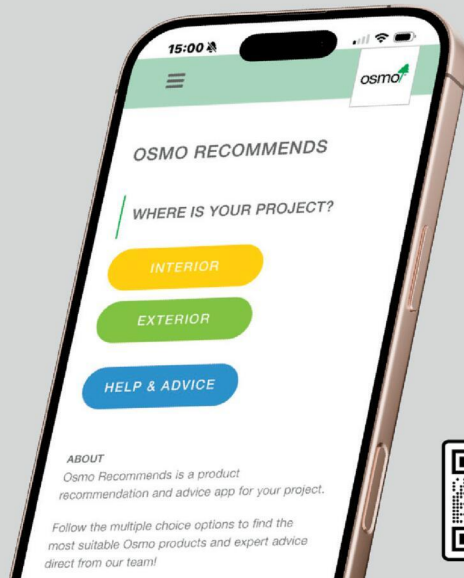
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Get Your Garden Spring-Ready Over the Bank Holiday Weekend

Easter weekend is the perfect time to dust off the trowel, pull on your gloves, and get stuck into the garden. With longer days and milder weather (fingers crossed!), now is the time to set the stage for a colourful, blooming summer.

Whether you've got a sprawling lawn or a few pots on the patio, here are 10 expert-approved Easter gardening tips to help you make the most of the spring energy:

1. Plant Some Instant Colour

Bring borders and containers to life with hardy spring favourites like pansies, primroses, violas, and marigolds. These tough little blooms add an instant pop of colour and can cope with unpredictable April weather. *Top Tip: Don't forget to deadhead flowers regularly to keep them blooming for longer.*

2. Start Your Veg Patch

Easter is a brilliant time to sow early crops. Try lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, and peas – all can go straight into the ground (or deep pots). For smaller spaces, use growbags or raised beds.

No garden? No problem. Salad leaves grow happily on windowsills or balconies!

TOP GARDENING TIPS FOR EASTER

3. Pot Up Strawberries

Strawberry plants thrive in pots and hanging baskets – and planting them now means you'll have juicy fruits by summer. Look for varieties like Cambridge Favourite or Hapil for UK conditions.

4. Prune and Tidy

Cut back dead stems on perennials and tidy up shrubs, especially winter-flowering ones. It's also time to prune lavender, hydrangeas, and roses – but always check specific care advice by plant type.

Remember: Avoid pruning spring-flowering shrubs until after they've bloomed.

5. Feed Your Plants

Plants are waking up hungry after winter. Use a general-purpose fertiliser on beds and borders, and liquid feed for containers. Roses, fruit trees, and clematis all benefit from a boost right now.

6. Sow Wildflowers for Pollinators

Support bees and butterflies by scattering wildflower seeds in sunny spots. Choose UK native mixes and rake lightly into the soil.

They'll bring colour and wildlife to your garden from early summer onwards.

Look out for mixes labelled "Bee Friendly" or "Pollinator Mix".

7. Watch Out for Pests

Slugs and snails love tender young shoots. Use organic deterrents like copper tape, eggshells, or wool pellets around vulnerable plants – or try beer traps for a humane solution.

8. Replant Bulbs After Display

If you've had bulbs like tulips or daffodils indoors or in pots, you can replant them in the garden once the flowers fade. Let the leaves die back naturally – this feeds next year's bloom.

9. Sort Your Tools and Shed

Easter's a great time to give your tools some TLC. Sharpen blades, oil hinges, and clear out the shed or greenhouse. A tidy gardening space makes a huge difference as the season ramps up.

10. Plan Your Summer Showstoppers

It's not too early to sow summer stunners like cosmos, zinnias, sweet peas, and nasturtiums.

Start them indoors or in a cold frame, then harden off in May before planting out.

Tip from Jo Fielding, local garden designer: "Think ahead. Easter is the time to prepare – the real show starts in June!"

Final Thought:

Easter gardening isn't just about jobs – it's about joy. Take a moment to sit outside, notice the buds on trees, and listen to the birds. Nature's putting on a show – and you've got front-row seats.



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Role of AI causing growing fears among young workforce

MORE THAN half of 16-25-year-olds in the West Midlands fear AI will impact their job chances.

This is according to a report published by The King's Trust (formerly The Prince's Trust), which was carried out by YouGov.

It also found that 71 per cent of young people wish they were not starting their careers in the current economic climate and up to 77 per cent worry there will not be enough jobs for people like them.

The research, carried out with support from TK Maxx, highlights that alongside economic uncertainty, two thirds (66 per cent) of young people are worried about the impact of artificial intelligence on their future job security. This is a rise of 17 per cent since last year.

Alex Khanyaghma, West Midlands head of delivery at The King's Trust says: "When The King's Trust first began, it was responding to a generation of young people growing up with uncertainty about their futures.

"Today, the world may look very different, shaped by new technologies and changing industries, but for many young

people in the West Midlands that underlying fear has not gone away. Too many feel locked out of opportunities and unsure whether a secure future is really within their reach.

"This research gives voice to those concerns. It shows how deeply anxious young people are about work and what lies ahead, particularly those already facing the toughest barriers.

"By standing alongside young people now, helping them build skills, belief and resilience, we can open doors, break cycles of disadvantage and help the next generation of young people in the West Midlands to thrive."

This report shows that most young people in the West Midlands feel unequipped for the changing world of work and an increasingly competitive job market.

And three out of five (61 per cent) say they felt unprepared for how competitive the jobs market would be after leaving education, while almost two thirds (64 per cent) believe most entry level jobs available to young people are insecure.

The report suggests these worries are having a damaging impact on young people's well-being and aspirations for the future, particularly for those

facing adversity. Almost a third (31 per cent) of young people feel they are going to fail in life.

Alex added: "As we celebrate 50 years having supported over a million young people to build a better future, The King's Trust remains more determined than ever in our vision of ending youth unemployment, tackling inequality and ultimately, ensuring every young person has the chance to build a secure and fulfilling future."

The King's Trust, formerly The Prince's Trust, has helped 1.3 million young people during the past 50 years to build the confidence and skills they need to move into work.

Last year, 67,000 young people benefitted from Trust programmes, with three in four moving into work, education or training.

The anniversary report, supported by TK Maxx, reflects the strength of long-term partnerships that help young people gain the confidence, skills and experience they need to take their first steps into work.

Alex Khanyaghma, West Midlands head of delivery at The King's Trust.



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SUDOKU

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

EASY

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

HARD

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

PATHFINDER

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

Composers

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

Solutions opposite

CROSSWORD

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

ACROSS

- Scatter here and there (11)
- Serpent (3)
- Instruction (9)
- Type of duck (5)
- Apart (7)
- Beginning (6)
- Highest point (6)
- Relate (7)
- A dead language (5)
- Vigorous (9)
- Untruth (3)
- Anyway (2,3,6)

DOWN

- Pinch (3)
- Senior (5)
- Shriek (6)
- Shut out (7)
- Blown spray (9)
- Seek advice (4,7)
- Rebuked (11)
- Cleansing agent (9)
- Gospel (7)
- Stinging plant (6)
- Sordid gain (5)
- Allow (3)

Scribble pad

LADDER

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

- Scorch
- Chair
- Achievement
- Gathering
- Clenched hand



NINER

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

- 752435 gives a flower;
- 1368 gives a tree;
- 9887 gives a plant.

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

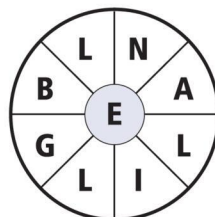
CODEWORD

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

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

WORDWHEEL

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

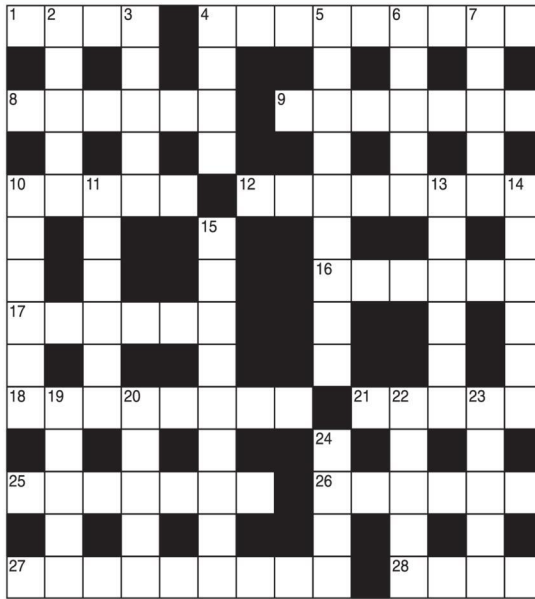


How you rate
 15 words: average 25 words: very good
 20 words: good 30 or more: excellent.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Large triangular plucked, stringed instrument (4)
- The air force of Nazi Germany (9)
- Figured material, now usually of linen (6)
- Small, brownish spot on the skin, caused by sunlight (7)
- Surname of the composer whose works include Rigoletto and La Traviata (5)
- See 27 Across
- Region of central Italy in the Apennines, capital Perugia (6)
- Delicately-flavoured, ovate fruit with a brownish, rough outer skin, native to China (6)
- Spanish composer famous for The Three-Cornered Hat, etc. (6,2,5)
- Basic unit of length in the metric system (5)
- State in the southeastern US, capital Montgomery (7)
- Artist, traveller and writer who popularized the limerick (6,4)
- Novel by Francis Brett Young, published in 1928 (2,7,8)
- River of East Africa (4)



DOWN

- Banded or cloudy silica, used to make ornaments and objects of art (5)
- Woollen cloth, with a tartan or chequered pattern, of Scottish Highlanders (5)
- Evangelist closely associated with St. Paul (4)
- Any of the Theraphosidae family of large, often hairy, spiders (9)
- Racecourse where the Gold Cup, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Stakes, etc., are run (5)
- See 18 Across
- Finer kind of parchment (6)
- Climbing palm from which a kind of cane is made (6)
- Large insect of the wasp family, inflicting a serious sting (6)

- A delicate difference in meaning, opinion, colour, etc. (6)
- Diving bird of the auk family (9)
- A mixture of metals (5)
- Brown earth used as pigment (5)
- Muir, Orkney-born poet famous for 'The Horses', etc. (5)
- Pertaining to the country, as distinguished from the town (5)
- See 26 Across

SOLUTIONS

13 Home; 14 Nuanetsi; 15 Guillemot; 19 Alloy; 20 Umber; 22 Edwin; 23 Rural; 24 Lear.
 DOWN: 2 Agate; 3 Plaid; 4 Luke; 5 Taramula; 6 Ascot; 7 Falla; 10 Vellum; 11 Rattan; 17 Litchi; 18 Mama; 25 Alabama; 26 Edward; 27 My Brother; 28 Nile.

General Knowledge Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Harp; 4 Lurttwaffe; 8 Damas; 9 Freckle; 10 Verdi; 12 Jonathan; 16 Umbr; 17 Litchi; 18 Mama; 25 Alabama; 26 Edward; 27 My Brother; 28 Nile.
 DOWN: 2 Agate; 3 Plaid; 4 Luke; 5 Taramula; 6 Ascot; 7 Falla; 10 Vellum; 11 Rattan; 17 Litchi; 18 Mama; 25 Alabama; 26 Edward; 27 My Brother; 28 Nile.

Crossword

ACROSS: 1 Intersperse; 9 Asp; 10 Directive; 11 Elder; 13 Asunder; 14 Outset; 16 Zenth; 18 Narrate; 19 Latin; 20 Emergent; 21 Lie; 22 At all events; Down: 2 Nip; 3 Elder; 4 Cream; 5 Exlude; 6 Spindrift; 7 Take counsel; 8 Reprehended; 12 Detergent; 15 Evangel; 17 Mettle; 19 Lucre; 21 Let.

Wordwheel Pathfinder

Richard Strauss, Jean Sibelius, Edward Grieg, William Byrd, Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Vivaldi, Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, Henry Purcell, Giacomo Puccini, Joseph Haydn, Richard Wagner, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Frédéric Chopin, Giuseppe Verdi, Maurice Ravel, Edward Elgar.
 PHILANDER
 Niner
 LABELLING
 Wordwheel Pathfinder
 24=M, 25=A, 26=X
 17=L, 18=D, 19=A, 20=E, 21=N, 22=B, 23=I,
 10=H, 11=K, 12=Q, 13=U, 14=P, 15=C, 16=L,
 1=5, 2=W, 3=O, 4=G, 5=R, 6=F, 7=Y, 8=Z, 9=Y,
 Star, Sear, Seat, Feat, Fest, Fist, Fish

Ladder Codeword

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

Easy Sudoku



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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:

A426 LEICESTER ROAD, RUGBY (SOUTH BOUND CARRIAGEWAY ONLY)

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic from Technology Drive to Newbold Road.

Reason for Order: Carriageway patching works, overnight 20.00hrs - 06.00hrs.

Order Commences: 2 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 3 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: A426, A5, A361, A45, A45 Daventry Road, B4429 Daventry Road and Coventry Road, Symmetry Park, A45, A4071.

Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415302.

B40380 KILSBY LANE, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic between the junctions of the A428 and Nortoft Lane.

Reason for Order: Carriageway structural patching and associated works, 09.30hrs - 15.00hrs.

Order Commences: 7 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 2 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: A428, Barby Lane, Rugby Road, Ware Road, Kilsby Road, Barby Road, Chapel Street, Main Road, Rugby Road and vice versa.

Contractor: Balfour Beatty, Tel: 03452 415302.

HOULTON WAY & HILLMORTON LANE, CLIFTON ON DUNSMORE

Order Effect: All traffic will be prohibited from turning right and left from Hillmorton Lane into Houlton Way. Please note, these details differ from the details previously advertised week ending 20 March for Houlton Way/Hillmorton Lane.

Reason for Order: To enable electricity supply works.

Order Commences: 7 April 2026 for up to 18 months

Anticipated Completion: 15 June 2026.

Contractor: Power On, Tel: 07824 873 544.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH BETWEEN BOUGHTON ROAD AND LEICESTER ROAD, RUGBY

Order Effect: Footpath closed to all traffic.

Reason for Order: To safely enable electricity supply works.

Order Commences: 27 April 2026 for up to 6 months.

Anticipated Completion: 11 May 2026.

Access & Diversion: Waterside Drive, Kinman Way, Projects Drive, footpath from Projects Drive to Boughton Way and vice versa.

Contractor: Power On, Tel: 07980 317 209.

VARIOUS ROADS IN THE BOROUGH OF RUGBY

Order Effect: Carriageways closed to traffic as indicated in the Schedule below.

Road(s) subject to closure	Location
Sheep Street	Rugby
High Street	Rugby
Market Place	Rugby
Little Church Street	Rugby
Chapel Street	Rugby

Reason for Order: The closures and restrictions are required for the safety of the public and to facilitate the Rugby Town Centre Easter Market Event. Roads closed 07.00hrs - 18.00hrs.

Order Commences: 4 April 2026 for 1 day.

Contractor: Rugby Works Services Unit Tel: 07736 695763.

PUBLIC FOOTPATH AMBLESIDE, RUGBY

Order Effect: Footpath closed to all traffic.

Reason for Order: To enable laid laying works.

Order Commences: 8 April 2026 for up to 6 months.

Anticipated Completion: 10 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Public Footpath from Ambleside to Ulverston, Ulverston, Buttermere, Ambleside and vice versa.

Contractor: Quantum TM, Tel: 01724 786 286.

GIBBET LANE, SHAWELL

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: To enable pipe renewal works.

Order Commences: 8 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 10 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Rugby Road, Main Street, Rugby6 Road, Service Road, Swinford Road, Lutterworth Road, Shawell Road, Gibbet Lane and vice versa.

Contractor: Chevron TM Ltd, Tel: 0330 008 0820.

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

PUBLIC FOOTPATH R99 IN THE PARISH OF CHURCHOVER

Order Effect: Footpath closed to all traffic at Grid references 499796 and 500799.

Reason for Order: For public safety because works are being carried out on or near to the footpath.

Order Commences: 15 April 2026 for up to 6 months.

Anticipated Completion: 9 September 2026.

Access & Diversion: R100, E20630 and vice versa.

Contractor: Network Archaeology Ltd, Tel: 07776 023 473.

WELLS STREET, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Repair/replacement of defective manhole cover and frame.

Order Commences: 20 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 20 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Murray Road, Whitehall Road, Clifton Road, Grosvenor Road and vice versa.

Contractor: CSP, Tel: 07918298 599.

WOOD STREET, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Boundary box repair works.

Order Commences: 20 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 21 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Newbold Road, Evreux Way, Park Road and vice versa.

Contractor: Chevron TM Ltd, Tel: 0330 008 0820.

LEICESTER ROAD & GIBBET HILL, CHURCHOVER

Order Effect: Road Closed to vehicular traffic from A5 to M6 west bound off slip including the east side of Rugby Interchange. In addition, all traffic will be prohibited from making a right turn from Lutterworth Road onto Leicester Road and from Coton Road onto Leicester Road.

Reason for Order: To enable bridge joint repair works, weekends only.

Order Commences: 17 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 27 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Watling Street, A5, M1, M6 and vice versa.

Contractor: Kier Transportation, Tel: 07751 733 753.

COALPIT LANE, WOLVEY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Works to lay duct in verge and carriageway.

Order Commences: 23 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 27 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: No diversion available.

Contractor: Callan Connect, Tel: 0121 327 5167.

STAVLEY WAY, RUGBY

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic outside No. 31.

Reason for Order: Repair/replacement of defective manhole frame & covers.

Order Commences: 22 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 22 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Crowthorns and vice versa.

Contractor: Customer Solutions Plus, Tel: 07918 298599.

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 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 02 April 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES

Warwickshire County Council

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

OVERSTONE ROAD, WITHTYBROOK

Order Effect: Road closed to vehicular traffic.

Reason for Order: Works to lay duct in verge and carriageway.

Order Commences: 7 April 2026 for up to 18 months.

Anticipated Completion: 9 April 2026.

Access & Diversion: Main Street, Featherbed Lane and vice versa.

Contractor: Callan Connect, Tel: 0121 327 5167.

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

B4113 STONELEIGH ROAD, STONELEIGH

Order Effect: A 30mph Speed Limit will be imposed between a pint 60metres north of the bridge over the River Avon and a point 15 metres north of the junction of Mary Lodge Drive.

Reason for Order: For the safety of all road users and of contractors working on HS2 realignment along Stoneleigh Road.

Order Commences: 19 April 2026 until such time as the Works have been completed and the Order has been revoked.

Contractor: Balfour Beatty Vinci, Tel: 0808 143 4434.

A45 BIRMINGHAM ROAD, GREAT PACKINGTON

Order Effect: A45 Birmingham Road closed to northbound traffic from the Warwickshire/Solihull Boundary (Great Packington) to Warwickshire/Solihull Boundary at Stonebridge Island (both carriageways inc. slip roads on and off).

A45 Birmingham Road closed to southbound traffic from the Warwickshire/Solihull Boundary a Stonebridge Island to Warwickshire/Solihull Boundary (Great Packington) (both carriageways inc. slip roads on and off).

Reason for Order: Carriageway patching and associated works to be carried out overnight in 2 phases as follows:

Northbound carriageway: 17 April 2026 (2000 hrs) - 18 April 2026 (06.00hrs)

Southbound carriageway: 18 April 2026 (2000 hrs) - 19 April 2026 (06.00hrs)

Order Commences: 17 April 2026 for up to 18 months

Anticipated Completion: 19 April 2026

Access & Diversion: Northbound traffic diversion: Exit A45 at B4104 (Birmingham Road, Main Road), B4102 Hampton Lane, Molands Roundabout, A452 Kenilworth Road, Stonebridge Island.

Southbound traffic diversion: Stonebridge Island, A452 Kenilworth Road, Molands Roundabout, B4102 Hampton Lane, B4104 (Main Road, Birmingham Road), Showell Lane, A45 on Slip.

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 www.warwickshire.gov.uk/roadworksmap or call us 01926 412515.

S Duxbury, Director of Strategy, Planning & Governance, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RL Date 02 Apr 2026

PUBLIC NOTICES



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

Application Number R25/1041

LAND ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF ASHLAWN ROAD, DUNCRUCH, RUGBY

Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for the erection of up to 90 residential dwellings (Use Class C3) (including up to; 28 affordable homes, 9 self-build/custom build homes, 9 accessible homes to M4(3) standards and 6 specialist homes), up to 2.28ha of public open space (including natural and seminatural green space, amenity green space and a child's play area), a pedestrian refuge island crossing and associated development

This is a major development

Application Number R26/0256

36, HILLMORTON ROAD, RUGBY, CV22 5AA

Proposed single storey rear extension with raised patio, replacement of front windows and front boundary wall, installation of 4no. rooflights to the rear, alongside associated internal alterations and landscaping.

This development may affect a Listed Building. This development may affect a Conservation Area

Application Number R26/0257 36,

HILLMORTON ROAD, RUGBY, CV22 5AA

Application for Listed Building Consent for proposed single storey rear extension with raised patio, replacement of front windows and front boundary wall, installation of 4no. rooflights to the rear, alongside associated internal alterations and landscaping.

This development may affect a Listed Building. This development may affect a Conservation Area

Application Number R26/0257 31,

35, HIGH STREET, RUGBY, CV21 3BW

Installation of defibrillator and bleed control kit cabinets to external wall.

This development may affect a Conservation Area

Members of the public may inspect copies of the application, the plans and documents submitted with it online at:

www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk 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 26 April 2026. Please note a planning officer would not be present.

If you wish to make an appointment to discuss the application, please contact the case officer.

Any person who wishes to make representation to the above mentioned Council about the applications should make them online - www.planningportal.rugby.gov.uk (search for application number and select comment) - or in writing by that date to The Chief Officer Growth and Investment, Town Hall, Rugby, CV21 2RR.

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

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

Nicola Smith - Strategic Director for Place

PUBLIC NOTICES

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

M3 Haulage Ltd of 19 Fasneman Avenue, Coventry CV4 9RB is applying for a licence to use Boots Farm, Straight Mile, Bourton On Dunsmore, Rugby, CV23 9QQ as an operating centre for 1 goods vehicle and 1 trailer.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner, Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice.

Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-to-the-traffic-commissioner

or www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-to-the-traffic-commissioner

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PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

Rugby Borough Council
Notice of Intended Disposal of Open Space Land
Local Government Act 1972 Section 123(2A)

In accordance with section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, notice is hereby given that Rugby Borough Council intends to dispose of a parcel of land at Cotton Park, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 0WB, which consists of open space land. The land is intended to be disposed of by way of easements contained in a Lease to be granted to UK Power Distribution Limited plc for the provision of underground electric lines and ancillary apparatus.

A plan showing the precise location of the land in question may be inspected at Rugby Borough Council, Town Hall, Evreux Way, Rugby, CV21 2RR, during office hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) and can be viewed on our website at www.rugby.gov.uk/section123

Any objections to the proposed disposal should be made in writing to the Legal and Governance Manager of Rugby Borough Council at the address given above, and received no later than 9am on 24 April 2026.

Dated: 3 April 2026

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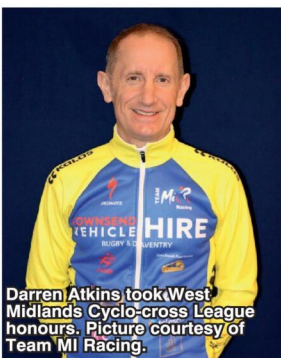
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MI Racing take treble of titles in cyclo-cross competitions



Darren Atkins took West Midlands Cyclo-cross League honours. Picture courtesy of Team MI Racing.

gle point from the second-placed rider.

And Kenilworth-based rider Atkins won the masters 50 to 59 age category title in the West Midlands Cyclo-cross League.

Atkins took victory in the 12-round series by a total of 15 points from his closest challenger.

And Popham won the 50 to 59 age category title in the Leicestershire Cyclo-cross League.

Popham secured four race victories and twice finished second in the six-round championship to win the overall prize by four points.

And strong performances from 15 team riders saw MI Racing win the team award in the West Midlands League.

Riding in his first season for the team, junior cyclist Ruben Stringfellow won the final two rounds of the West Midlands League series.

In the Eastern Cyclo-cross League, Ray Cochrane placed 15th in the masters 60-plus league with teammate Richard Perham 18th in the masters 50 to 59 league.

Elsewhere, in the Notts and Derby Cyclo-cross League, Popham finished fourth after placing in the same position in the Leicestershire League while he took third place overall in the West Midlands Masters League 50 to 59 competition.

CYCLING: TEAM MI Racing, based in Coventry, are celebrating following a successful end to the 2025/26 competitive cyclocross season.

More than 20 of the team's riders have spent the past few months competing against the best riders in the country.

And a trio of riders won their respective league titles as Layla Bradbrook, Darren Atkins and Nick Popham all triumphed.

Bradbrook won the women's championship in the North West Cyclo-cross League.

She raced in eight of 10 rounds and claimed the title by a sin-

Angliss vows to challenge for top British GT honours



Blake Angliss is busy preparing for the new season. Picture by Jakob Ebray Photography.

MOTORSPORT: COVENTRY'S Blake Angliss has set his sights on challenging for the British GT Championship title this season.

The young driver is busy preparing for his first full season in British GT4 with Mahiki Racing.

Angliss secured a class podium finish in only his fourth race in the championship in 2024 and added further silverware and a maiden class pole position last season.

He initially joined Mahiki as a reserve driver but impressed on and off the track to earn a race seat during the previous campaign.

The 22-year-old will drive Mahiki's McLaren Artura GT4 this season - the same car he made his British GT debut in.

Angliss forms part of a GT4 silver class entry alongside teenage talent Revie Lake with the latter making his British GT debut this year.

Angliss said: "I'm delighted to be returning to the British GT Championship grid for the 2026 season with Mahiki Racing.

"Last year, we ended on a high and it feels only natural to keep the momentum going into a second year together.

"I'm hugely thankful to the team for their support in me.

"We built up a great relationship last season and now moving to the McLaren, I believe we as a team can really make the package work and put together a GT4 title challenge this year.

"I know the McLaren and was quick to get it back in 2024, so I'm confident I can hit the ground running in pre-season testing.

"Revie's racing education in the Ginetta Juniors will serve him well and he's been impressive in the McLaren in testing so far, so I think we make for a strong driver pairing.

"A huge thank you to my sponsors Transend UK, YorPower and Trigpoint for their support this year and allowing me to keep working towards my goals.

"I am confident that I have the ability to be one of the leading drivers on the GT4 grid this season and I'm excited to get out there and prove it."

The 2026 GT4 calendar will comprise eight races, running from one to three hours in length, across six events.

Debut try for teen as Cov earn fifth straight league win

by Aaron Sutcliffe
aaron.sutcliffe@bullivantmedia.com

RUGBY UNION: TAO Vardnell scored a debut try as Coventry Rugby cruised to a 54-29 bonus point victory at London Scottish.

Senior academy prospect Vardnell came off the bench to mark his Coventry debut with a try at the Richmond Athletic Ground.

Tries from Jack Shine, Jordan Poole, Josh Barton and Morgan Strong secured a bonus point for the visitors before half time.

And Dan Green, Tom Bacon, Vardnell and Jack Reeves crossed after the break in a eight-try win while Tommy Mathews kicked seven conversions.

The result means Coventry sit fourth in the Champ Rugby table, three points behind Worcester Warriors in second.

Alex Rae's side scored the game's first try on 15 minutes when Shine dotted down after Matt Johnson won a high ball and Aristot Benz-

Salomon and Mathews moved the ball quickly through the hands.

However, London responded four minutes later as Harry Clayton powered over from close range after the home side kicked a penalty to the corner.

Coventry extended their lead on 23 minutes when Poole broke away following a scrum penalty to dot down.

The visitors scored a third try on 37 minutes as Barton reacted quickest to a quick tap penalty to touch down after London had Bailey Ransom sent to the sin-bin for persistent infringements.

And Coventry scored their bonus point try on the stroke of half time when Strong finished from Poole's offload to send the away side into the break with a commanding 21-point lead.

The home side had a second player sent to the sin-bin just two minutes into the second half as Will Prior received a yellow card.

And the visitors made the most of the extra man as Green dotted down on 44 minutes from close range.

Scottish scored a second try just three minutes later courtesy of Ransom only for Bacon to score Coventry's sixth try in a frantic start to the second period.

The tries continued to flow as Tom Wilstead crossed for Scottish on 54 minutes from close range.

London further reduced the deficit on 69 minutes when Clayton crossed for his second try of the game to secure a bonus point for the home side.

A special moment arrived on 71 minutes as replacement Vardnell picked up a loose ball inside his own 22 and sprinted to the line to score a try under the posts on his senior debut.

Scottish crossed again five minutes later when Vaughan Bentley dotted down after Eliot Salt saw yellow for Coventry moments earlier.

However, the visitors scored the game's final try at the death as Reeves weaved his way past several defenders to score a fine solo try.

Coventry are next in action against Caldly on Saturday, April 4 with kick-off at 3pm at the Nick Newbold Stadium.

Blaze beaten by Elite League champions Belfast with two games of season left

ICE HOCKEY: COVENTRY Blaze suffered a 7-4 defeat against recently-crowned champions Belfast Giants in midweek.

Blaze matched Belfast for much of the contest at the SSE Arena only for the Giants to show their championship quality with a third period blitz.

The result means Coventry sit seventh in the Elite League standings. Blaze must win both of their remaining regular season games to have any chance of improving their position in the table ahead of the play-offs.

Blaze killed an early penalty before Coventry received a four-minute penalty with Belfast's Reid Irwin penalised for holding and abuse of officials.

The visitors could not convert on the man advantage but did open the scoring soon after at 11.57 when Alessio Luciani found the net.

Belfast responded late in the first period at 16.58 as Jake Gaudet levelled the scores from Karl Boudrais' assist.

And the Giants took the lead on the powerplay at 19.23 as Scott Conway finished Mike Lee's feed with 37 seconds remaining in the first period after Blaze's Grayson Constable committed a boarding offence.

Belfast extended their lead at 25.25 when Nicolas Guay beat Mat Robson in the Blaze net from Josh Roach's assist.

However, Coventry hit back at 28.07 with a short-handed goal as Jack Hopkins scored a well-taken goal after Mike Pelech forced a turnover.

Blaze suffered a blow immediately after the goal with Colton Saucerman forced to leave the ice injured following the play.

Belfast quickly restored their

Blaze celebrate during their home win against Cardiff Devils. Picture by Scott Stevens.



two-goal cushion at 32.58 courtesy of Carsen Twarzynski while Belfast saw Gaudet penalised soon after for cross-checking as Blaze's Connor Russell dropped the gloves with Boudrais.

Coventry capitalised on the resulting powerplay as Constable fired past Giants netminder Jake Kupsky at 35.36 to close the gap to a single goal heading into the third period.

The Giants struck again on the powerplay at 50.04 when David Goodwin converted from Lee and Ryan Smith with Hopkins in the box for Blaze.

And Belfast took control of the game at 51.30 as Conway scored his second of the match with time running out for the visitors.

Conway completed his hat-trick at 54.08 with a goal on the powerplay as Lee recorded his third assist

of the match. Blaze scored a late consolation at 59.27 when Luciani found the net to score his second of the game with just 33 seconds left to play.

That came after Blaze put five goals past Fife Flyers and Cardiff Devils respectively last weekend.

Coventry battled to a 5-3 victory against bottom club Flyers at Fife Ice Arena.

And Blaze then claimed a 5-4 success against Cardiff on home ice at the Skydome Arena.

Coventry travel to Cardiff in their penultimate game of the regular season on Saturday, April 4 with the face-off at 7pm at the Vindico Arena.

Blaze then host Belfast in their final fixture of the regular season on Sunday, April 5 with the face-off at 5.30pm at the Skydome Arena.

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Valley fall to Corby defeat

FOOTBALL: RUGBY Town suffered another blow in their fight against relegation following a 1-0 defeat away at Corby Town.

A first-half strike from Jordan Crawford settled the contest at Steel Park as Valley saw their winless run in the league stretch to 10 matches.

The result leaves Rugby rooted to the bottom of the Northern Premier League Midlands table with the club seven points from safety with five matches left to play.

Corby broke the deadlock on 35 minutes when Crawford beat goalkeeper Charlie Woods to a loose ball in the box and finished into an empty net after Eunis Lievins flicked a free-kick into the penalty area.

Prior to the goal, Rugby's Rivel Mardenborough tested Corby shot-stopper Theo Avery with a powerful

effort which the goalkeeper gathered at the second attempt.

Valley went close moments before the break as Avery tried to punch a free-kick to safety only for Mardenborough to direct his follow-up effort against the outside of the post from a tight angle.

Chances remained at a premium in the second half as Josh Thomas failed to trouble the Corby goal with a couple of headers from set-pieces.

Corby spurned a chance to double their lead late on as substitute Fran Obiagwu raced clear only for Woods to keep Rugby in the contest.

Valley had one final chance to draw level as Tyler Bruck saw his effort loop into the air and over the crossbar in the last meaningful action of the game.

Rugby are next in action against Anstey Nomads on Saturday, April 4 with kick-off at 3pm at Butlin Road.

Borough thrash St Neots to end losing run and move clear of relegation zone

RUGBY Borough cruised to an emphatic 4-0 home win against St Neots Town to end the club's three-game losing run in the league.

A brace from Tyrell Waite and further goals from Cam Collins and Will Grocott sealed the points for Borough at Kilsby Lane.

The result means Rugby sit 15th in the Northern Premier League Midlands table, seven points clear of the relegation zone.

Borough made a bright start as Kane Richards forced St Neots goalkeeper James Goff into an early save at his near post.

And Goff then parried another effort to safety after good work from Lindon Meikle as a sudden snow and hail storm swept over the ground.

St Neots threatened at the other end as Rugby goalkeeper Marcus Bald turned a shot around the post.



Rugby thrashed St Neots. Picture by Brian Dainty.

Rugby looked certain to score soon after only for Gary Stohrer to head Waite's cross narrowly over the crossbar.

Meikle then had a goal ruled out but Borough eventually broke the deadlock on 38 minutes when Waite tapped into the bottom corner from close range.

And Rugby doubled their lead just three minutes later as Collins powered a shot into the top-right corner from the edge of the penalty area.

Borough extended their lead after the break on 52 minutes when Grocott scored from the penalty spot after Goff brought down Richards in the box.

And the home side sealed the points one minute into injury time as Waite tapped in Stohrer's cross from close range.

Rugby are next in action against Loughborough Students on Saturday, April 4 with kick-off at 3pm at the Loughborough University Stadium.

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