



WESTERN PARK FESTIVAL **CANCELLED** WHAT NEXT FOR THE FESTIVAL?

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Hello From The Editor

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the Western Park Gazette.

We lead with the news that this year's Western Park Festival has been cancelled. We talk to organiser Ady Alexander about why and find out what the future holds for the event. In a nutshell, last year's torrential downpour gave it a real kicking, but there is hope.

In our regular features, and in keeping with the rain theme, Helen Knott's incessant grumbling about the weather continues in her latest rain sodden rant. Our green-fingered Carey Tunstall, dodges the showers with some timely advice about which vegetable seeds to plant over the next few weeks and there's the local policing update. This time focusing a recent huge success in closing down a major drugs ring which led to a number of West Leicester men being jailed.

And if your little grey cells need to do push-ups, the Brain Tazers await you with a wet rolled up towel...

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Events Diary

Free Thurs Club: 2pm. **Meet & Eat:** Weds 5pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narborough Rd.

Fosse Camera Club: For details visit Facebook page or fossecoopcameraclub.co.uk

Hall @ St Anne's, Letchworth Rd: Knit & Natter:

1.30pm, 4th Tues. **Weds Club:** 2.30pm, 1st Weds.

Musical Memory Box: 1st & 3rd Tues 2pm **Pram Club:**

Weds 9.15-11.30am. **Women's Taekwondo:**

Thurs 8-9pm taekwondo4all.com **Fri Coffee:** 10am

Free Tea/Coffee @ St Paul's Worship Ctr / Community Hub, Kirby Rd Weds, 2- 4pm. T-Top sale. 2nd Sat.

Free drop-in Coffee Morns: Tues. 10-12 noon. St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Glenfield Rd East.

Newarke Houses & Westcotes Library: Popping To The Shops (About Narborough Rd) *Until 28 April.*

@ De Montfort Hall: Leics Make Music Fest: 23-25 April **Sound of Springsteen:** 28 April.

@ Curve: Blood Brothers: 23-27 April. **Tribute to the Carpenters:** 29 April. **Mr Toad:** 9-11 May.

@ Little Theatre: Dangerous Corner: 29 April-4 May.

Real Manhunter Live: 7 May. **Andalusia:** 8 May.

@ Y Theatre: Tommy Sandhu Live 28 Apr. **Still Marillion:** 4 May. **Laura Belbin - Too Much:** 9 May.

@ Upstairs At The Western: New Acoustics: 3 May.

Short Sharp Shocks: 14 May. **Santa Rouge:** 15 May.

FredZeppelin: 26 April. **The Musician.**

Big Country: 26 April **O2 Academy.**

UK Foo Fighters: **O2 Academy.** 27 Apr.

Pop-up Pub: Last Friday Monthly. Hall @ St Anne's.

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WP FESTIVAL CANCELLED

This year's Western Park Festival will not be going ahead following 2023's washout. Torrential rain drowned any chance the festival had of coming back this year.

In 2012, after three years of fundraising to redevelop the park's run down play facilities, Ady Alexander, Christine Holton and Jane French (Friends of Western Park – FOWP) secured £50,000 with the help of Biffa's match funding programme. As a result, the first Western Park Festival was held to celebrate the play area's re-opening.

The open day was a huge success, so Ady Alexander (Front page photo) decided to continue running the festival on an annual basis. He said: "The volunteer support and enthusiasm of the local community at that time was amazing!

"Year-on-year, the platform given to the bands, musicians, community groups, dance schools, local traders and suppliers has been unparalleled, with each returning for future years."

Each festival took months of planning as Ady liaised with traders, suppliers, health and safety, musicians and various multi-agency groups to ensure a successful, safe and fun event could always take place.

Due to the festival's success, with bumper years seeing approximately 10,000 people throughout the day, Leicester City Council ordered that extra licences would be needed as well as an increased infra-

structure, such as, toilets, security, first aid and fencing. Obviously, this meant that the costs for the event would increase. Last year the festival cost a staggering £20,000. And then it rained. A lot.

The festival relies on generous local sponsors, trader fees and £4500 from local ward budgets. The balance is paid by FOWP, with gate receipts reimbursing the bank account ready to fund the next festival.

Last year only 300 people braved the torrential rain and although everything was setup and waiting, the rain did its job. Very few gate receipts left the FOWP bank account in dire straits and unable to run the event this year.

What does the future hold for the Western Park Festival? "Not this time," said Ady. "But yes in the future, and we need your support. We're looking for new committee members for FOWP and a team of volunteers to help me set up and run the next festival.

"It would be great to hear from people who can help make it happen in 2025."

To help contact Ady Alexander:
bookings@zanderevents.co.uk



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KNOTT'S LANDING

I suspect Freyjr the Norse goddess of spring, rain, fertility and fecundity in general is having a good laugh at us from her bungalow in Asgard. She's been sending rain non-stop since autumn and it's no longer funny. Not one little bit.

My lawn needs mowing and it's been an impossible task because every time we get a spare moment to do it, the heavens open. Again and again.

This time of year should see things warming up, more sunshine, fewer storms, perhaps a nice tornado or two; there are thirty or so across the country every year. March is supposed to come in like a lion and go out like a lamb. Well, I'm not seeing much lamb. It feels like someone hijacked the lamb and drowned it.

I was at my dad's at Easter and his lawn desperately needed cutting. I walked onto his grass and it actually squelched as I maneuvered past the puddles. There was a sort of desperate sucking noise as if a three year-old was getting the last drips of cola out of their cup with a straw. My wellies sank into the moss



and water oozed up around them. We didn't get the lawn cut that day, but now I'm home and my own incipient hay meadow is looking lush.

Our first world problem is that the robot mower cannot be set free until the grass is at a suitable height and to get it down to an appropriate level, I'm going to have to grow gills and rent a sea cow. A big one; there's a lot of grass.



There is no respite in sight either. April showers are upon us and the long-term forecast is for 'unsettled' weather – that's meteorological boffin speak for rain... torrential rain of biblical proportions. Still at least we can be sure there won't be a hosepipe ban this summer... right? **HN**

PLAYGROUND FUNDING ON FOR NOW

Leicester City Council has confirmed it will continue funding Leicester's adventure playgrounds into 2025. It will also make some grants available for the first part of 2025/26 but will then expect the playgrounds to become self-sustaining.

The council currently provides more than £1m every year to the city's nine adventure playgrounds including those in New Parks, Braunstone and Woodgate. The average cost of funding all the playgrounds is between £84,000 and £138,000 per year each.

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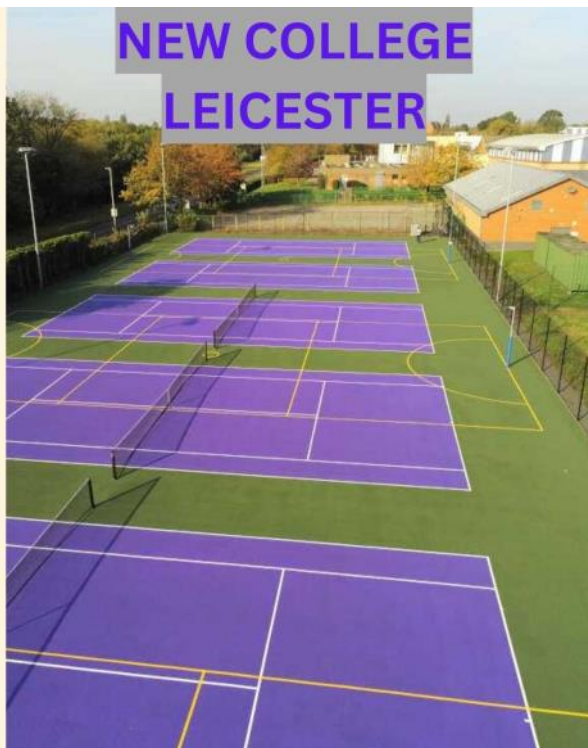
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SOWING THE SEEDS OF FRIENDSHIP

A local friendship group, with over 800 mostly older and retired members, says it will do all it can to help bring people seeking company together this spring.

Leicester Oddfellows, based on Upperton Road, meet up regularly to enjoy events and activities in and around Leicestershire. They are extending a welcome to anyone interested in getting to know new people locally.

"There are lots of obstacles that can get in the way of making friends, particularly as we get older," said Mike Harris, Branch Secretary at Leicester Oddfellows.

"Not knowing how to start or where to look is often the first and most difficult hurdle, so we want people to know that we're here and will help to remove as many barriers as possible."

Prices are kept as low as possible and some events are free. Activities include day trips and games mornings.

Find out more about Leicester Oddfellows contact Jo Brown on jo.brown@oddfellows.co.uk or 0116 2543106 or go to www.oddfellows.co.uk



LETTER BOX

Another great community event at the **Braunstone Gate Archways on Bede Street**. The sun shone and there was a buzz of creativity. This was their first craft event funded by Leicester City Council. There were stalls with eco-friendly goods, delicious vegan and vegetarian treats and free seeds were given to the public.

In the children's corner potions and wands were made, while guitars were strummed in the background. Meanwhile in The Archway next door there was a clothes swap and free refreshments.

A fabulous family event all in all. **T. Howard**



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April Police Update

Five West Leicester men are among forty-five others who have been recently imprisoned for a total of 420 years for the supply and distribution of Class A drugs.

A huge law enforcement operation, called Operation Carter, was carried out in 2020 between UK, French and Dutch authorities which led to the dismantling of the encrypted chat platform 'Encrochat'. The communication service was being used by criminals to plan and co-ordinate illegal activity. As a result police access to millions of messages and images exchanged between users in relation to criminal activity led to a massive breakthrough in the fight against serious and organised crime.

Once the team had enough evidence, enforcement operations were carried out across the country in 2020 and 2021. This led to suspects being arrested and huge quantities of class A drugs and cash being recovered. 47 people were charged and 42 sentenced to prison.

The investigation saw 12.5kg of cocaine seized alongside 2kg of amphetamine. Around £350,000 in cash was confiscated from the supply of class A drugs while hundreds of thousands of pounds were found in bank accounts and property equity. Five high value vehicles were seized as well as £3million to £4million in bitcoin cryptocurrency and several high value Rolex watches and other jewellery.

Dozens of kilos of cocaine and heroin were sent from Merseyside and Cheshire to a Leicester based organised crime group, centred around a gang of local men who were all jailed for conspiracy to supply class A drugs. Nigel Julien (Leicester Forest East) received 13yrs. 6 mos. Ashley Forde (Braunstone) 12 yrs. Ross Sterland (The Fosse) 13 yrs. 6 mos. and Ashley Lunn (New Parks) received 12yrs. 4 mos. and Steven Freakley from Glenfield was jailed for 3 yrs. 4 mons.

In other news: A big thank you to the Community of New Parks for helping police with the recovery of a motor scooter.

A second bike was found burnt out around the Keightley Road area. If anyone had seen it or heard anything in the area, around 4am on the 6th of April, please contact police or Crimestoppers.

On Friday 6th of April, as there have been issues in some areas regarding drug dealing, the Braunstone Beat Team stopped several people to be searched. One male ran from officers and decided to go garden hopping and play hide and seek... He couldn't hide for long.

Tackling a further beat priority of road safety and speeding, one male had been issued a traffic report. A male who had been on the run since December 23, ran out of luck and is now waiting an imminent court date having been charged with several offences.

CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



Spring is finally here at last! With it comes the chance to grow a variety of vegetable seeds during April and May. The soil begins to warm up and conditions get better for germination and growth. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or an enthusiast novice, here are some vegetable seeds ideally suited for sowing now to ensure a plentiful harvest.



Carrots: April is an ideal month to sow carrot seeds directly into well-prepped soil. Go for a sunny spot with loose, well-drained soil, and sow the seeds thinly in rows. Keep the soil consistently moist for successful germination and thin out the seedlings as they grow to allow enough space for carrots to develop.

Radishes: With their quick growth cycle, these veggies are a rewarding crop to sow in April. They thrive in cool weather and can be harvested in as little as three weeks. Sow the seeds directly into the ground, spacing them about an inch apart. Regular watering will promote rapid growth and crisp, peppery roots.

Spinach: Both nutritious and delicious, spinach is a great choice for sowing in April and early May. Choose a site with partial shade to prevent the plants from bolting in warmer weather. Sow the seeds thinly and cover them lightly with soil, keeping the bed consistently moist. Harvest young leaves for salads or allow them to mature for cooking.

Beetroot: Sow beetroot seeds from mid-April onwards for a reliable crop with minimal fuss. You'll need a nice sunny spot with well-drained soil and sow the seeds thinly in drills. Keep the soil consistently moist to encourage germination, and thin out seedlings as necessary. Beetroot can be harvested when the roots reach around golf ball size.

Peas: May is the perfect time to sow peas for a summer harvest. Once again, you'll need a sunny spot with well-drained soil and sow the seeds directly into the ground, providing support for climbing varieties. Keep the soil moist and protect the young seedlings from pests. With regular harvesting, you can enjoy sweet, tender peas throughout the summer months.

By sowing these vegetable seeds in April and May, you can look forward to a bountiful harvest of fresh, homegrown produce to enjoy throughout the summer and beyond. In fact you'll be able to grow all of your five a day!

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2D: Forms of lottery **3D:** Paper bosses **4D:** Vehement speeches
5A: More stylish **6A:** Unwell **7A:** Peculiar **8A:** Not liquid **9A:** Female sibling in short.
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