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Hello From The Editor

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

First of all a brief update about the Gazette. From January next year the Gazette's footprint will change as we move away from Westcotes and further into New Parks and Braunstone. If you live between Fosse Rd South and Narborough Road you will no longer receive copies, but the Gazette will still be available for download from the usual sources.

In this issue we have a few snaps from the October's local Halloween festivities. Carey Tunstall says there's no excuse for being lazy in the garden before Christmas, Project Hive get us up to date with their current plans, and there's a grim local policing update.

As it's Christmas and panto time, you can win 4 tickets to Jack and The Beanstalk at De Montfort Hall. And if you're feeling particularly festive there's our tradition Bigly Crossword on the inside back page.

Please join us on Facebook or X (Twitter) where we post photos, videos, notices, reviews and links which don't always get into print.

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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.

Enlightened Leic Light Show: **Abbey Pk until 24 Dec.**

Xmas Ghost Walk: **18 Dec 5pm. Newark Houses.**

De Montfort Hall: **Jack & The Beanstalk:** **15 Dec-7 Jan.** **Leic Comedy Fest Preview:** **12 Jan.**

@ Curve: **Evita 27 Nov- 31 Jan.** **The Owl Who Came For Christmas:** **Until 6 Jan.**

@ Little Theatre: **Puss in Boots 14 Dec-7 Jan.** **Improv Comedy 13 Jan, April in Paris 22 Jan.**

Loughborough Town Hall: **Peter Pan until 7 Jan.**

Y Theatre: **Xmas With Fleetwood Mac 15 Dec**

Annie (Musical) 17-18 Jan.

Beer & Carols - The Merry Monarch: **20 Dec, 7.30pm**

Tom Meighan: **22/23 Dec, O2 Academy.**

New Parks Xmas Extravaganza: **23 Dec, 11am 3pm.**

NPKs Club for Young People. **NPKs Boulevard LE3 9SB.**

Ice Rink & Big Wheel: **Jubilee Sq. Until 7 Jan.**

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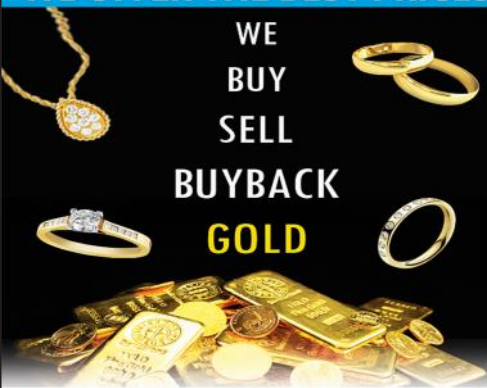
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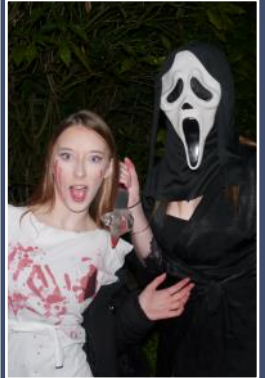
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HALLOWEEN 2023

The annual pilgrimage to frighten the living day-lights out of West Leicester arrived as usual over Halloween as dozens of children and young people roamed the streets.

The ghouls, goblins, witches, vampires and zombies were out in force busily trick or treating across our neighbourhoods. Many residents enthusiastically joined in with front gardens and windows bedecked with some scary creativeness.

The Crows Nest held their annual Scare Fest, this time featuring a huge marquee filled with animatronic horrors raising over £1000 for a kids' hospital charity.



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CHRISTMAS FUN IN LEICESTER

For families looking for free or low-cost things to do in Leicester during the run-up to Christmas there's lots of festive fun to be had that won't cost a box of crackers.

Santa welcomes young visitors to his grotto in Town Hall Square. Visits are free of charge, and he'll be there every day until 23 Dec.

The libraries are offering extra activities with crafting sessions at the Central Library from 3pm-5pm on Thursdays (14 and 21 Dec), while younger visitors are invited to look out for the library's *Elf on the Shelf*, who'll be hiding amongst the books.

Fosse Library offers festive papercrafts between 12 noon and 2pm on Sat 16 Dec, and there's a Christmas party for children at the Brite Centre, Braunstone Av, on Fri 15 Dec. Tickets for the Christmas party are £3.50 each, with a family ticket for 4 at £12.

Visitors of all ages can drop in to Leicester Museum & Art Gallery and make their own masterpiece on Sat 16 Dec from 11am to 3pm in a free art class — the opening day of this year's Open Exhibition. From Mon 18 Dec, there'll be a festive theme to all



the Stay and Play sessions at Leicester's Children, Young People and Families' Centres (CYPFC). Details of the festive programme can be found on the CYPFC Facebook page.

Families planning a trip to the city centre to enjoy the Christmas lights can also visit the unique Emergence light installation at the bottom of New Walk.

Now that restoration works are complete at Leicester Cathedral, many family-friendly events are planned, including the Blessing of the Crib at 3pm on Sun 24 Dec.

Getting around the city centre is easy, and free, thanks to the Hop! service. The one-way circular route links key locations, including Leicester station, Highcross, Leicester Market and Jubilee Square, making it easy for to see all the attractions. Hop on and off the green buses, with their distinctive 'ribbit' frog sound, from 8am until 6pm from Mon to Sat.

Details of low-cost family-friendly activities taking place in Leicester during December can be found at:

<https://families.leicester.gov.uk/winter2023>

Other ideas for Christmas fun here:

<https://www.christmasinleicester.co.uk/whats-on>



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Win Tickets to Jack & The Beanstalk Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum, De Montfort Hall and Imagine Theatre present their 2023 Christmas Panto- mime - Jack and the Beanstalk.

On their little farm, our hero Jack, his mother Dame Trot, and his brother haven't a bean to their name, their friendly cow Buttercup is all that they have, and the village is being destroyed by an evil giant! The people are in dire need of a hero brave enough to climb up to the giant's castle. Will Jack, with a little help from his friends, be that hero? There's only one way to find out!

Now here's your chance to Join BBC Radio 2's Scott Mills in his panto debut, alongside X Factor winner Sam Bailey, boyband A1's Mark Read, and Leicester's favourite funny man, Jarred Christmas.

We have one set of 4 tickets for you to win for the Sat 6th January performance. Just answer the question below to be in the draw.

What is magical about the goose Jack steals from the giant?

- 1: It honks out Taylor Swift hits.
- 2: It can tap dance.
- 3: It can lay golden eggs.
- 4: It can juggle.

Email your answer & include your phone number before December 20th 2023 to: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk



ENABLING TALENT

A Year 8 project at New College Leicester has sent enthusiastic music and arts students to Team Hub and Soft Touch Arts all in the name of motivation and inspiration.

Students have had the chance to engage with various local community projects which could guide them onto a future creative arts or media pathway.

Project Enable is the latest of a series of programmes in New Parks, dedicated to improving lives through creativity. The project is a partnership with New College and resident-run community centre, Team Hub, and Soft Touch Arts in Leicester. It coordinates music, art and creative sessions across the three groups to engage young people who attend New College and/or Team Hub, leading on to longer term development and progression sessions in New Parks and eventually at Soft Touch.

Designed for students who have taken part in Stage 1 of the Project Enable onsite at New College, the visit to Soft Touch Arts provided an insight into working alongside industry professionals in a music studio setting, with a view to the students eventually attending sessions at Soft Touch Arts independently. Students explored different resources that are available and took part in art and music workshops. They also had the opportunity to create their own music with some of Soft Touch's highly skilled professional musicians and producers.

During their time at Team Hub, our students were able to see what the local community provision has to offer them. There are a wide range of opportunities, for example music and art workshops, dance classes and football.



These visits raised awareness about career opportunities within music and the performing arts and provided students with the opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships within our partnerships with Soft Touch Arts and Team Hub.

Project Enable is providing creative projects that can have a positive impact and encourage ownership of the community. We hope that by participation our students will have pride in their local community, accountability for their education and leave a lasting creative legacy that they can be proud of for years to come!

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PROJECT *hive Update*

Project Hive is run by the WWCE, a group of local residents raising funds to redevelop the former Eco House into a community space.

The Western Park Pumpkin Roll returned to the slightly soggy hillside behind the Bowls club on Halloween weekend. Around a hundred eager rollers brought along their decorated gourds for a fun time racing to the bottom. It was lovely to see so many new faces amongst the crowd.



In October we said that we were in negotiations with an experienced bid writer who would be helping us with applications for the capital funding we need to complete the building works necessary to open the doors on Project Hive.

We can now confirm the James Johnson of Johnson's Grants For Non-Profits will be working on our behalf to identify the most appropriate funding streams. Locally, he recently supported the New Parks Adventure Playground secure funding for their outside play area. We are currently working alongside James to complete expressions of interest for several funding streams to split the total cost needed between them.

Find out more at our website wwce.org.uk or on Facebook @wwceleicester **KN**

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Nov/Dec Police Update

A murder investigation which led officers on an international manhunt, has ended with two men being jailed for a total of 20 years.

Marian Botea and Dragos Marin-Gugu were both convicted in August of the manslaughter of 42-year-old Dumitru-Nicolae Cherascu. Both were acquitted of murder.

Mr Cherascu died in November 2022 after being found unconscious on Tudor Rd with serious head injuries.

The investigation also uncovered other criminal offending by 42-year-old Botea relating to the controlling of prostitution for financial gain.

The trial relating to the death of Mr Cherascu ended with Botea, of Cranmer Street, Westcotes, being sentenced to 11 years and Gugu, 26, of no fixed address, jailed for 9 years.

Botea had fled the country and was found in Rumania following the issuing of an International Arrest Warrant. He later pled guilty to running a prostitution ring and was jailed for a further 10 months.

Daryoush Kholghnik, 34, was convicted of the kidnap and murder of Tala Tala following an incident in Braunstone in March this year. He was also convicted of two counts of blackmail.

A second man, Talib Mombeini, 38, had previously pled guilty to the kidnaping of Mr Tala. Following the trial at Leicester Crown Court, Mombeini was found guilty to Mr Tala's manslaughter.

On 24th November, Kholghnik was sentenced to a minimum of 31 years and Mombeini for 18 years.

Kholghnik and Mombeini, both of Vaughan Way, had kidnapped Mr Tala in Braunstone, driving him away in his own car. A police investigation led to Mr Tala being found dead from stab wounds in a house in Harrow Road.

It is thought the attack followed a scheme which Mr Tala had previously used to scam money from Kholghnik and Mombeini.

During the early morning of 28 November 3 men were arrested on Suspicion of Theft after the stolen Ford Transit they were in failed to stop for officers on Blackbird Road.

A pursuit was brought to a safe conclusion in Thurmaston where one suspect was also arrested for a number of driving and drug offences.

A 25-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of robbery after he and an accomplice tried to steal a car at knife-point from a driver on Cambridge Street on 24 October.

Two men threatened the driver of a black Chevrolet Matiz before pulling him out of the car.

They failed to start the car, breaking the wing mirrors during the incident.

One of the suspects was detained at the scene by the victim with the help of a member of the public and the other made off.

Investigations are continuing.

CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



As the brisk winds of November and December signal the arrival of winter, we gardeners are sometimes tempted to hang up our gloves and trowels a little too early. But these late autumn weeks can allow time for preparation which can significantly improve the health and vibrancy of our gardens in the spring. However, there are common missteps that enthusiastic gardeners might make that could hinder rather than help their plants, before the cold really moves in.

One easily forgotten chore is neglecting the soil. This is the ideal time for soil amendment and preparation. Failure to enrich the soil with organic matter like compost can lead to poor drainage and nutrient deficiency, affecting the overall health of your plants. Gardening experts recommend incorporating well-rotted compost or manure into the soil to improve its structure and fertility.



Another mistake is careless pruning. While it may be tempting to cut back all the foliage, some plants benefit from winter cover. Over-pruning can expose plants to harsh winter conditions, causing damage to vulnerable stems and buds. Research the specific needs of each plant in your garden before taking out the pruning shears.

Don't ignore pest control. Just because temperatures drop doesn't mean pests disappear. In fact, many seek shelter in garden debris during the winter. Leaving dead plant material around can create a haven for pests and diseases. Clearing away this debris can reduce the likelihood of infestations in the coming season.

Lastly, ignoring the need for protective mulch can leave plants vulnerable to frost. Now is the ideal time to apply a layer of mulch around the base of plants to insulate them from the cold. Failure to do so can result in frost damage, especially for young and tender plants.

In conclusion, while November and early December may seem like a time to wind down; active, and thoughtful care of your garden during this month can set the stage for a thriving garden in the spring. Avoiding these common mistakes ensures that your plants enter winter well-prepared and ready to flourish when warmer days return.

Have a wonderful Christmas and I'll see you in the New Year.

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