



IT'S A JUNGLE IN THERE!



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Hello From The Editor

Well, here's the February Gazette, reassuringly late once again.

We have changed our delivery footprint to include more of New Parks and the parts of Braunstone adjacent to Western Park. So, if you're receiving the Gazette for the first time - welcome along.

New and old readers can click the back issues tab at www.westernparkgazette.co.uk or scan this code into your phone to download previous editions of the magazine and find out what we've been up to for the last thirteen years.



This month, we feature a local man who has converted his back room into a jungle, Helen Knott rages at the lack of pockets in women's clothes, we have the policing update from Sgt Shauna Ashton, gardening advice from Carey Tunstall and the Brain Tazering crossword and sudoku await your little grey cells.

We are always looking for contributors, so if you have an interesting local story to tell, or perhaps you'd like to write a regular column, then please get in touch.

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If you've got a local news story or event email: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

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Events Diary

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

Fosse Camera Club: Zoom Meetings, Fridays, 7.30pm. fossecoopcameraclub.co.uk for details

Hall @ St Anne's, Letchworth Rd: Knit & Natter: 1.30pm, 4th Tues. **Weds Club:** 2.30pm, 1st Weds.

Musical Memory Box: 1st Tues 2pm **Pram Club:** Weds 9.30-11.00am. **Fri Coffee Morns:** 10.00am.

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

Family Friends: Term time 4th Mon. St Paul's & St Augustine's Centre, Kirby Rd. 2nd Sat at New Parks Methodist Ch. Contact Sarah on 07465 431 585.

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

Perfectly Edible UK's Community Shop. Fri & Sat. Fri 11-2/3pm. West End Centre, Andrewes Street.

@Curve: Beautiful - Carole King Musical 28 Feb-12 March. **Billionaire Boy** 15-19 March.

@DM Hall: Texas 1st March, Adam Ant 2nd March, Anton & Erin 3 March, Nish Kumar 4 March.

@Y Theatre: Sleeping With Beauty - 4 March. **Swinging 60's Show** - 5 March, Nigel Ng 12 March.

@Little Theatre: Salad Days - 4-5 March, **Up 'n' Under** 4-19 March, **One Act Play Fest** 24-26 March.

Upstairs@The Western: upstairsatthewestern.com

Light Up Leicester: 3-6th March A trail of free illuminated, immersive artworks in the city centre.

Steam Toys in Action: 6th March, Abbey Pumping St.

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Decorating your home is a uniquely personal activity. Some of us just like to splash emulsion on the walls - and some of us don't.

Upon entering the terraced home of local eccentric, Mark Cooper, the birds sang... Literally, a motion sensor triggers a cacophony of forest sounds, and your nose is caressed with a waft of Himalayan Cedar.

In what he describes as a surreal response to the past two years Mark transformed his back room into a jungle.

Asked what motivated him, Mark responds: "It was partly artistic inspiration after watching the 2016 version of The Jungle Book on Netflix during lockdown and partly practical in that the bears (Mark has a vast collection of teddy bears and no, we didn't ask why) needed somewhere to enjoy themselves since they had been prevented from exercising on the outdoor gym equipment in nearby Fosse Recreation Ground."

Not only does Mark's back room provide a home for the bears, but the under stairs cupboard is the location for the Wimbledon Burrow which houses



Orinoco and Tobermory womble who are now, predictably, in charge of his recycling. The wombles also regularly look after Billy the kitten who turned up uninvited in the New Year. Billy was adopted by Mark after he was told the kitten would eventually grow into a tiger. Sounds unlikely? Try telling that to a man with a dragon launching itself from one of many branches, sourced from local parks, emerging from his living room walls.



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WOODGATE SITE UPDATE

The Gazette's main story last month concerned the dangerous state of the derelict factory site opposite Repton Street in Woodgate.

The site, which is earmarked for development, has fallen into extreme disrepair with evidence of fly tipping, dumped furniture, arson and, according to witnesses, needles.

The Woodgate Residents Association remain frustrated with the situation as the area has also become a playground for local children due to easy access.



The Gazette approached Leicester City Council for comment, but the reply came too late to print in the last issue. A city council spokesman said: "The land is privately owned so it is their responsibility to secure the land to prevent access. We recently met the landowners on site and asked them to ensure that access points to the site are closed off to prevent people getting in and to stop fly tipping.

"There was no evidence of discarded needles at that point, but we have requested officers from our Enviro Crime team to revisit to see the current situation. If the site is no longer secure, we will be following this up with the landowners.

"We have met several times with the owners, potential developers and the Environment Agency to look at what would be needed for the site to be redeveloped. The main issue is the flood risk at the site, which would need to be assessed and measures put forward to address it as part of any proposed regeneration work."

LETTER BOX

I have just recently read the article concerning the young man who completed 80km for charity.

Realising I could not use the city council's gyms, and not being able to cycle, I decided to walk five miles a day, to regain some strength in wasted muscles in my left leg. That was following a hip replacement, due to accident damage. Sadly, that left me with a left limb 2cms shorter than the right. After the operation, I began on crutches, to walk first one, then two housefronts, and built it up until I reached the end of the street - it took nearly three weeks. That was three years ago. I was about to start at the gym, when covid struck. So, I commenced the 5-a-day about last March and have been doing it ever since. I'm 76.

Richard Hall

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KNOTT'S LANDING

It drives me crazy that I have to carry a bag around with me because shops don't sell clothes with pockets in. Men never have this problem, and they can be bloomin' smug about it.

A male of the species rarely struggles for somewhere to put their car keys or bank cards. It's simple for a man about the office to sling on a jacket and instantly be ready to leave for lunch. A woman in the same position has to root around in a bag to find her purse and then either take the bag with her plus coat or carry her purse in her hand because her coat doesn't contain pockets big enough!

It wasn't always like this. In medieval times men and women had little bags hung off rope belts and could access their stuff through slits in their clothing. It was only as clothing started to be manufactured in factories in the 1700s that men get pockets in their clothes. Women still had to carry the bags but somehow the slits in their clothing got stitched up. Also, dresses started to be slim fitting so you couldn't have much

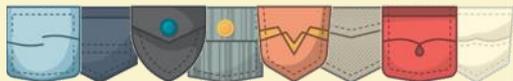


underneath them at all, so we had to carry the bag on the outside. Sensible Victorian ladies had a brief respite when their big skirts allowed voluminous pockets but then fashion struck, and tight dresses doomed the pocket once again. It's now been over a hundred years and still 60% of women's jeans don't have a pocket big enough for a mobile phone.

Pockets are empowering, the suffragettes knew this, they had a suit with at least six deep pockets in. That might be why pockets got stitched up. There is some talk that nice girls didn't have pockets so they could prove they weren't witches. It always comes down to witches doesn't it. Women who make demands, have opinions and are financially independent are such a threat they need controlling through clothing. The patriarchy says, "make them carry all their worldly goods in a bag everyone can see, and a stronger male can snatch with ease."

Well, I say bog off. I will seek out clothes with pockets and I will wear them proudly. The patriarchy can have my handbag, I've got deep pockets for my phone, my bank card is in the case, there is £40 stuffed in my bra for the taxi and I'm going out!

Helen Knott



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Motorbikes On Our Parks

Many local residents have expressed concern over the number of motor cycles, mostly dirt bikes, being ridden recklessly across Western, Braunstone and Fosse Park.

The Western Park Traffic Action Group put together an action plan to help deal with what is now seen as an increasing danger to the safety of park users.

1. Report all issues to the police. If they are not reported, incidents will not be logged. If there is a risk of injury such as riding near or at people, sporting teams, near play areas or on access paths, ring 999. If bikes are present but not threatening please report using 101.

2. Give a description of rider; colour of clothes/helmet /bike and location/direction of travel. Entry and exit points and photos if possible.

3. Use the What3Words App which provides a 3 word code giving a location to pass onto police.

4. Photo evidence can be emailed to the duty officer on West Leicester - Beat 01 New Parks NWBeat01@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk

CCTV is helpful in identifying routes taken and a bid for additional CCTV has been submitted.

Most important advice - In all incidents please make sure you remain safe yourselves.

Western Park Traffic Action Group

MORE TREES FOR WESTERN PARK

Nearly 2000 new trees will have found a home in Western Park by March after the city council secured £139,665 from the Forestry Commission's Local Authority 'Treescapes' fund to plant 85 standard trees (3-4m in height) and 1,875 small trees.

This is welcome news following the potential loss of at least 108 trees, some 125 years old, due to disease. Cllr Piara Singh Clair, deputy city mayor responsible for parks, said: "This is good news for everyone who values Leicester's parks and open spaces.

"These new trees will be a welcome addition to Western Park... but they also represent our commitment to planning for the future.

"In 25 years or so, these trees will have grown and matured – and will be enjoyed and treasured by future generations too."

All the new trees will be bedded during this year's planting season, which runs until March.

Tree canopy already covers around 1,200 hectares in Leicester, with the city council owning around 153,000 individual trees and around 109 hectares of woodland.



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PROJECT Update hive

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

It's been a while since we've talked, particularly as we were not able to hold an event over the Christmas period. But, behind the scenes, we can assure you that the wheels have been in motion.

In December we held a costing meeting with our architect and learned of the amplified effect on the project's budget caused by the recent global pandemic. We are as committed as ever to seeing it through and getting our building open, but the new numbers did make us pause for thought.

Our increased capital costs for construction will be met by applying to other funding streams such as the Lottery, but the rise means we will be asking for more money.

Our fund raising events have always been about paying for things like architects drawings and a seemingly endless amount of surveyor's reports.



We are pleased to say that our 2022 events calendar is already taking shape with the Scarecrow Trail returning in September and seasonal events planned in December. We are currently trying to tie down a date for something in early spring too, more on that soon.

We are always looking for people to help out at our events. Find out more about WWCE and Project Hive at our website wwce.org.uk or on Facebook @wwceleicester **K.N**

LIBRARY BOOK AMNESTY

Library users who have overdue books can return them for free this month.

Until 6th March, anyone who has overdue books can return them free of charge to any Leicester library.

Visitors to libraries are also being invited to fill in a customer survey, giving their views on the service and facilities on offer.

The amnesty on fines applies to all and any Leicester library books – no matter how long you might have had them. Historical charges which may be listed against books you have already returned will also be wiped for customers visiting the library during this period.




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Feb Police Update

Another busy few weeks across the area. On Braunstone, officers executed a search warrant on Winstanley Drive under the Misuse of Drugs Act. A small amount of cannabis was recovered, and the offender dealt with out of court – *PS 2017 Nick Golden*

Several beat surgeries have been held on N.P.E (New Parks Estate) and knife sweeps had been conducted over Stokeswood Park and surrounding areas. That week, several knives had been recovered by police on the streets of the N.P.E. Two cars, with no insurance, were also seized. – *PS 181 Matt Hutton*

A misuse of drugs act warrant was executed on Tewkesbury Street where two males were arrested for production of 104 cannabis plants. The drugs recovered had a street value of £72,800. The males have already pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. A male was arrested for attempting to import an offensive weapon on Vaughan Street. Of note, the law changed on 14th July 2021 around possession of offensive weapons. It is now an offence to be in possession of items such as knuckle dusters, any kind of flick/gravity knives and zombie knives in private dwellings as well as in a public place. Two males were arrested for Immigration offences on Bosworth Street and six vehicles recovered for no insurance across the Fosse Ward.

Three men have been charged with drugs offences following the discovery of several cannabis plants at a business unit on Carlisle Street on the 27th of January.

Emiljo Bigaku, 22, of Bolton Road, along with Sali Dragodi, 23, and Erald Dragoti, 32, have all been charged with possession with intent to supply a controlled class B drug.

A male and female have been charged with multiple vehicle crime offences in Westcotes and have been sentenced at court. Police officers have executed a drugs warrant on a house located on the Westcotes, resulting in over 270 plants being found plus one male being arrested, charged for drugs offences and being remanded to court.

A 30 year old man from Fosse Lane has been jailed for 19 months after he threw a brick at a police officer. Jameel Chenia plead guilty to 3 counts of common assault, using violence to secure entry to a property; 9 counts of criminal damage; possession of cannabis; possession of Class A and assault occasioning actual bodily harm on a police officer.

A number of improvements to Bede Park such as lighting and CCTV are now underway and scheduled to last into spring time.

Finally, a series of cycle prevention events took place where over 40 D locks were given to bike owners and crime prevention advice was provided. This has proved to be really useful and received positive feedback from those who engaged – *PS 1966 Anil Mehta*
Sgt Shauna Ashton



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CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



This is a very busy time for gardeners, especially when preparing for the coming seasons.

I had to have a few fence panels repaired after a battering from the harsh winds. Now the fence is secured, it just needs repainting and re-wiring, then my climbing plants are ready to thrive in a secure environment in their growing season.

Now is a good time to prune plants such as clematis, the late flowering variety, also known as group 2 and 3. Group 2 requires a gentle prune, and they are characterised by large flowers during summer. Group 3 can withstand a much harder prune, they generally flower mid to late summer. Group 1 includes early flowering varieties such as Armandii and Montana, these should not be pruned now as we would remove the flowering stems. In addition, I'll be pruning back Mahonia, Winter Jasmine and bush and climbing roses.

It's also a good time to re-nourish your soil. I like to spread a mixture of well-rotted manure and



Winter Jasmine

compost around my established shrubs and roses as well as a sprinkling of slow-release fertiliser. It's a good idea to give summer flowering bulbs head starts by growing them on indoors. I plant pots up with bulbs such as Liatris, Agapanthus and Lillies. I feed these regularly with tomato food, so they are nice and strong for when they are ready to plant out.

I'll also be dividing mature clumps of snowdrops, replanting at the same level and ensuring the white part is under the soil. This will enable more flowers next year as they won't be so congested. If you don't have any mature clumps to divide you can always plant snowdrops in the green to give you a better display next year. It's also a good time to remove any netting you might have installed to prevent leaves falling in your pond and then remove any plant debris, including any escaped leaves and duckweed to stop water pollution.

We all want to encourage more wildlife into our gardens, and I hope to install another bird box as, whilst cleaning an old one, I discovered it had become a little rotten. I will erect the new one in a sheltered spot with a northeast aspect. I'm also going to hang homemade fat balls in my roses and shrubs as this obviously feeds the birds and encourages them to pick at any pests that might be present on the shrubs.

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1 Across: Tooth doctor **1 Down:** Energetic **2D:** neither **3D:** Deep fried veg or seafood **4A:** Self obsession **5A:** Cloak **6D:** Affirming gesture **7D:** Age **8A:** Showboating at the end of an aria

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Answers at w.westernparkgazette.co.uk

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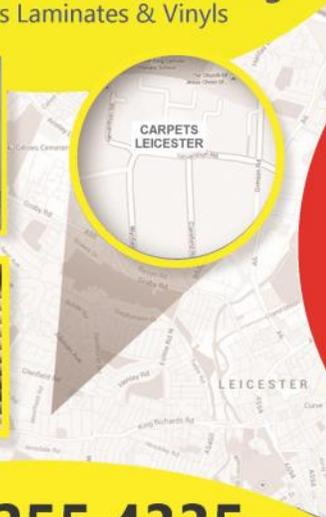
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