



UP THE JUNCTION WEST LEICESTER ROADS - 3 OF THE WORST



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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the January edition of the Western Park Gazette.

We kick off 2016 with West Leicester right at the top of the accident black spot chart as figures reveal the number of car accidents across local roads. We meet a Westcotes author who's just self published his first novel and DMU's Square Mile Project provided a hearty Christmas meal for the elderly.

There's also our regular local policing news from Mike Hooper, Roger Blackmore dips his toes into the city's rivers, Helen Knott has a spectacular rant about shopping bag thieves, (We cut out a load of rude words but left a few in) our gardening guru, Tony Huxley, turns over the New Year sods and the Brain Tazers hide at the back ready to puree your little grey cells into soup.

There's also the fantastic chance to win a brilliant prize worth £200 from M&M Hair on page 16. That'll set you up for the New Year!

And we also keep you up to date with local news and activities on social media.

Follow us on Twitter @mygazette & Facebook by searching for the Western Park Gazette.

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

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Events Diary

Fosse Singers: Fosse N'hood Centre. Weds. 7pm.
International Folk Dancing: Monthly 2nd & 4th Fri. St. Anne's Hall. 2-4pm. Tel: Geoff on 0116 285 8352.
Peter Crebbin's Cool Swing Band: 1st Sun Monthly. Café Chino at Hilton Hotel, Meridian. 1-3.30pm
Thursday Club: Thursdays. 2-4pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narborough Rd.
West End Pay As You Feel Café: Thursdays 6-8.30pm. West End Centre. Andrewes St. LE3 5PA.
Heritage Sundays: Monthly last Sun. Mediaeval city open days/tours. 11-3pm. goleicestershire.com
Rumours Of Fleetwood Mac: 27th Jan. De Mont Hall. www.demontforhall.co.uk
Mammoth Cake Sale: 29th Jan. St. Anne's Community Hall. Letchworth Rd. 3pm.
Chicks Charity Chortle: Fri 29th Jan. NFP Working Mens Club. 7.30pm. £5.00 on the night.
FESTIVAL FUN - UPSTAIRS AT THE WESTERN
George Egg - Anarchist Cook: 5th & 6th Feb.
Conversation Garden: 6th & 20th Feb. **An Audience With Henry VII:** 11th Feb. **Mixed Doubles:** 13th Feb. **Peter Antoniou:** 18th Feb. **Revan & Fenel:** 19th & 20th Feb. All at Upstairs At The Western. Visit: www.upstairsatthewestern.com for info.
Science of the Time Lords: 30th & 31st Jan. National Space Centre. Info at www.spacecentre.co.uk
Steam Toys in Action: 7th Feb. Abbey Pumping St.
Western Park Pop-up Pub: 4th March. St. Anne's Church Hall. From 5.00pm.

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UP THE JUNCTION

Two busy West End roads have made it into Leicester's top ten league of accident black-spots over a five year period.

The Fosse Road North/Blackbird Road and Groby Road Junction shared the number one spot with the Soar Valley Way/Lutterworth Road and Glenhills Way junction which both suffered 27 car crashes over the last five years.

In at number four with 26 accidents is the stretch on Narborough Road between Noel Street to Stuart Street and straight in at number eight with twenty-two collisions is the Upperton Road/Narborough Road Junction.



Dovelands In The Top Ten!

Dovelands Primary School is now in the top 10 primary schools in Leicester for English and Maths.

The school moved from 46th in the Local Authority to 10th in 2015, for the Key Stage 2 result in maths, reading and writing combined for Year 6 children. Ninety per cent of children achieved a level 4 or higher in reading, writing and maths, and 29 per cent achieved a level 5 in all 3 subjects.

Headteacher, Sara McAdam said: "This is better than the national level and better than our results in 2014.

"It has been an incredible year for Dovelands! The changes we have made have continued to put children's progress at the centre of our focus and are having a huge impact – taking us into the top ten primary schools in Leicester for English and Maths".

The school also took part in more sporting tournaments than ever before, including table tennis and girl's football, and a year five boy came first in the Leicester City Schools cross country event.

To feature your school email:
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Down By The River

Rivers have been very much in the news over these past few weeks. They are often seen as the source of a great deal of flooding and consequently flood damage.

However, there is also a view that they harbour important flood plains. The latter have too often been used as the sites for foolhardy building developments, which themselves aggravate the flood problems.

Our rivers have for centuries been major arteries of transport and trade. Until comparatively recently they provided for much quicker and more reliable travel than moving about by road.

Here in Leicestershire the River Soar was an outlet to the North Sea via the Trent, whilst further south, the Welland offered access through Stamford to the Wash and the East Anglian coast.

As the industrial revolution developed, the transit of goods was speeded up by the digging of canals. Links were made to Loughborough and beyond into the north-west Leicestershire coalfield.

The River Soar navigation was improved and a canal was built up the valley of the Wreake to Melton Mowbray and beyond into Rutland. Alas the canal era was not to last and the new waterways in many cases were abandoned.

There are other rivers draining many other parts

of the county, including no less that two River Sences. One of these flows through the country park at Ibstock into the west of the county, whilst the other runs into the River Soar near Wigston.

The River Swift near Lutterworth is reputed to be where the body of the rebel preacher, John Wycliffe, was thrown after his death. Back in the city not everyone is aware of the River Baum which joins the Soar near Aylestone.



In the past Leicester has been accused of turning its back on the River. However the recent growing popularity of our summer Riverside Festival may indicate that interest in our riverfront is growing.

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KNOTT'S LANDING

I've never thought of plastic bags as particularly valuable. I laughed at all those jokes about collecting all the carrier bags in your house and selling them online for 5p each. Well guess who's not laughing now. Not since some kleptomaniac, lowlife, scumbag stole the carrier bags out of my shopping trolley TWO days before Christmas. In SAINSBURY'S for goodness sake! Aren't they supposed to be a better class of shopping experience? No-one in Aldi would dream of pinching your bags. It's just not done.

I understand that we are still in the grips of austerity but seriously, if you realise you can't afford the extra 20p for some carrier bags as you walk into the store to do your Christmas shop you are clearly a bit thick. Everyone in genuine need is off down the discount supermarkets and the food banks getting together what they can but you... No, you are in Sainsbury's, maybe for a few luxury items? Perhaps you didn't feel it necessary to pay for those either?

Maybe I shouldn't have left my trolley for a few seconds to reach through the crowds to grab that streaky bacon? That's what the cashier said to me and yes, she was right, but on the other hand, it was a bum-fight in there. People ramming each

other with trolleys, grabbing the last cheese platter out of another shopper's hands, scrabbling for pickled onions and a packet of Paxo. The polite shopper leaves their trolley in the empty health food aisle and heads into the fray with both hands free to shop, and they shouldn't have to worry about some sneaky little scrota nicking their carrier bags.

Apparently some people put their purses in the shopping bags and leave them there, which is why my carriers may have been targeted, but I don't buy it. Most women I know have a purse like a brick with a density higher than lead. It's filled with tatty old receipts, lottery tickets from last year, a thousand loyalty cards and very little actual money. The nanosecond you lift a carrier bag you know that there isn't a purse in there because your bicep tells you so.

No, I think the criminal that took my bags is the worst kind. A lazy, entitled middle class muppet, probably with a job, who couldn't be arsed to bring their own bags or cough up the 20p to buy some more and decided that my unattended ones were an in-store free gift, even though they quite clearly said TESCO and ALDI on the side.

I have the last laugh though. One of the bags had a leaky box of raw chicken thighs in it the day before. I'm hoping you got a serious gastrointestinal infection that erupted from both ends and ruined your Christmas.

Helen Knott



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New College Community Partnership Community Partnership proudly presents the New College Leicester Knitting Club! The club started on the 24th September 2015 and was established by Jennifer Alton, one of their community volunteers .

The aim of the club is for each student to knit and contribute a square to a blanket. The blankets will be donated to Prince Harry's Sentebale charity in Lesotho, South Africa. The Charity works with Lesotho's most vulnerable children offering them safe accommodation, hot meals or psychosocial support.

Jennifer has a close connection with the charity sending knitted items from hats to blankets and she hopes to involve the wider community in the project.

The club takes place on a Thursday lunch time in the library. The first meeting was captured on camera and shows all of the enthusiastic students. Principal of New College Leicester, Mrs Brown joined the students offering her support and knitting expertise!

Community Partnership say they are excited to watch the club progress and allow the students to make a difference to the life of others.

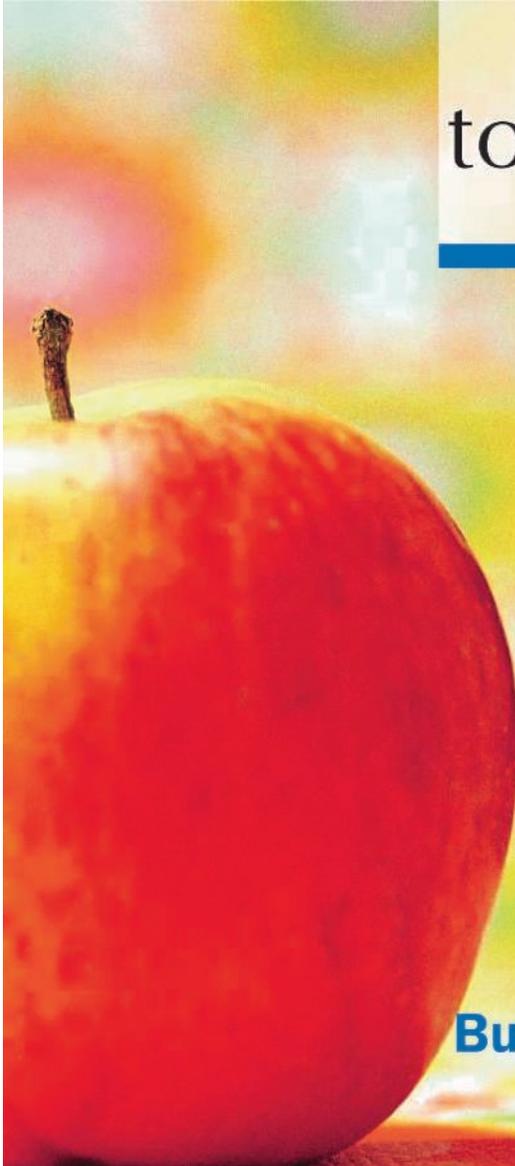
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No! - To Cold Calling

Two streets in Leicester's West End are the latest to say no to uninvited cold callers.

Residents in Cherryleas Drive and Linkway Gardens have worked with the local police and Leicester City Council trading standards to set up a 'No Cold Calling Zone'.

The voluntary scheme is designed to discourage rogue traders and uninvited door-to-door sellers by sending a clear message that they are not wanted in the area.

Ward councillor and assistant city mayor Sarah Russell said: "No Cold Calling Zones can help give people the confidence to say 'no' to cold callers.

"The zones are there to let cold callers know that they are not wanted in the area and residents will not be doing business with them.

"It's an effective way of helping to deter unscrupulous traders and stopping doorstep crime".

There are now over 70 No Cold Calling Zones in the city.



THE CREATURE IN THE CLOSE

A West End author is hoping for great success with his debut novel.

Jethro Swift from Westcotes has self published 'Gossamer - The Creature in the Close', a teen fantasy action novel about a young lad fighting an ancient evil in Port Ramon on the world of Haven.

Jethro's day job is working for the city council's environmental department but his love of literature dates back to childhood. He said: "I



was influenced at an early age by the likes of Tolkien, Lewis, Roald Dahl, Star Wars, Burroughs, and many others. Whilst riding to school, and now years later, walking to work, stories of my own occupy my mind".

(The Creature in the Close continued)

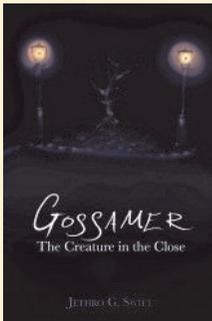
"My interests and experiences, including the more recent ones out on the streets of Leicester, have all influenced my work".

Gossamer is an inquisitive young boy and his sole companion is the enigmatic Coat. He's searching for the ultimate view of the vast city he lives in and he isn't afraid to explore every nook and cranny on the way. This leads him into trouble, more often than not, and draws the attention of the denizens from the more mysterious and dangerous side of Port Ramon.

Jethro said: "As a child, I had a fear of stepping on the cracks in the pavements. One day, I decided to try my own version of why these cracks should be avoided and The Creature in the Close has grown from that initial idea".

Jethro is already working on Gossamer's continuing adventures in Beneath The Bell Tower.

Gossamer and The Creature in the Close can be downloaded for Kindle for £1.99 or ordered as a paperback for £4.99 from Amazon



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Pensioners Xmas Treat

More than 100 pensioners enjoyed a Christmas celebration with music, games and festive food at a special party organised by students.

It was organised as part of DMUlocal, De Montfort University's campaign to create positive change and opportunities for people across Leicester, using the skills of staff and students to help the community. DMU's Square Mile outreach team invited community groups, worked with Age Concern to identify elderly and vulnerable people who would welcome the chance to meet new people and delivered leaflets to advertise the event.

Volunteer students served the food, took orders, organised games and raffles and ran bingo for their guests at the West End Community Centre in St Andrewes Street.

The party was supported by Lord Mayor Ted Cassidy and John Coster of the Leicester Centre for Integrated Living, which is based at the centre. Leicester West MP Liz Kendall was also there to chat to residents and wish them a happy Christmas.

Food was served by the Real Junk Food Project, which runs a pay-as-you-feel café every Thursday night and Fridays between 11am to 3pm, while the LCIL social media cafe is on. "This is lovely," said spokeswoman Alison Preston, "The Square Mile Project does such great things for the community and it's lovely to see so many people here today."

One of the organisers, Debbie Tinsley commented: We don't want anyone to feel alone at Christmas time and we hope that everyone has a nice time together and makes new friends, and we want to hold events throughout the year so people can meet regularly".





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Band

Fridays 7.00 – 8.00pm. Cost £2.00 per session. Ring 07866378392 for further details.

Senior Citizens Lunch Club

Mondays & Thursdays, 12.30pm. Cost £2.50 for two course meal plus tea/coffee.

Senior Citizens Club

Mondays 2.00 – 4.00pm. Cost £1.00.

Senior Citizens Keep Fit

Thursdays 11.00am – Noon. Cost 60p.

Fosse Lunch Club

Fridays 12.30pm. Cost 70p for main course plus tea/coffee. Run by Zinthyia Trust and funded by the Riverside Housing Association. All welcome.

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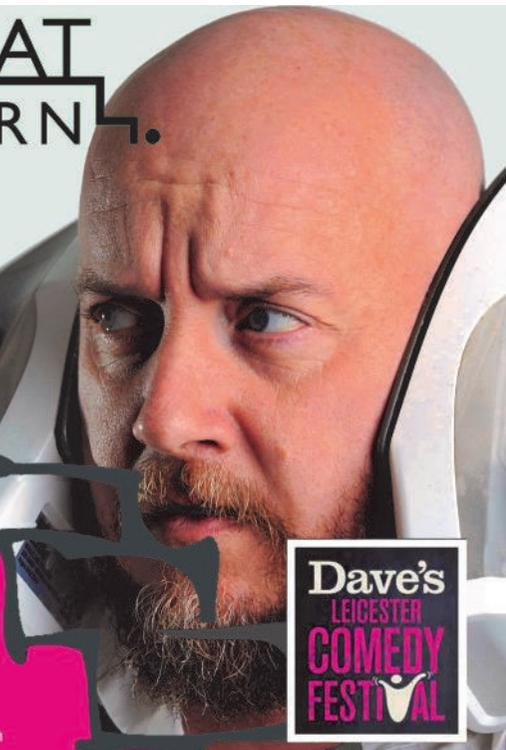
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CODE	DAY	COURSE TITLE	TUTOR NAME	WKS	START DATE	TIMES	COST*
35839	Monday	A History of 20 th and 21 st	Alex Reffell	7	25 Jan 16	10.30 – 12.30	53.90
Venue: West End Neighbourhood Centre, Andrewes Street, Leicester, LE3 5FA							
35832	Monday	Come and see the view!	John Florance	7	25 Jan 16	1.30 – 3.30	53.90
Venue: Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, East Bond Street, Leicester, LE1 4SX							
35861	Tuesday	Philosophy of Superheroes: looking at Spiderman, Su-	Emma Hurley	7	2 Feb 16	10.00 - 12.00	53.90
Venue: Secular Hall, 75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester, LE1 1WB							
	Wednesday	Creative Writing	Alison Dunne	7	27 Jan 16	10.30 – 12.30	53.90
Venue: Newarke Houses Museum, The Newarke, Leicester, LE2 7BY							
35852	Wednesday	Ukulele workshops for those with some experi-	Alison Dunne	7	27 Jan 16	1.30 – 3.30	53.90
Venue: Great Meeting Unitarian Chapel, East Bond Street, Leicester, LE1 4SX							
35859	Wednesday	Anglo Saxons	Stephanie	7	27 Jan 15	1.30 – 3.30	53.90
Venue: Newarke Houses Museum, The Newarke, Leicester, LE2 7BY							
35869	Thursday	Family History workshop	Kevin Brown	7	28 Jan 16	10.00-12.00	53.90
Venue: Leicester College, Abbey Park Campus, Painter Street, Leicester, LE1 3WA							
35862	Friday	Gonna Rise up Singing	Alex Reffell	7	29 Jan 16	10.30 - 12.30	53.90
Venue: Y Theatre, 7 East St, Leicester, LE1 6EY							
35866	Friday	I'm gonna sing – singing for	Alex Reffell	7	29 Jan 16	1.30 - 3.30	53.90
Venue: Y Theatre, 7 East St, Leicester, LE1 6EY							

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An all female line up of comedians will be heading to the Newfoundpool Working Men's Club to raise money for Women's Aid Leicestershire.

The Chicks Charity Chortle takes place on Friday January 29th and includes six acts who have given up their time to entertain and raise money for the charity. Caroline Ryan will be your host for the evening and other performers include Sarah Keyworth, Sarah Johnson and Helen Knott.

Tickets cost £5 and are available on the night or through www.eventbrite.com

MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS

Western Ward Councillors Surgeries

Councillors: Dr Susan Barton, George Cole and Malcolm Unsworth. First Friday of the month 3-4pm at New Parks Customer Service Centre, Aikman Av, LE3 9PW. **Second Weds** of the month 7-8pm at St. Anne's Church Hall, Letchworth Road, LE3 6FN & **Third Sat** of the month 11-12 noon at Braunstone Frith Recreation Centre, Sharman Crescent, LE3 6NW.

Fosse Councillors Surgeries

Councillors: Ted Cassidy MBE and Dawn Alfonso. Second Sat of the month 10.30-11.30am, Fosse Neighbourhood Centre, Mantle Road, LE3 5GH. **Last Sat** of the month 10.30 -11.30am, Woodgate Residents' Association, Woodgate, LE3 5GE.

Westcotes Councillors Surgeries

Councillors: Sarah Russell & Andy Connelly. Westcotes Library, Narborough Road, LE3 0BQ. First Sat of every month, 10.30 -11.30am and **Third Friday**, 10.00am - 11.00am.

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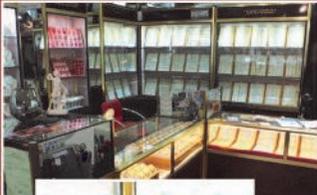
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Drive, off Narborough Road, LE3 0QT

January Police Update

Hello and a Happy New Year to you all. 2016 looks to be a busy year as usual, not only with normal business but also with the changes highlighted in the previous issue.

We have also been made aware by local residents of speeding vehicles around Glenfield Road and Letchworth Road. This is a concern of ours as we have a number of schools in the area and stopping times are greatly increased at higher speeds. We appreciate that this is not likely to be local residents but predominantly people passing through the area. To combat this, we will be utilising our volunteer Special Constables to assist in a speeding operation, which has been conducted before in the area. Where necessary we will be giving words of advice to drivers and issuing tickets to those flouting the law. In previous incidents a number of individuals managed to draw attention to themselves by their high speed and, upon checking the vehicles, they were found to be without insurance or in an unsuitable state. One such vehicle had a virtually bald tyre, which is extremely dangerous as the ability to displace water from the surface means that control will be lost easily.

Towards the end of the year we did see our anticipated spike in burglaries across the wards. We took part in an operation to tackle the problem, through the use of increased high visibility foot and mobile patrols in the area; the use of plain clothes officers patrolling the area and



also utilising of the Mobile Beat Bus. The Beat Bus is essentially an office on wheels that can be parked up in various parts of the community. From here, officers handed out crime prevention advice, took on board any issues brought to them and were generally available for a chat. During the operation we arrested an outstanding suspect for a burglary who was spotted by the plain clothes officers and was swooped in on. In another incident, high visibility officers came across a male who had stolen property on him from a car that had been broken into on a neighbouring area; so he was promptly arrested also. Our patrols will be continuing and if you have any worries then please stop us to have a chat if you see us. Otherwise, events will be added to both the Fosse Ward and Western Park website pages.

Mike Hooper

Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



2015 left us with the wettest December on record and 2016 didn't begin any drier. With the soil now holding its maximum water capacity, even after the rain eases, it'll be well into spring before many areas begin to dry.

Record breaking "Hundred Year events" seem to be happening almost annually. We should probably reconsider what constitutes a "Hundred Year event" and alter how we garden accordingly.

If your garden has become a bog, the best course of action is to do nothing! Healthy soil is porous, like a sponge. This allows plant roots to breathe. When the soil is saturated, the roots suffocate and the plant slowly dies. But walking on the waterlogged soil squashes those spongy holes out of existence. This destroys the soil structure, so even



when the ground dries out the plants still struggle.

The soil also loses its absorbency so actually floods even quicker next time!

But how to prepare for increased rainfall? If you improve the soil structure, your garden will hold more moisture in dry periods, but drain easier in a downpour. If the ground is compacted, use a fork to break it up. On big lawns, you may want to hire a mechanical aerator then top-dress with



a mixture of sharp sand and topsoil. Adding grit and sand can help drainage, but you'll need a huge amount to alter the nature of a heavy clay soil. Adding plenty of organic matter is the best way to improve the soil. In extreme cases, you may want to consider land-drains, but that can be a major project. Less drastic measures include growing plants in raised beds or building a seasonal wildlife pond to drain the excess. There's also a vast array of trees and plants that can cope with wet soils, from Alders to Zantedeschia. Whatever weather you plan for, expect the unexpected, and lots of it. This is England after all!

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1		2				3
4				5		
6		7				
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1 Across: Centre bowling pin **1 Down:** Scrooge
2: To pilfer **3:** Child carer **4:** Little lamb **5:** Jack
6: Early month **7:** --- Year **8:** Drowsy sighers

© Paul Towers

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

- Lava Needy Nits** is an anagram of which notable event?
- Solve this rebus puzzle: **PINNACLE**.
- Make 4 new words by combining these words into pairs: **SO, EYE, MARK, STICK, EAR, SORE, LID, DRUM**.
- What number is next in this sequence? **27, 214, 221, 228, 235...**

Answers for the quiz and crossword are online at: www.westernparkgazette.co.uk

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