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More on page 4

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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the July edition of the Gazette. We're not out of the Woods of Covid by a long way, but life is getting back to near normal. It still seems prudent to keep masks on in certain circumstances. Going around breathing on people, even if you've been double vaxed might not be as dangerous as it once was, but it's still a bit rude and covid-19, with its dreaded Delta variant, can still be spread.

It's a particularly quiet month on the news front and the thought of just kicking back and chilling through July was quite tempting, but nevertheless...

It was a very quiet start to "Freedom Day" as the masks came off. We took a walk around our local venues to see what was happening. Not a lot as it turned out. And that's pretty much it. Regular features continue with Helen Knott spotting some alfresco activity on Western Park, Carey Tunstall has a July gardening update, Paul Towers looks ahead to new shows at Leicester's theatres and there's the latest policing news. Finally, the Braintazers will mangle your little grey cells, if the recent heat hasn't already.

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Coronavirus remains a serious health risk. It's important to stay cautious and help protect yourself and others.



- Continue to wear face coverings to help protect those you come in to contact with.
- Minimise the number, proximity and duration of meeting people.
- Book a test and self-isolate as soon as you get symptoms or when contacted by NHS Test and Trace.
- Take regular rapid covid tests if you do not have symptoms.
- If you test positive, continue to stay at home for at least 10 days and until you feel better. Every one you live with should stay at home for 10 days, even if they don't have symptoms.
- Let fresh air in when meeting people indoors.
- Have the vaccine as soon as you are eligible.
- Wash or sanitise your hands regularly.

TESTING SITES: Aylestone Leisure Centre, Belgrave N/hood Centre, Birstall Park & Ride, Braunstone Leisure Centre, Highfields Centre Victoria Park and Overton Road.

RAPID TESTING CENTRES: Fosse N/h Centre, Hamilton Library. **Open:** 8am-5pm from Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri. Weds:12-7pm. Closed Sat & Sun.

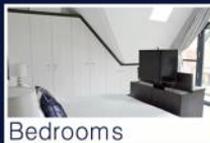
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UNLOCKED!

Leicester suffered more than most cities during the pandemic. Covid 19 took many lives and the extended lockdowns crippled the local economy.

At one past midnight on Monday 19th July, England entered Step 4 of the coronavirus recovery plan.

In the city, this meant that a throng of immortal young club goers were queuing up outside Club Republic, ready to party without masks from the stroke of midnight. Here in the West End, the bars shut and prepared for the following day.

It could have been the heatwave, the Monday morning blues, the July Fortnight or a combination of all of these, but "Freedom Day" came and went without a murmur.

Taking a walk around Braunstone Gate, the number of patrons in the local bars could be counted on both hands.

Even for a humid Monday evening - it was very quiet. Tommy Coombs who owns the Metal Monocle said: "We've been busy at weekends since reopening but it tends to pick up after nine during the week. We've put



Tommy Coombs

in a new stage for live bands, so that'll help". His main concern is the possibility of another lockdown: "We will survive as we have an awesome following, but we'll, yet again, have to cancel all the live bands and won't know when to book them again".

Across the road, West End Brewery owner, Josh Gray said: "The only changes we've really made are no more table service but no vertical drinking. Go to the bar, get your drink and sit back down. Luckily our customers are quite sensible, so there won't be a problem". He added: "I'm trying not to think about further lockdowns. The last thing we need is another one, but if there is then we'll get through it like the last one and the one before that".

The Crows Nest (Cover pic) made some changes, the large marquee in the carpark is down, following Euro 20 but the outside seating, now with added bouncy castle, remain. It was quiet with small groups sitting outside enjoying the evening sun. Manager Ray Cooper has consistently tried to provide a safe environment for families as lockdown rules were relaxed but he remains optimistic about the future.



Josh Gray

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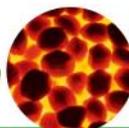
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KNOTT'S LANDING

Summertime and the living is easy. OK, so the weather wasn't the best to start with but the kids have broken up, work is slowing down and we are walking in Western Park again, trying not to catch the Johnson Variant before our holiday in a week or two. Everything is rosy right? Well no, it isn't.

Recently, I took an evening perambulation with my son and as we drifted along the upward path towards the football fields, catching the odd Pokemon (it's a cunning way of luring younglings out for a walk) I noticed movement in the long grass. I turned to get a better look and in the evening sunshine I got a glimpse of a rising Death Star. 'That's no moon', I thought to myself in my best Obi Wan Kenobi inner voice. The moon in question was repeatedly rising and setting in a rhythmic fashion, that had very little to do with Red Leader's bombing run, and appeared to be attached to a young man. I positioned myself between this new celestial body and my child and



walked us quickly along until we were out of sight and indeed, earshot.

I've seen lots of strange things on the park and it's not news that it's being used for 'al fresco' activities, but it's never been quite so blatant before. I clearly remember a naked sunbathing man who would pick a remote corner and lay there in the buff! This time though, the couple in question couldn't have been more than 10ft off the main tarmac footpath and although the long grass offered some cover, it doesn't cover everything! I'm no prude but I found myself wondering if it was really necessary to engage in this particularly energetic summer evening exercise in the park. I mean, could you not wait a few hours until the cover of darkness? Move further into the wooded bits? Enjoy the precursor activities that don't involve me getting an eyeful?

I suppose we should be thankful for small mercies. At least our park doesn't have the kind of reputation Aylestone Meadows enjoys – I learned recently it is nationally renowned in the gay community. So much so, I was told one man moved his flight from London to East Midlands Airport just so he could come and spend some time in the park before he flew! Destination tourism in action! Although I'm guessing that won't be joining Richard III on the Historic Leicester signs at the city limits.

Helen Knott



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Update

wwce.org.uk

WWCE's Project Hive is run by local residents who are raising funds to redevelop the old Eco House on Western Park into a community space.

We would like to start this month with a huge thank you. We ran the refreshments at this year's Open Gardens event based at St Anne's Church Hall and we could not have run the table service system without the help of the incredible team of school children that volunteered themselves for the weekend. It was a very well attended event and we raised over £1000 towards our cause.

Looking ahead, The Scarecrow Trail in September creeps ever closer. If you have enjoyed the buzz the event has created for the last two years, then we really need your help to bring the magic again. A trail needs scarecrows to populate it, and while there has been good early interest, what we really need is more of you to take the plunge and sign up to build one. Don't be scared, it's a lot easier than it looks and would make a great summer holiday project for you and your family to work on together.



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BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Dare we hope that **NORMAL** is returning?

Curve is doing its absolute best to bring audiences back into our prestigious theatre as safely as possible, but all the safety measures in the world are as nothing unless there are shows to go attend. To this end Curve has booked in a whole roster of touring shows coming to Leicester throughout the summer.

Kicking off the holidays season is Curve's very own revival of Grease on 30/31 July, before it starts a nationwide tour.

Next up is a production of the iconic Dial M For Murder, made famous by Alfred Hitchcock, this production stars Tom Chambers and Diana Vickers and runs from 31 August to 4th September.

Then, Tennessee Williams' classic, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, directed by Anthony Almeida, winner of the 2019 RTST Sir Peter Hall Director Award. Be warned, this production contains adult themes.

For something feel-good, filled with hummable tunes you could do worse than join Curve for the return of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert. The story of three Australian drag queens, braving the arid Down Under hinterland to climb the ultimate rock in the centre of the country; and all this in a battered pink bus. This fun show runs from 13th to 18th September.

If that isn't enough campness then you need to book for Everybody's Talking About Jamie. Direct from the

West End, this inspirational show runs from 20th to 25th September as part of the new nationwide tour. Provisional casting includes Curve favourite Layton Williams in the lead.

Continuing on the gay theme, September also sees the arrival of the Turbine Theatre revival of Kevin Elyot's award-winning comedy, My Night with Reg, which runs from 21st to 25th September.

The climax of the summer season is the touring production of Six, the reimagined story of the six wives of Henry the Eighth, after a sold out pre-covid run in the West End.

Tickets for all productions are available at curve-online.co.uk

Leicester's smaller venues are gearing up too. High-lights include the historical tale Blue Stockings, a night of musical theatre in Six Feet Away and a Cinderella Christmas panto, all at the Little Theatre. Tickets from thelittletheatre.co.uk The Y Theatre are going full steam ahead with a variety of shows including stand-up comedy, music, tribute bands and one man/woman shows.

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July Police Update

As the summer stretches ahead and many of us take our annual holiday, please remember to secure your home. Window locks, CCTV, alarms, light timers, can all help reduce the risk. If you live in a flat don't let anyone in you don't know, even if they say they are expected or know another resident - and don't let them follow you in.

Changes to legislation brought about by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 mean that it is now illegal to possess items like knuckledusters, throwing stars and zombie knives, even in private.

Other sections of the act include an updated definition of flick knives to reflect changes in weapon designs, and the banning of private possession of flick knives and gravity knives.

The rest of the act will bring in new provisions for the control of goods sold online, as well as placing responsibility on delivery companies to conduct age verification at delivery stage. These are important developments that will help us to address the growing issue of online sale of knives. Knife crime remains a priority for Leicestershire Police and the additions to the legislation will support our officers to further tackle serious violent crime.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) is a term used to describe the manipulation or coercion of children and young people into committing crimes such as selling and storing drugs, carrying weapons and committing burglary, robbery or theft.

Currently, we are seeing children and young people, between the ages of 9 and 17, being used by criminals. If you think a child could be involved in this type of activity, you can contact Leicestershire Police on 101 or online. If you suspect a child is in immediate danger always call 999.

Six men from an organised drugs crime group, including three from New Parks and Braunstone have been taken off the streets and sentenced to more than 44 years in prison between them.

This follows a huge covert operation spanning two years which saw over 50 people arrested.

29 year old Benjamin Miller of Walpole Court, was sentenced to 6 years and 6 months, 39 year old Philip Warren from Hinckley Road, was jailed for 7 years and 6 months and 46 year old Richard Elton of Rancliffe Crescent was sentenced to 6 years and 6 months.

Two men were arrested in connection with a serious collision at the junction of Hinckley Road and New Parks Way on July 3rd at 11.30pm. The 25 year-old was arrested on suspicion of causing serious injury by dangerous driving and the 18-year old on suspicion of dangerous driving.

The collision involved a black VW Golf and a blue Nissan Micra. The driver of the Micra, a woman in her 20s, was hospitalised and is receiving treatment for her injuries.

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CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



I know we've had a lot of rain at the start of the month, but it can be deceiving how quickly water can evaporate, so please ensure ponds, bee baths and bird baths are topped up regularly. Fruit and veg plants should also be watered daily - this is when your water butt comes in handy as Severn Trent has requested we reduce the amount of mains water we are using.

If you're suffering with mosquito larvae in water containers, a couple of drops of washing up liquid affects the surface viscosity, which stops the survival of the larvae. If you haven't done so already it is also helpful to mulch your borders as this helps to retain moisture for your plants and reduces the amount of weeds that grow, at the expense of your prized flowers.

I've been picking off dead flower heads from my bedding plants and flowering perennials such as hardy geraniums and lupins. This promotes new growth and new flowers. It is a good time to prune back any deciduous Magnolia and reshape if necessary, whilst Wisteria should have the whippy new growth clipped back to about 5 leaf points from the main stem. I've also summer pruned my

espalier pear tree to try and retain its shape by removing any long new growths and dead or diseased branches.

In the vegetable garden I've been picking courgettes whilst they are young, which encourages more fruit production. I've also been pinching out tomato side shoots and removing any leaves below the first fruit truss. These actions help to concentrate energy to fruit production and improves air circulation, reducing the risk of pests and diseases. I've been feeding both fruit with a weekly dilute solution of tomato feed to keep the plants healthy and to encourage better fruit production (I also water my bedding plants with tomato food every two to three weeks, it contains all the nutrients they need!).

After this summer of football your lawn is probably looking a bit worse for wear so it's okay to give it another feed to green it up. If rain is not imminent after feeding it is best to water it in so that the grass doesn't become scorched. A word of warning - don't feed it after the end of August as new growth at that time can be susceptible to cold weather, pests and diseases.

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1 Across: Religious day **1 Down:** Lady Bracknell's reticule **2D:** Composed of laminates **3D:** Vaporisation & condensation **4D:** Gave up **5A:** Hindu greeting **6A:** To me, to you **7A:** Unclear.

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Answers at w:westernparkgazette.co.uk

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		3	4	2				
9	1					5		
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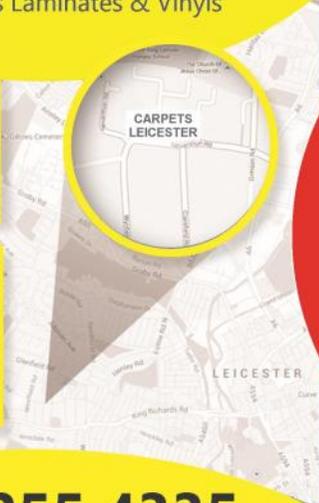


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