



SO WHAT NOW?



8 YEARS ON SINCE DEADLY BLAST AND NO CHANGE *More on Page 3*



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Hello From The Editor

Hello and welcome to the fashionably late October edition of the Western Park Gazette.

In February 2026, it will be 8 years since the explosion on Hinckley Rd took the lives of 5 people and injured several more. Since then the site has become a target for arson and a dumping ground for rubbish.

We tried to find out what the future plans are for it, but it looks like there aren't any...

On a much happier note, we rundown some of the festive entertainment heading our way as Christmas approaches and we're offering you the chance to win 4 tickets to the opening night of Dick Whittington at the De Montfort Hall. Keeping in the Yuletide spirit our gardening expert Carey Tunstall has some thoughts on what to buy the gardener in your life for Christmas. And there's the latest policing update including a couple of successful prosecutions and another cannabis farm gets shut down in the Fosse.

As always the crossword and sudoku are on the inside back page with the answers on our website.

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Events Diary

Hall @ St Anne's, Letchworth Rd: Knit & Natter: 1.30pm, 4th Tues. **Weds Club:** 2.30pm, 1st Weds. **Pram Club:** Weds 9.15-11.30am. **Women's Taekwondo:** Thurs 8-9pm taekwondo4all.com **Fri Coffee:** 10am.

Musical Memory Box: 1st & 3rd Tues 2pm. The Grove, Braunstone.

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

Drop-in Talk: @ St Paul's Worship Ctr. Talk to local police & support orgs. 1st Tue monthly 10-12 noon.

Wonderful Walks on Western Park: Monthly 3rd Sunday. 9.30am start at Hinckley Rd gates.

@ Metal Monocle: Fallen North/The Rail Yard Dog/Burning Circus: 7 Nov. **The Davidson Trio:** 8 Nov.

@ The International: The Della Grants: 1 Nov. **Laurence Jones:** 2 Nov. **John Blaylock:** 5 Nov.

@ De Mont Hall: River Dance 30 1-4 Nov. **Cirque - The Greatest Show:** 8 Nov. **The Stylistics** 10 Nov.

@ Curve: Curve Tours: 1 Nov-10 Jan. **Sound of Music** 22 Nov-2 Jan. **Aliens Love Panta Clause:** 2 Dec-4 Jan.

@ Y Theatre: Wonders Of Our Universe: 1 Nov, **Indians Are Coming:** 2 Nov, **14/48 Fest:** 7/8 Nov.

@ Little Theatre: Holes: 5-8 Nov. **Things I Know To Be True:** 10-15 Nov. **Hairspray:** 18-22 Nov.

Bonfire Night: Abbey Park 1st Nov, from 6.30pm

@ O2 Academy: Comedy Store: 7 Nov. **The Jerry Cinn-a-Man Exp (Trib) + Support:** 8 Nov.

Anime Con: DeMont Uni Campus Centre. 8 Nov.

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So What Now?

At 7.00pm on February 25th 2018 an explosion ripped through a supermarket and flat on Hinckley Road, killing five people and leaving several others badly injured. Three men were later jailed for life for murder and for blowing up the shop and nearby businesses as part of a £300,000 insurance scam.

The buildings and rubble were quickly cleared away and the damaged area fenced off. It was then listed for auction as "an ideal development site" with a view to build shops and flats, but since then - nothing.

In the eight years since that tragedy, the site as become a target for fly-tipping, vandalism and even arson much to the irritation of neighbours. One resident, Tracey said: "It's a pit! Disgusting how it has been left and nobody has done nothing about it. It needs sorting... Spoken to many that say the same thing. Hinckley Road around there used to be lovely - now a dump!" Another, Louise, said: "Disgusting how it's been left. Shame on the landowners."

Leicester City Council officers say they have identified two of the three land owners, but a new one hasn't been logged with the Land Registry as of yet. The owners admit they don't have any plans to develop the site but one was instructed to make it secure and begin the removal of fly tipped rubbish.

From our observations, photos and video, that work has not happened to any great extent.

Fosse Cllr. Sue Waddington said: "I am aware of the problems at this site and am very concerned that it continues to be neglected and is used for fly tipping. An absolute eyesore that residents have rightly complained about."



"I have raised the problem several times with the City Council environmental health officers and the City Warden. It is particularly troubling as this site was one where a real tragedy occurred which lives on in people's memories, and therefore it should be respectfully cared for and not neglected as it has been now for several years." **RP**

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WINTER EVENTS

The nights draw in, the temperature drops and the end of year celebrations begin. There's a lot to look forward to over the next two months so here's our guide to planning ahead!

After another colourful and successfully noisy Diwali followed by all that Halloween fun across the city, Abbey Park hosts **Leicester's biggest bonfire night celebration**, with this year's event having a distinctly spooky flavour.

On Saturday 1st Nov visitors can look forward to two spectacular firework displays, with the first, quieter display at 6.45pm, and the second launching into the sky at 8pm. As this year's event follows hot on the heels of Halloween, you can expect a 'spooks and sparks' theme, with fire and flame acts, ghostly walkabouts, creepy creatures and Halloween characters featuring as well as spectacular fireworks.

The VAL Firework Festival at Leicester Racecourse, also on 1st Nov, opens its gates from 4pm and includes kids activities, funfair and Aston Merrygold on stage.

A 14 Metre Norwegian spruce arrives in the city centre early in Nov, ready to be decorated ahead of the **Christmas lights switch-on** (19th Nov) and celebrations around the Clock Tower on Gallowtree and Humberstone Gates.

The Wheel of Light and ice-skating rink on Jubi-

lee Square will also arrive in early Dec helping us to slide gently into Christmas.

The Yuletide market runs, on Gallowtree Gate from 13th November to the 28th of Dec, offering seasonal handmade artisanal gifts and more, all running alongside the **fun fair** on Humberstone Gate.

De Montfort Hall host their annual panto; this time it's **Dick Whittington** with a star cast aiming to put the pun in pun-tomime from 12th Dec to 3rd of Jan. Dick Whittington and his cat are also appearing at the **Little Theatre** from Dec 12th until 4th of January, and from the 22nd Nov to 4th Jan **Cinderella** drops her glass slipper at Prince Charming's feet at Loughborough Town Hall.

If panto isn't your style **Curve Theatre's** family show is **The Sound of Music** from 22nd Nov to 17th of Jan and the children's Christmas show, **Aliens Love Panta Clause**, runs from 2nd Dec to 4th Jan. **Leicester's Guildhall's** Christmas activities run through December, covering everything from festive tales guaranteed to scare you to death or enchant you, as well as Christmas movies and themed activities for all the family. More at visitleicester.info



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Dick Whittington



It's nearly that time of year again!... Oh yes it is as Leicester's big panto returns for 2025

This year Dick Whittington starts his travels to London from the De Montfort Hall on the 12th of December, and you can be the first to see it!

Join in the chaotic fun with BBC Radio 2's Richie Anderson in his panto debut, actor/singer and TV personality Suzanne Shaw from 2000's chart-toppers HearSay. Both are starring alongside CBeebies Rebecca Keatley, comedian Jarred Christmas, Jack Ballard's dazzling Dame and award-winning beatboxer Hobbit as Boots the Cat with all the boos and hisses provided by West End star Djalenga Scott as Queen Rat.

With hilarious jokes, catchy songs, and seasonal panto joy for all the family, this festive treat won't disappoint!

Dick Whittington at the De Montfort Hall runs from 12th Dec to 3rd Jan. Tickets and more show details from: demontforthall.co.uk

Win Tickets To Dick Whittington

Here's your chance to go to opening night and be among the first people to see Leicester's biggest panto for 2025 at De Montfort Hall!

To win 4 tickets for the first night 7pm performance on Friday 12th of December, just answer the question below:

Who or what calls Dick Whittington back to London to become Lord Mayor?

- 1: He was tired and hungry
- 2: A telegram from King Henry 5th
- 3: Dick chases his cat back to the city
- 4: The Bells of Bow Church

Email your answer & include your phone number before November 30th 2025 to: editor@westernparkgazette.co.uk

Terms: 1 entry per household via email only, tickets not transferable & are valid only for this performance. One winner with the correct answer will be chosen at random to receive 4 tickets to the opening night of Dick Whittington at the De Montfort Hall on Friday December 12th at 7pm.



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November is our key fundraising month and you are warmly invited to attend the two events being held in our community hall. The first is our **Christmas Shopping Evening on Wednesday November 12th 7.30 - 9.15pm**; browse the stalls of a variety of local crafters and pick up some early Christmas gifts. Entry is £4 including wine/juice and nibbles. From **2.30pm on Saturday November 29th** join us for our annual **Christmas Fair**. Tombola, cakes, toys, books and jigsaws, bric a brac, gifts, games, festive refreshments and, of course, the chance to visit Santa too! These fundraising activities enable us to keep our weekly meetings affordable for all. **JS**

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CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



With Christmas just around the corner, you might be wondering what to buy for your green-fingered friends or family? Sometimes gifts are received with pleasure and surprise only to be shoved in a cupboard or shed never to see daylight again. This may be due to them being unsuitable, impractical or from Temu. So, I've put a list together of our most invaluable tools, that can always be used by any level of gardener.

Our most used tool must be our trusty secateurs, which can come in many price brackets. As our most used tool, we like to go for quality secateurs that can be used year after year, with simple maintenance. We use the Japanese brand, Niwaki Higurashi GR. They are very strong and easy to clean and sharpen. Experts at Gardeners World agree, stating that they "feel strong and robust with an excellent cutting performance" Our other favourite brand is Felco.



The beauty of these is they can always be sent off for sharpening or servicing, and you can easily buy new blades.

Another invaluable tool is the Wolf Garten Grubber. It can be used for weeding and turning over soil. As part of the multi-change system, it can be used as a hand-held tool or attached to a long handle, enabling you to reach the back of borders easily. Many other tools can be attached to either of the handles making a tool change quick and simple. Homes and Gardens recently agreed, especially if "you lack storage space!"

Another shout out for Niwaki is the hori hori knife. It can be used for so many jobs around the garden from weeding, planting, pruning and digging. Gardeners illustrated expert, Veronica Peerless, says she "became a hori hori convert within a few hours of getting it home."

And finally, our trusty border spade. The Ames carbon steel border spade is light, strong and ergonomically designed. It allows us to dig holes, split perennials and plant all without putting too much strain on our backs. Gardeners World gave it 4.5 out of 5 and says "the blade slices easily through the soil"

With products starting from £10 we're sure you can find something within your gift buying budget that will be used for many years to come.

Happy gardening!

Carey Tunstall



Martin Page

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October Police Update

A drug dealer from Beaumont Leys has been jailed for possession of class A drugs with intent to supply, obstruction, possession of counterfeit money and assaults on an emergency workers.

24-year-old Kacper Ogrodnik, was suspected of being involved in the supply of crack cocaine and heroin by officers working in West Leicester and City CID teams.

On the 25 June, his car was seen in New Parks and was followed by officers to Dannett Street, off Tudor Road. When Ogrodnik got out, he was arrested on suspicion of being concerned in the supply of drugs. While waiting to be transported to custody, he became obstructive, and officers noticed that he had swallowed a SIM card.

A further search found he had concealed 33 wraps of crack cocaine and seven wraps of di-amorphine on his body which had a total value of around £400. While in custody, he also assaulted two officers, punching one and kicking out at another.

At his trial on the 14th of October, Ogrodnik pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 6 ½ years.

A domestic violence victim who was nearly killed by her abuser has been praised by police for her bravery.

At 1am on 27 January 2024, Olegs Arklins' victim rang police saying he was intoxicated at her address and threatening her. While on the phone to the call handler, Arklins stabbed her.

Officers rushed to the address in Norfolk Street, Westcotes, where they found 45-year-old Arklins, sitting on a pavement outside. He was immediately arrested, and other officers went into the property where they took care of the victim until medical assistance arrived.

The victim, underwent life-saving surgery and has since made a full recovery.

On the 3rd October Arklins, was sentenced to 27 years for attempted murder.

Detective Constable Vik Patel said the victim had great strength and bravery "... in providing an account that led to Arklins being convicted and now locked up for a very long time."

On 17th of October, following several weeks of intelligence gathering, officers executed a warrant to enter an address on Warwick Street and found a cannabis grow.

As usual the electricians were creatively and dangerously bypassed but luckily nothing was able to ignite. The plug sockets were heavily overloaded and dangling from the ceiling only increasing the risk of a fire even further. Sadly, this is all too common in cannabis factories.

An Emergency Prohibition Order has now been placed on this address, preventing this property from being used in crime again.

Are Your Eyes Road Ready?

With the government reviewing driver eyesight standards, particularly for older motorists, is your vision still keeping you safe on the road?

For many of us, driving is more than a way of getting from A to B – it's independence, freedom, and connection to the people and places we value most. Yet we often take for granted our eyesight which makes safe driving possible. Problems usually creep in gradually, and many drivers don't realise how much their vision has changed. They are often surprised at the difference up-to-date glasses or specialist driving lenses can make.

The current UK requirement is simple: drivers must be able to read a car number plate from 20 metres away. While this sets a minimum for distance vision, it ignores crucial aspects such as night vision, glare sensitivity, depth perception, and peripheral awareness. Even more concerning, once you've passed this check, there are no further compulsory assessments until the age of 70, and then drivers simply self-declare that their eyesight is good enough.

Ageing brings natural changes that can make driving more difficult. From the 40s onwards, near vision deteriorates, making it harder to refocus quickly from dashboard to distance.



ALAN BELLAMY

Alan Bellamy is the senior optometrist at Bellamy Eyecare, serving Leicester and Irthlingborough communities for over 22 years.

Glare from headlights becomes more intrusive, and contrast sensitivity declines. Combined with the higher risk of cataracts and other eye conditions, these changes make spotting hazards harder and reaction times slower. I do occasionally come across some drivers who are well below the legal standard.

Government discussions have raised the possibility of introducing compulsory eyesight checks for drivers, but no new rules are yet in place. I recommend a comprehensive eye examination every two years, or more often if you're over 70. I believe this is what the great majority of people do already.

Good eyesight for driving isn't just about meeting a standard – it's about looking after yourself and those around you. Keeping your vision clear and comfortable makes every journey safer and less stressful, protects your independence and the wellbeing of everyone who shares the road.

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5						
6			7			
8						

1 Across: Popular Leicester park **1 Down:** Serving at Downton **2D:** Germanic Switzerland **3D:** Evasive/slippery person **4D:** Tell a tale **5A:** A breather **6A:** Inertia **7D:** Great blue bird. **8A:** Publication related to 1 Across © Paul Towers 2025

Answers at w:westernparkgazette.co.uk

7							
	5	1	7	4			
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