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## Hello From The Editor

Welcome to February's Gazette. Not only are we dealing with the pandemic, we've also had to endure Storm Darcy and her cold snap which sent temperatures dropping to below freezing and carpeting some of the county in several inches of snow. It wasn't so bad here but we had enough white stuff for many to head off to the park with sledges.

It's still fairly quiet on the local news front but the long awaited traffic calming measures near Christ The King and Dovelands School are due to start. Any chance, whilst they're at it, they could fix the sump-bashing dips caused by badly maintained speed humps on the Westcotes Drive? Local comedian Sarah Johnson zooms her way into this year's Leicester Comedy Festival from her spare room, first time author Helen Cooper gets her debut novel into print. Our new Gardening Guru, Carey Tunstall, has some advice on prepping the garden for the spring, Helen Knott is faced with a tragic dilemma that all to many of us have had to deal with, and Ed Jones has this month's police update.

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# COVID RESTRICTIONS

## SCAN THIS QR CODE FOR FULL DETAILS



- 1: Stay at home except for specific reasons such as work, exercise or shopping
- 2: Limit your contact with other people.
- 3: Don't mix with other households indoors or in private gardens, unless you have formed a support bubble as a single adult. You can only do this with one household.
- 4: Work from home if possible.
- 5: Reduce the number of journeys you make.
- 6: Walk or cycle if possible, or use buses outside peak times if you can.
- 7: Stay 2m apart from anyone you don't live with.
- 8: Wash or sanitise your hands regularly.
- 9: Wear a face covering on buses, in shops, if dropping or collecting children at school and in any space where distancing is difficult.

### BOOK A TEST IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS

**TESTING SITES:** Jubilee Sq, Birstall Park & Ride, Evington Leisure Centre, Spinney Hill Park, Victoria Park, the Highfields Centre, the Shree Praja-pati Community Centre, the Overton Road Ball Court and the Belgrave N/hood Centre.

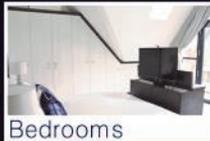
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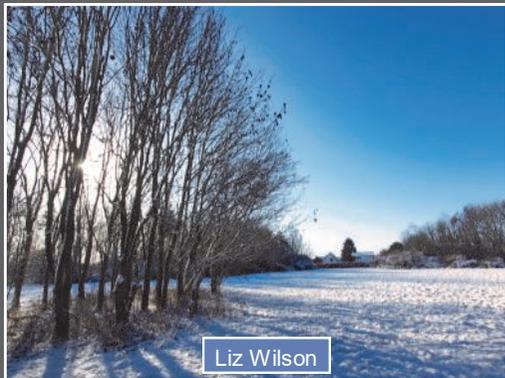
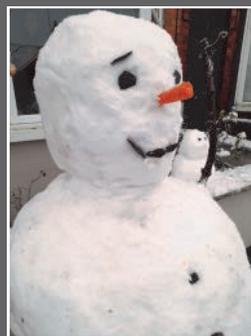
They called it 'The Beast From The East 2' And like any good sequel it mauled the UK in its icy grip. Here in Leicester's western neighbourhoods, it just got chilly and snowed a bit, but enough for Steve Dayman at Daymans' Hardware store to sell out of sledges. One thousand of them!

We headed out onto Western Park with a camera (not with a sledge – couldn't get one) and sent out a call for some snowy photos.

If you're out and about and take an interesting photo send it to [editor@westernpark.co.uk](mailto:editor@westernpark.co.uk)



James Riley



Liz Wilson



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# KNOTT'S LANDING

I've got a dilemma. I've had dilemmas before – whether to have chocolate cake or Victoria sponge, which school to send my child to, where to go on holiday – these are all OK dilemmas to have. Today I'm sitting wondering whether to go to a funeral. That's a crap dilemma. Thanks Covid.

I'd be representing my Dad at the funeral of his Great Uncle. Uncle Elijah was a gloriously mad old coot. He gave us shiny 50p pieces when we went to visit him. He grew fields of strawberries and gladioli at his small holding. Back in the 80's he came to visit us in Hong Kong and appeared in arrivals wearing tropical army uniform and a pith helmet. My mum was mortified but as kids we thought it was hilarious. He also hoarded mountains of stuff which was fascinating.

Uncle Elijah has been in a care home for a few years and we thought we had got away with it. He had just had his vaccine and we had managed to get a year through the pandemic. Life had other ideas though and we got the news that he had caught Covid. We crossed everything, prayed, all the usual stuff, but he wasn't able to fight it off. We had one of those calls to say he didn't have long. Then another of those calls to say he had gone.

And so to the funeral. My Dad is in his late 70s and

has been vaccinated but he lives a long way off and cannot travel independently. I live closest. I know you can go to funerals and I think I'm happy to go but there are dissenting voices. They say you've spent a year not going to places, not doing things so you can go and see your Dad. With weeks to go before that would be possible you're planning on a trip across the country to a room full of people you don't know. If ever there was an opportunity to catch the virus, this would be it.

I don't know if I will go. The living are more important than the dead but then some of the living want me to represent them and others of the living want me to stay healthy. If Covid has taught me anything it's that the hard decisions come to everyone. Some you recognise as hard like my funeral dilemma, others are huge decisions, but we minimise them because we want to behave a certain way. Whether to wear a mask, whether to join up with your family for a party because we tell ourselves "they definitely haven't got it", whether to go for that ride to the countryside, whether to take the whole family shopping to the supermarket for a 'trip out', whether to stand close behind someone in a queue... These all seem like small decisions but right now they are all massive decisions. Someone could die because you do these things. They are massive decisions and should not be taken lightly. So please. Stay home, Wear a mask, protect other people.

**Helen Knott**



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## Road Safety Schemes To Start

Work is due to begin on installing new traffic calming measures in two planned 20mph zones in Western Park.

Schemes at Letchworth Road North and around Dovelands Primary School were delayed last year due to disruption from ongoing UK-wide coronavirus restrictions affecting the supply of rubber speed cushions central to the work.

However, the traffic calming measures are now due to be installed in the coming weeks.

Work on Letchworth Road North will begin on Monday, February 22, and will see speed cushions installed on Letchworth Road, from its junction with Glenfield Road to its junction with Aikman Avenue.

The second scheme, around Christ the King and Dovelands Primary Schools, will begin on Monday, March 1, and will include speed cushions on Letchworth Road from its junction with Glenfield Road to its junction with Wynfield Road, and also on Westfield Road from its junction with Glenfield Road to its junction with Hinckley Road.

Works at both sites should be completed within two weeks.

The scheme, costing about £104k, follows a public consultation which saw strong support for the traffic-calming and speed-reductions measures. The consultation carried out in September 2019 showed that 86 percent of respondents in the Letchworth

Road North area, and 89 percent in the area around Dovelands Primary School, supported the introduction of a 20mph zone.

Leicester assistant city mayor for neighbourhoods, Cllr Kirk Master, said: "It was very disappointing to have to delay this work at the end of 2020 due to supply problems caused by the Covid-19 lockdown, but I'm glad we are now able to carry out this work as planned."



"Residents have been calling for action to improve road safety at these two sites, and the scheme we are bringing in will help make the streets in this area safer for all road users, pedestrians and cyclists."

"We want to encourage as many people to walk or cycle, particularly in residential areas and near schools, such as these examples."



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## HEADING FOR A GOAL

Bosworth Academy, along with Desford Football Club, the Football Foundation and Leicestershire & Rutland County FA are working to put in a full size £800,000 floodlit artificial grass pitch at Bosworth Academy.

Many students from West Leicester attend Bosworth Academy and this, state of the art, 3G pitch will provide a much-needed football training and match venue for both the school and clubs within the area. The total cost of the pitch is being raised through grant applications and fundraising events.

Friends of Bosworth Academy hope to raise £5000 towards the total, although due to Covid-19, the fundraising activities are currently limited.

They have raised £2237 so far, but if you would like to donate visit [justgiving.com](http://justgiving.com) and search for Bosworth Academy



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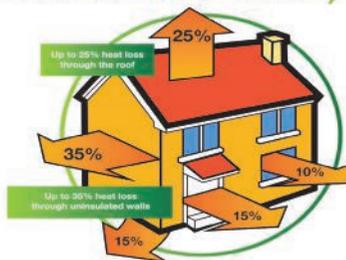
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# SEWING A COMEDY LEGEND

This week I had the great pleasure of chatting to Western Park's very own Sarah Johnson about her experiences as a comedian during lockdown, and the performances which she's been doing at Leicester's Comedy Festival.

This isn't Sarah's first rodeo - she has an impressive and varied comic history, including 20 years as a comedy waitress, many short sketches which you can find on YouTube, and stand up which she's performed across the UK. Her performance at this year's Comedy Festival is a bit different, however - it's on Zoom.

The show is 'Crafternoon with Carol' and, in it, Sarah assumes the role of the titular Carol, a 'craft-a-holic' who takes her merry band of Zoom guests on a gleefully chaotic crafting adventure. The character is one which Sarah developed in lockdown as a way of combining her 'two great passions': crafting and comedy. She also notes the positive effect that crafting can have upon our mental health - something particularly pertinent in these difficult times.

Sarah tells me that it's 'not the same' performing without a physically present audience, but 'you've got to adapt' - and she most certainly has done so. She's done a great job of recreating the sense of community at an in-person live show through her creative use of social media, sharing partici-

pants' finished projects and hosting crafting competitions. In this way, she develops a sort of virtual equivalent of the back and forth between comedian and an audience, which feels most welcome in this often-lonely period.

What makes it even more impressive is that Sarah has done all this 'from her back bedroom'. This lends the show a delightfully cosy feel, and is a powerful demonstration of what can be achieved with hard work and enthusiasm, even when we're stuck at home.

It's a real treat to see Sarah doing Western Park proud, and at a time when it's more important than ever to support the arts, it's well worth following Sarah on social media and catching her shows if you can. Besides, we could all do with a laugh!



**Alexandra Tunstall**

Search for Sarah Johnson on YouTube or find out more at [sarahjohnson.co.uk](http://sarahjohnson.co.uk), [@sazzejohnson](https://twitter.com/sazzejohnson) & on Facebook at [sarahjohnsoncomedian](https://www.facebook.com/sarahjohnsoncomedian)

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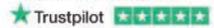


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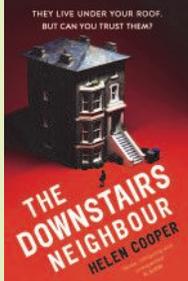
## Mystery Novel Debut

Western Park author, Helen Cooper, is celebrating the February release of her debut thriller 'The Downstairs Neighbour'.

Published by Hodder & Stoughton, it tells the story of three families sharing a converted Georgian townhouse in southeast London, whose lives unravel after the disappearance of the 17-year-old girl who lives on the top floor.

Helen says: "It's not easy launching a novel during a national lockdown, especially a debut, but the support I've had has been overwhelming. Huge thanks to all those who pre-ordered the book, read and reviewed advance copies, and cheered me on during my journey to publication."

The Downstairs neighbour is available from Amazon, Waterstones or Bookshop.org Follow Helen on Twitter: @helencooper85 or Facebook: @helencooperwriter



## DOWN THE ALLY

Every now and again the street litter gets too much, we crack and bag it up ourselves or a kind soul takes it upon themselves to do a clean up.

The cut-through between Ainsdale and Hinckley Roads is a case in point. Littered with cans and bottles stuffed in hedges, it's been 5 years since local environmentalist, Ady Albett, last pushed his can collecting tricycle down that path.

Ady said: "This time I picked up over 140 cans, 45 glass bottles, 45 plastic ones. There's still loads there and it looks like I'll have to come back and have another go.

"A lot of the cans were high strength lagers. The best way of stopping it would be to cut down the vegetation as much as possible."

Ady donates the cans to Heli-pads4Hospitals who need 80 tons of aluminium or 5.7 million cans to raise enough money to build one helipad at a local hospital.



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**Feb Police Update**

It's 30 days since my last article, during which time the country has seen over 34,000 further Covid deaths. Where once this infection was 'terra incognita', we now have vaccines and guidance that is built around a good evidence base. We all need to follow that guidance. Stay at Home and Save Lives, Wear masks in shops, wash your hands frequently and stick to social distancing. The Police hear too many lame excuses, encounter too many selfish people who seemingly fail to grasp that they can transmit this virus and cause another's death. Whilst infection rates are finally falling and our vaccine programme is well underway, now is not the time for complacency. Vaccinations need time to embed if we are to reap the benefits and ease the demand upon the front line. The front line includes our teams, who are well aware of the risks of infection and of exposing their loved ones to harm. In spite of these risks, they continue to be out and about responding to calls for service. An example of this, was the recent drugs warrant at the old Henley Road Substation. It has seen many uses over the years, but a greenhouse full of cannabis is a first. Health and Safety is not at the forefront of the criminal's priorities, so the manner in which they bypass the electricity presents a real risk to the communities in which they are sited. A recent spate of electrical fires in properties, subsequently revealing cannabis grows, is testament to these risks. Power cuts and road works, as the utility companies rush to rectify burnt out cabling, are all consequences of cannabis factories. In this case, over Six hundred plants were taken out the hands of the criminals, hurting them financially to boot. Amongst the foliage, officers arrested two people. They are now safely nestled in a cell courtesy of HM's Prison Service. It was the public that alerted us to these premises, so I would encourage you to report any suspicious activity in your area either through crime stoppers or via 101.

Scammers are targeting people advertising their old phones for sale on social media. Consequently, we have seen a spate of phone thefts in the area. These criminals pose as potential buyers communicating through fake profiles. A meeting is arranged in a public space, where they exchange the phone for counterfeit cash, or run off with it whilst pretending to examine it. Either way, the seller is left empty handed. Whilst online auction sites charge a commission, they still represent the safest way to sell your items.

We regularly update our Neighbourhood link with information about the latest crime threats, so if you have not already done so I would urge you to sign up. As always, keep yourself safe, keep healthy and be a good neighbour.

**Sgt Ed Jones**

# CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



**This time of year, especially with the recent snowfalls, it's a little quiet in our gardens, but we'll still be lucky enough to see some emerging bulb growth.** These new growths are an indicator that you can plant summer flowering bulbs such as easy growing Alliums, which return each year, and Anemone corms, which I soak overnight before planting.

If we have a mild spell later in February, I like to give my shrubs a tidy and reduce any overgrown specimens in size. Grab a gardening book or go online and look up each plant. It's always helpful to do a little research before pruning. Snip at the wrong time or in the wrong place and your prized specimen may not flower as expected. Dogwood can be cut back to ground level but will happily regrow in the spring (I like to use the off-cuts as supports for other plants; waste not want not!). I also prune Winter Jasmine, Buddleja, Hydrangea and Rosa Rugosa. To make sure there is a good display of flowers later in the year, I take out ground level older shoots from my Rosa Rugosa, as well as half of its remaining shoots, which improves air circulation and reduces pest and dis-

ease problems. Clematis can also be pruned now but a word of warning - only groups 2 and 3! If you prune the early flowering group 1, which includes Armandii, Alpina and Montana, it will result in no flowers. Finally tidying Mahonia by removing any flowers and removing any long shoots is a good idea, as this will give it a nice shape.

I like to grow my own fruit and veg and start the year by tidying my, by now, rather tired looking strawberry plants. A disease that they are susceptible to is botrytis, so by removing dead and brown foliage you can reduce the risk of this infection. In allowing more air circulation, it also allows more light in, which in turn promotes new growth. If you can't wait and would like an early crop of fruit, you can cover these perennials with a cloche towards the end of this month. I also sow seeds of hardy plants indoors or under glass; I find both hardy beetroot, broad beans, radish, lettuce, rocket and peas fair pretty well in the cool temperatures of February.



Mahonia

Carey Tunstall



# Martin Page

## YOUR LOCAL TREE SURGEON

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1		2		3		4
5						
6						
7						

**1 Across:** A Valentine novel **1 Down:** Argument settler  
**2D:** Small work vehicle **3D:** Alternative name for radon  
**4D:** Wage makers **5A:** Comedian **6A:** Payback  
**8A:** Harem guards. *Paul Towers 2021*  
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		6	2		8
	2		3		6
9			1	3	
	3	4			
8		5		9	4
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