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More on page 4



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## Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the March edition of the Gazette. Is it the imagination or are things slowly moving towards a great release of pent up frustration?

Assuming the covid infection rate continues to fall, and the Government's roadmap hits all the right milestones, restrictions will start to be lifted from March 29th, with non essential retail opening from April 12th. Not pubs without gardens though. Damn...

Our contributors and advertisers have soldiered on throughout this year long nightmare and can now bring you the latest, slightly thicker, Gazette!

We find out about a local foodbank which has proved to be a vital lifeline for many, Shaftesbury School are in need of governors, there's free unemployment advice from Brighter Futures, and an 8 year old from West Gate School is sending something to the moon!

In this edition, Roger Blackmore rocks out, Helen Knott has her feet sanded down by a podiatrist, Carey Tunstall gets to grips with garden prep and there's updates from the local police and Project Hive.

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# COVID RESTRICTIONS

## SCAN THIS CODE FOR DETAILS



- 1: Stay at home except for specific reasons such as work, exercise or shopping
- 2: Limit your contact with other people but you can meet 1 person in a public space.
- 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.
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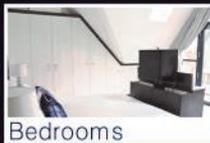
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# WOODGATE FOODBANK

Two hundred local households a week are benefitting from a foodbank set up during the early days of the coronavirus shut-down.

Woodgate Community Food (WCF) was born from the Covid-19 crisis and continues to grow, providing food and support in Leicester West, winning an award from the Leicestershire Champions Awards 2020 for 'Community Organisation' on the way.

One of the organisers, Abi Harrison, said: "Initially it was a popup operation based at my house as part of Mutual Aid efforts happening all over the city in the first lockdown. This continued across the first three months as a delivery service only, and as we developed and grew, we could see the need for more support in the wards where there was no existing foodbank.

"We cover people from Fosse Ward, Westcotes and Western Park, but Fosse and the Woodgate area is our primary location and user base.

"A group of volunteers working in grassroots mutual aid came together to discuss how we could create something more official and permanent."

A group of around 20 or so volunteers operate the phones, emails, website, socials, open sessions and deliveries. From collecting food to making parcels and doing drops, a diverse group of people make this happen. Food is bought from

Fareshare Trust and community donations are accepted. This has included churches, schools and temples over the course of the year. They are also supported by locals who donate money on a regular basis to help pay for bought in food.

They have worked to get support from some businesses like ASDA and Wonky Veg, but would be open to more help from local businesses. They also provide support by referring users to charity link, the councils and other agencies who can offer further support for their needs.

**Woodgate Community Food is located at Rally House - 125 Bonchurch Street, LE3 5EG and providing a Saturday only session 11am - 1pm. Search for them on Facebook or go to: [woodgatecommunityfood.org.uk](http://woodgatecommunityfood.org.uk)**



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# KNOTT'S LANDING

I find myself missing things that I never even knew I liked in lockdown. Going to the beautician was a horror show. I'd take my pale, hairy body into the luxuriously wallpapered shop and sit in the glamorous waiting room, my stomach sinking, as unfeasibly smooth, buffed, bronzed bodies emerge from the doors around me, pay for their 'work' and glide gracefully out the door.

The receptionist, behind her enormous desk, would give me the "Oh dear God how are we supposed to fix you" look. Her overly manicured eyebrows raised in horror that anyone as old and unkempt as I might dare to enter their hallowed halls. You feel sick. You feel like you want to run away, or perhaps, helpfully, a sink hole might open up and swallow you, the hot wax and the receptionist before you get to the point where you are face down on a plastic couch wondering whether or not you should have left your pants on.

But the desire to be pampered is strong and it led to my genius plan to get a pedicure.

You can't get a 'beauty treatment' for love nor money but by God you can get a podiatrist appointment. Let



me be the first to warn you, there is considerably less glamour involved in a podiatry appointment. Ushered in to a room in need of redecoration, I was seated in an enormous chair, complete with bifurcated footrest, and asked to place my feet in a bidet. After a few minutes, unseen hands pressed buttons and my chair rose into the heavens leaving me gasping for oxygen at altitude.

A lady with razor blades sat way below me shaving dead skin from my feet in intensely satisfying sheets.

In this new world, she couldn't ask me where I was going on holiday, or if I was going anywhere nice, so instead we chatted about how busy she had been and how I had corns. Altitude sickness setting in at this point, I wildly denied I could possibly have corns. "I'm far too young" I cried. She blithely told me "You are never too young for a corn! Especially if you are on your feet all day" and with a flick of her blade, lanced the offending skin extrusion. She then bought out a Dremel and my giddiness only increased as she ground my toenails down, leaving the dust of my dignity on the floor.

I will say my feet felt amazing after she had finished. I floated home on little clouds of softness and I may or may not have a follow up appointment, but the pedicure of my dreams it was not. Maybe I'll book one of those after lockdown.

*Helen Knott*



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# Leicester Rocks!

I was wondering recently why people have long been so fascinated by Stonehenge. It is universally recognised as an iconic feature of our chalk heartlands, but there are many different stones which, each in their own way, represent much of Britain's history and culture.

As a city of the Roman road system, it is hardly surprising that at least a couple of Roman milestones have been found around Leicester, though not necessarily in their original location.



The 20 tonne Humber Stone (above), for instance, off Thurmaston Lane, is of unknown origin, but may have been deposited there as the glaciers retreated over Leicestershire at the end of the Ice Age. Various guesses have been made about it and no firm conclusion has ever been

reached, but the granite composition is similar to that found in Mountsorrel. Surrounded by myth, it has had several names over the ages - including Hellstone. This could be a corruption of 'hela' the Saxon word for death which may explain the many local legends of loss and woe surrounding it.

Charnwood Forest has always been a fertile source for rocks and stones, which is hardly surprising since this area contains some of the oldest rocks in the British Isles. Amongst these is the Swanimote rock in Charnwood Forest near Whitwick. Like the Humber Stone this could be an 'erratic boulder' left behind by a glacier a millennia before it became a traditional forest gathering and tribal meeting place. It is possible it was a location for moots right up into Saxon times. It is thought that later on the Earls of Huntingdon held court at the site before transferring to Whitwick.

Having grown up in North Devon I have often been surprised at the similarities between the Tors of Dartmoor and the hills of Charnwood, particularly those with rocky landscapes such as Beacon Hill and the Warren Hills. Here are also more modern features, such as the Calvary at Mount St Bernard Abbey which regularly attracts visitors. And, of course, in Western Park, we have our own Centenary stone celebrating this beautiful public open space since 1899.

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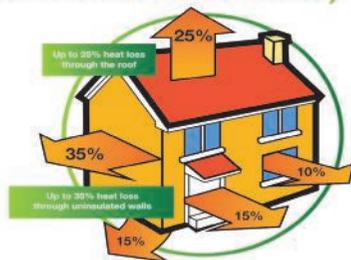
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## GOVERNORS FOR SHAFTESBURY

Whether you loved school or hated it, this could be a rewarding role for you.

School governors perform one of the most important voluntary roles in education.

They can be anyone from any walk of life; on the current team we have a jewellery designer, a fashion blogger, a banker, a vicar and an eco-warrior! Our longest serving governor joined with no apparent connection to the school only to discover his grandfather had attended Shaftesbury Junior in the 1930's.

If you enjoy asking questions and holding the headteacher to account (my personal favourite), this could well be to role for you! Before I joined the team, I imagined learning more about the education system and was keen to get involved in shaping the way children learn. It's been a real eye opener and taught me a lot about dealing with a budget on a large scale.

Shaftesbury Junior School is a lovely school to work with and lives up to its motto of, "We care, we share for the future we prepare."

The role involves a bit of reading once or twice a week, monthly-ish Zoom meetings at the moment, but visits have involved interviewing new staff, trying out school dinners, environmental demonstrations, cooking and gardening!

A standard term of office is 4 years but you can

leave at any time or indeed stay on as long as you enjoy it! I'm happy for anyone interested to call me on 07729383859 or Karl Stewart, the head, on 0116 2549203. **Alex Buchanan-Smith**



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## FOSSIE ROAD Little Library

We are based at 101 Fosse Road South and we run a community book box.

People can donate books if they want, but the idea is to allow people access to books following the closure of libraries during lockdown.

We advise people taking books to quarantine them for a couple of days and antibac their hands once they've chosen.

We occasionally have to vet what goes in there. Extreme right wing manifestos and religious texts have been known to creep in, but then so have hundreds of copies of 'Fifty Shades of Grey', an obvious best seller at the time, and a few Jackie Collins and Barbara Cartland novels, but everyone to their own.

The box is on our front fence panel. We try to vary what's in there, there's no donation box and no expectation to return or replace a book.

It all started last summer when we put out packs of crayons and cut-out dolls etc. for kids and we sometimes do a themed day, depending on how many of a certain type of book we have.

There is an Instagram and a Facebook page which is updated most days to show what's out there. Search for Fosse Little Library.

*Jane Towers*

## ASTRO LIZ HEADS TO THE MOON

7 year old West Gate school student Elizabeth Norman, better known as Astro Liz, continues to reach for the stars after the successful launch of her homemade rocket and the offer of a lifetime from NASA's lunar payload company.

Astro Liz was inspired by last year's DragonX flight, which was the first launch of a crewed commercial rocket to the ISS. Since then, she's spent the lock down improving her knowledge of space science whilst encouraging other young people to do the same through her YouTube channel Astro Liz's Lab. She became involved in NASA's 5 week virtual Mission to Mars programme, ahead of February's landing of the Perseverance Rover on the red planet and features in a campaign video for the Artemis mission which will see the first woman set foot on the moon in 2022.

But it was her launch of a homemade rocket and her request to payload company Astrobotic, to include one of her Liz's Lab stickers on the flight to the moon, that really impressed the US space specialists. So much so, that they said "Send us your sticker and we'll send it to the moon"

Elizabeth's mum, Jennifer, said: "It has been amazing watching Elizabeth's self-confidence and ambition grow. We were already excited about the launch later this year and now we will be watching with a whole different perspective. Elizabeth (in sticker form) is going to the moon!".



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## Free Unemployment Advice

Brighter Futures is a free advice service in Leicester, run by local charity Emmaus Leicestershire & Rutland offering socially distanced one-to-one appointments to help local unemployed people into employment, education and training.

Brighter Futures, based at 67B Hinckley Road, is funded by the European Social Fund and The National Lottery Community Fund.

If you're seeking work and are aged over 16, Brighter Futures can offer free assistance with accessing education, training, CV skills, job searching and interview preparation.

The service also helps with other related issues, as Brighter Futures Community Coach Supervisor Linda Farmer explains: "Although our clients are those who aren't currently in work, we don't just look at someone's employability skills. We can also assist with other things going on in their life, such as housing problems, debt, health and confidence issues. We have a team of qualified Community Coaches who get to know our clients' goals and aspirations. We make sure we offer the right advice and support, helping people take their next steps."



Leicester resident Nana Adoma-Mensah (Pictured above) was helped by Brighter Futures when she wished to start her own business: "I was out of work; I had the idea to open an African shop but I didn't know where to start. My Brighter Futures Coach supported me to apply for funding and helped me with my business plan. I was so excited when I opened my shop on Beatrice Road. I'd definitely recommend the team at Brighter Futures; they can give you the support you need, whatever you want to do next."

The Brighter Futures office is closed, but the charity hopes to reopen from April 12<sup>th</sup>.

**For more information email:**

[brighterfutures@emmauslandr.org](mailto:brighterfutures@emmauslandr.org) to register your interest. The team will be in touch to book a free, safe appointment as soon as reopening begins.

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WWCE's Project Hive is a fundraising venture, run by local residents to redevelop the old EcoHouse on Western Park into a Community Space.



## Update

It's been a long winter here at WWCE HQ, but there are finally green shoots to talk about. In line with the government's roadmap for reopening following Covid, we can start to pencil in community events for later in the year. We have really missed the buzz that getting the community together creates!



There have already been a few enquiries about whether The Western Park Scarecrow Trail will be back this year. We are pleased to confirm that this is planned for its regular slot at the start of September and we will be announcing the theme for entries soon, before registrations are opened.

In the meantime, following its success last year, we are launching the Parklife 2022 calendar competition. In 2020 our community came together online to create a full colour calendar made up of photographs taken in the area. The almost 100 entries were submitted to an independent panel of judges to choose their top dozen from. The finished article was so popular that we completely sold out! We will be doing the same again this year and we want your photographs of views, landmarks or everyday life in the Western Park area to populate the empty pages for the twelve months of next year. Maybe you can capture an amazing picture that shows the changing seasons? Your imagination is your only limit!

You can submit your photographs, preferably in landscape orientation, together with your name and age via email to [projecthive@outlook.co.uk](mailto:projecthive@outlook.co.uk). Find out more about WWCE and Project Hive at our website [www.org.uk](http://www.org.uk) or on **Facebook** @[wwceleicester](https://www.facebook.com/wwceleicester)

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Their team performed outstandingly throughout the extensive judging period, which focused on customer service levels.

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The team personally mystery shops every estate agent against a set of 25 criteria to obtain a balanced overview of their customer service levels. The judging criteria is both comprehensive and detailed exploring different mediums, scenarios and time periods to ensure that agents have been rigorously and fairly judged.

Robert McLean from The British Property Awards said 'Our awards have been specifically designed to be attainable to all agents, removing common barriers to entry, such as cost, to ensure that we have the most inclusive awards. Our awards have also been designed to remove any opportunity for bias or manipulation. If an agent has been attributed with one of our awards, it is simply down to the fantastic customer service levels that they have demonstrated across a prolonged period of time. Winning agents should be proud that their customer service levels provide a benchmark for their local, regional and national competition'.



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**March Police Update**

As snowdrops and daffodils transform the grass verges into seas of colour; as evenings become lighter and the weather warmer, the spring ushers in new optimism for the future. Covid related deaths are falling as the vaccination programme intensifies and it seems that we have finally turned a corner. The government roadmap out of lockdown marks June 21<sup>st</sup> as the proposed end of restrictions. However, these are goals, not certainties. Infection rates in Leicester remain stubbornly high. How we conduct ourselves over the coming weeks will determine whether the June date becomes reality, or just some fanciful notion. We cannot afford to be complacent. Your teams will be out and about enforcing the rules. For those selfish enough to believe that the law doesn't apply to them, expect a fine. We don't have to catch you in the act in order to issue a penalty notice. Where the evidence exists, by way of CCTV, you can expect a visit from us.

Scrutiny under CCTV will be a way of life for two offenders charged with the production of cannabis worth over £300,000 at the old Henley Road, Substation (see last edition). Both were sentenced to 20 months imprisonment and will be deported thereafter. Since then, your teams have closed other cannabis sites down through enforcement action. For a while, at least, we have stemmed the flow of power cuts in the area, which were a direct consequence of this activity. Your teams have also targeted vehicles which we suspect are ferrying the drugs.

For those who abandon their vehicles and flee on foot, the chase is frequently short lived, testament I guess, to the agility of your teams. In most cases arrests follow, drugs seized, money confiscated, and the cars crushed.

Money is the theme of our latest alert. Telephone scammers are forever changing their tactics. In the latest twist, the victim receives a call which is shown to be from 0116 222 2222 which is the main switchboard number for Leicestershire Police. This number is 'spoofed' or faked. A person claiming to be a police officer tells the victim that their details are being used to open a large number of bank accounts. They threaten the victim with arrest if they fail to cooperate and are told to transfer money to a specified bank account for 'safe keeping'. Police officers will never ask you to do this. Our advice is to hang up immediately.

The Food Banks remain busy and rely upon the generosity of the public and businesses for support. Nappies, UHT Milk, Sugar, Squash, or juice are in particular demand, but any donations are gratefully received. These places are lifelines to many in the community and my words of gratitude fail to do justice to those who provide help and support there.

**Sgt Ed Jones**

# CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



It's finally warm enough for the grass to start growing again, meaning we can get our mowers out! I find it easier to start by neatening and trimming the edges and then giving the lawn a cut later in the day when the sun has dried it out a little and any frost has gone. The first cut should be on the highest setting and you can reduce the height with each subsequent cut, which helps to reduce moss and weed growth. Follow this by fertilising your lawn and by the summer you should have a stunning patch of green to sit on and entertain friends.

There are plenty of jobs to be getting on with to tidy up your plants and prepare them for the coming seasons. I start with borders, hoeing, removing weeds and mulching with garden compost. Mulching helps create a barrier against weed growth, keeps the soil moist and provides plants with nutrients. Mulching materials can include leaf mould, compost, manure and bark chippings. Most perennials will benefit from division every two to three years, which helps to maintain health and vigour and provides you with more plants. These plants can be planted elsewhere in the garden or gifted

to friends and family. Once this is done I like to fertilise flowerbeds, roses, shrubs and hedges. Remember however that ericaceous shrubs such as rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias need an ericaceous fertiliser as they are acid loving.

You can begin hoeing vegetable beds as the weather warms up too. Now is a good time to plant those chitted potatoes in trenches, as well as onions and shallots. Not all fruit and veg is ready for outdoor weather just yet though, so in the meantime I sow tomatoes, chillies, peppers and aubergines in pots indoors ready to move outside when the temperature is higher. Young herbs can be planted in containers outside. It's a good idea to refresh containers, if not repotting them, by top-dressing - this means removing the top 5cm of compost and replacing with fresh nutrient rich compost.

As ever please keep feeding the birds especially as the mating season approaches.

Carey Tunstall





# Martin Page

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1				2		3
4		5				
6						
7						

**1 Across:** March hare **1 Down:** Like a song **2D:** Surry city **3D:** Spring cleaning cloths **4A:** Similar to 1 across **5D:** Children's elephant story **6A:** A brassica **7A:** Wait secretly.

Paul Towers 2021

Answers at [w:westernparkgazette.co.uk](http://w:westernparkgazette.co.uk)

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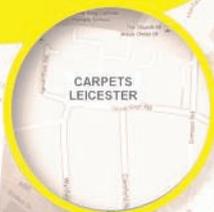
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