



RIVER OF BEER KEEPS CHARITY AFLOAT



More on page 4

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Hello From The Editor

Hello and welcome to the January edition of the Western Park Gazette.

We said goodbye to 2025 and welcomed in the New Year with, once again, the unfounded optimism that the world will be a better place. News Flash: It isn't.

In our little corner of the universe we'll concentrate on the local events and the news that we can interact with, maybe even change but certainly comment on.

In this issue, the Western Park Beer Festival folk handed over a £6000 cheque to the Baldwin Trust. This was raised by all the local people who got gently trolleyed at last year's beer festival. Big changes are coming to how our domestic waste is collected, The Leicester Comedy Festival returns, we have the latest policing update, Carey Tunstall has advice on how to keep plants safe during very cold weather and Helen Knott becomes a shield-maiden.

And why not keep the little grey cells occupied with the Word Wanger and sudoku on the back page?

So, Happy New Year and keep it clenched!

You'll find us on Facebook, X and now Bluesky.

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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.

Fat Thursday (Tlusty Czwartek): 12 Feb, 3-5pm. St Anne's Hall. Free Entry & Polish Cakes!

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.

Leic Comedy Fest: 4-22 Feb. comedy-festival.co.uk

@ Metal Monocle: Dirty Little Secrets, 7 Feb. Daisy Cutter, 13 Feb. Last Bastion + Support, 14 Feb.

@ The International: Whitesnake UK 6 Feb. Stipe: REM Trib 7 Feb. Ain't No Stoppin' (Funk) 14 Feb.

@ De Mont Hall: Punk Off: 3 Feb. Interview With Stephen Fry 8 Feb. UK Pun Championships: 9 Feb.

@ Curve: Murder She Didn't Write: 5-7 Feb. Legally Blonde (Musical): 7-12 Feb. Dear Zoo: 18-21 Feb.

@ Y Theatre: Leic Comedy Fest: 4-22 Feb,

@ Little Theatre: Dire Straits UK: 1 Feb. Jack Rhodes (Magic): 5 Feb. The Queen Story: 7 Feb

@ 02 Academy: Ocean Colour Scene, 26 Feb. The Phonics + A Band Called Malice, 27 Feb.

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RIVER OF BEER KEEPS CHARITY AFLOAT

Western Park area residents have helped convert hundreds of pints into thousands of pounds for charity.

The 2025 Western Park Beer Festival (WPBF) in August raised £8,000 for local good causes - and a cheque for £6,000 was recently handed over to The Baldwin Trust.



A further £2,000 was donated to two other worthy charities - £1,000 each - the Bodie Hodges Foundation and Voluntary Action Leicestershire. The Baldwin Trust is a Leicestershire charity, run by local volunteers, providing narrowboat cruises. Its mission is to reach members of our community that may experience loneliness and isolation, due to

physical, mental or economic reasons.

During the cheque presentation, volunteers from the charity offered representatives from the WPBF a tour of one of their boats and explained how the money will make a huge difference towards their never-ending maintenance costs.

Richard Jayes, chair of The Baldwin Trust, said: "We are extremely delighted to receive the funding. It will go a long way to helping with the well-being of the people of Leicestershire by offering them a relaxing trip."

The charity's two boats, which cater for all disabilities, run seven days a week during season, April to October, accommodating about 2,000 people during that time.

WPBF Chair David McAuley said: "We are delighted that money raised from the festival has gone to such a worthwhile charity.

"They were incredibly thankful - and we want to pass their thanks onto you, the generous people of Western Park, who support our events and help raise the money."

To find out more about The Baldwin Trust visit **baldwintrust.co.uk**

Plans for next year's WPBF are already underway - if you wish to sponsor a beer, a bar or be a main festival sponsor, **westernparkbeerfestival.org/sponsorship** and follow 'Western Park Beer Festival' on Facebook for updates.

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LESS WASTE MORE BINS

A huge shake-up in how Leicester's household waste and recycling will be collected this year is on the way.

The city council will introduce major changes to its recycling and waste collection over the next three years following new government legislation.

The first local change is the introduction of weekly food waste collections as part of the government's Simpler Recycling waste reforms.

All homes will get an indoor kitchen caddy to collect food waste, and a separate outdoor food waste bin. Smaller than the current black wheelie bins, it is intended to be put out for collection every week.

The council's existing waste and recycling contract comes to an end in May 2028, but the finer details for the roll out of the new weekly food waste collection service are still being worked on.

Alongside changes, as part of the national waste reforms, the city is looking to alter the way it collects wheelie bin waste and general mixed recycling. The authority plans to collect non-recyclable wheelie bin waste and household recycling on



alternate weeks. For most homes in the city, the existing orange bag system will be replaced by a single blue wheelie bin for mixed recycling.

Specific arrangements for flats, where communal waste collection points are sited, will stay in place.

Food waste accounts for around 40 per cent of wheelie bin contents in the city. The new weekly food waste collections, means the amount of waste put into black bins will be significantly reduced so those bins won't need to be emptied as often.

The introduction of blue bins for recycling should make it easier for households to store mixed recyclables like glass, plastic, tins, cardboard and paper while reducing mess on the streets and removing the need to reorder bags.

It is planned that the fortnightly garden waste collection service for subscribers, which runs between March and November, will continue without change.

Deputy city mayor Cllr Elly Cutkelvin, said: "We're having to make big changes to how our waste and recycling services will work in future.... The Government has introduced new rules designed to increase national recycling rates. This includes the requirement to introduce new weekly food waste collections from next year (2026) for all councils.

"The changes will be introduced over the next three years, giving people plenty of time to adapt."

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IT'S A LAUGH A MINUTE!

This year's Leicester Comedy Festival returns in February with over 700 shows in large and small venues across the city - and it's come a long way since it started in 1994.

De Montfort University student Geoff Rowe proposed a project to his lecturers to set up and run a comedy festival for Leicester. He called up Tony Slattery, Harry Hill and Matt Lucas for the first Leicester Comedy Festival in 1994, with 40 events at 23 venues for 5,000 tickets.

The festival has steadily grown over the last 32 years to be one of the largest comedy festivals in the world attracting top talent and up-and-coming acts alike.

It was not all plain sailing. The festival was one of the last live national festivals in 2020 before the pandemic hit and the lockdown process began. The following year, right through the third national lockdown, the festival continued online, yet still managed to sell 20,000 tickets.

The Leicester Comedy Festival and the UK Kids' Comedy Festival is run by registered charity Big



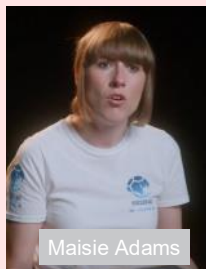
Difference Company. All surpluses made through the events are invested back into the festival and used to support new comedy talent as well as providing opportunities for young people to learn about comedy, address health inequalities and improve people's well-being.

The festival also incorporates comedy film, poetry & spoken word, comic theatre, photographic and art exhibitions, and children's shows.

The Leicester Comedy Festival continues to bring some of the biggest names to the city and county. This year is no exception, with the likes of Maisie Adams, Ahir Shah, Sophie Duker, Sara Pascoe, Chris McCausland, Darren Harriott and Olga Koch. There will also be the chance to see Stephen Fry in conversation with festival founder Geoff Rowe at De Montfort Hall.

The festival runs from 4th to 22nd of February and for a full programme of events visit.

www.comedy-festival.co.uk



Maisie Adams



Ahir Shah

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KN&TT'S LANDING

I may have unleashed my inner hippie recently now the shackles of poverty that existed through my 20s are gone. It used to be I would go to Glastonbury and look at all the stuff on sale and leave it there because I couldn't afford it. Things have changed.

This weekend I went into a shop there called Wyrd Raven and bought a Viking tunic. It's not a shop I've been in and I can't say I have been particularly interested in Viking things before. I was more of your wafting about in tie-dye with flowers in her hair kind of a hippie. It's a look I never managed to fully pull off as I was not insubstantial enough for the most part. But now as a grown-up, the Viking thing has a certain appeal. For a start, the tunic is sensible. It's made of woollen felt it is lovely and warm. It covers your backside. It also boasts ridiculous hood which I love. There is squiggly embroidery on it in the Viking style.

The longer I stayed in the shop, the more drawn in I got! I am seriously considering a fur lined cloak and the mead looked good. The real frisson of excitement was



reserved for the axes! It would appear I have gone from dreamy child of flower power to axe wielding, mead drinking, Viking wench! Maybe this Viking has always been inside me struggling to get out or perhaps women have a certain age have more in common with rage filled shield-maiden than Phoebe from Friends!

Whatever is going on it has been enabled by me having actual adult money. Now, instead of leaving the shop with a wan smile and a knot of disappointment in my stomach, I leave with carrier bags full of tunic, necklaces and the vision of me wielding an axe. I could get used to Adulting.

HN



LETTER BOX

In 2025 the 5th Ainsdale Rd Christmas foodbank collection expanded to include Oakthorpe Av, Dorchester Rd and Kingswood Av.

The response was overwhelming. In addition to the food and hygiene necessities, a huge amount of Christmas treats and goodies were collected. This was delivered to the Foodbank at the Alice Hawkins Community Project on the 15th of December. Eve and the team at the Foodbank were extremely grateful for our donation.

Every contribution helps and we would like to thank everyone for their kindness and generosity, we hope you enjoy a very Happy and healthy 2026.

JW



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CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



January can feel like a quiet month in the garden, but there is actually plenty to do if you wrap up warm and take things at a gentle pace. It's a time for care, preparation and protection, setting everything up for a strong start once spring arrives.

One of the most important jobs in January is keeping an eye on frost. Cold snaps can do real damage, especially to young plants and anything that's only marginally hardy.

Check that fleece, cloches and cold frames are still securely in place after windy weather, and add extra layers if temperatures are forecast to drop sharply. Frost shields are relatively inexpensive and are available online.

Pots are particularly vulnerable, so move them against a wall or into a greenhouse or shed if you can. Raising containers slightly off the ground also helps prevent roots from sitting in frozen compost. While growth is slow, this is a good time for general tidying. Remove fallen leaves from lawns and



borders so they don't smother plants or encourage disease. If the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged, you can lightly prune apple and pear trees, as well as currant bushes, focusing on removing dead or crossing branches. Always stop if conditions turn icy, as working frozen plants can cause damage.

January and early February are also ideal for checking stored produce. Look over onions, potatoes and apples regularly and remove anything that's starting to rot before it affects the rest. In the vegetable garden, winter brassicas may still be producing, and hardy crops like leeks and parsnips can be harvested as needed, as long as the soil isn't frozen solid.

Don't forget your soil during this quieter period. If weather allows, spreading well-rotted manure or compost over empty beds will protect the surface and improve structure in time for spring planting. There's no need to dig it in as worms and weather will do much of the work for you.

Finally, the start of the year is a good time for planning. On cold and chilly days, why not sit down with a notebook and dream a little? Order seeds, sketch out new planting ideas and make a list of jobs for the months ahead. Even when the garden looks asleep, these small January tasks make a big difference later on.

Happy gardening!

Carey Tunstall

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Jan Police Update

Detectives are appealing for anyone who has information following an attack on two men in Castle Garden's around midnight on Sunday 18th of January.

Officers arrived as the two were being treated after reporting they were assaulted and attacked with a metal pole.

Police are keen to speak to anyone who was in and around the area of the park at that time.

Call 101 – quoting crime reference 26*32801.

Do you recognise either of these watches which were stolen during a burglary in Wyngate Drive on 19 November. A passport and cash were also taken during the incident.

Anyone who recognises them, has seen or been offered them for sale, is asked to get in touch and anyone else who has any information about the incident is asked to come forward.

You can pass on do this online, quoting reference 25*679568 or call 101.



The dangerous and illegal use of vehicles around the Western Ward continue to be reported and raised as concerns by residents notably at ward meetings. Officers are now aiming to ensure this bad behaviour is targeted.

Police are aware of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in an area of New Parks which is affecting the daily lives of residents and nearby businesses. An address has been identified and options to change the behaviour of the resident are ongoing.

Retail crime continues to be a problem. The West Leicester Safer Streets Team has been carrying out arrest attempts for those wanted on warrant, as well as conducting targeted patrols in relation to a prolific shoplifter on Narborough Road.

On 18th January, a man wanted for shop theft was arrested in possession of a bag stuffed with stolen items. He was charged with 4 shop thefts and 2 breached of a protection order. Earlier in January, due to the continued work of the team and response officers, a man previously convicted of two shop thefts and two breaches of a Criminal Behaviour Order at Beaumont Shopping Centre was sentenced to 12 month's imprisonment.

What Happens to Our Eyes as We Age?

Just like the rest of our body, our eyes change over time. These gradual shifts are a natural part of ageing, but understanding them can help us protect our vision and stay confident at every stage of life.

From around our forties, many people begin to notice that reading small print requires more effort or that bright sunlight seems harsher than it used to. This is often due to the lens inside the eye becoming less flexible – a condition known as presbyopia. It makes it harder to focus on near objects, which is why reading glasses or varifocals often become part of everyday life.

As we move into our fifties and sixties, maintaining eye health becomes even more important. Common age-related conditions such as cataracts, dry eyes, and glaucoma tend to appear more frequently. Cataracts cause cloudiness in the lens, while dry eyes may leave vision feeling gritty or tired. Glaucoma, sometimes called “the silent thief of sight”, can gradually damage the optic nerve if not detected early – regular eye examinations are key to finding the condition as early as possible so preventing permanent loss.

Later in life, the focus turns to the macula, the part of the retina responsible for sharp central vision. Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) can make reading and recognising faces more difficult, but a healthy lifestyle helps reduce risk.



ALAN BELLAMY

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

There's much we can do to preserve our eyesight as we grow older. Eating a diet rich in leafy greens, berries and oily fish provides the eyes with vital antioxidants and omega-3s that help protect delicate retinal tissue. Wearing sunglasses throughout the year – even on overcast days – guards against the harmful effects of ultraviolet light, which can accelerate age-related changes in the eyes. Taking regular breaks from screens, especially during long working hours, helps prevent eye strain and dryness. Staying hydrated, exercising regularly, managing blood pressure, and avoiding smoking all support healthy circulation, which in turn keeps the eyes supplied with oxygen and nutrients. Even small, consistent habits can make a meaningful difference to how well we see in later life.

Although changes to vision are inevitable, most are entirely manageable with awareness and routine care. With healthy habits and routine check-ups, it's possible to enjoy clear, comfortable vision – and to keep seeing life's details beautifully – at every age.

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Can You Solve The Word Wang? Hidden in the above box are the following words:
Baileys, Ivy, Toast, Champaign, Robin, Warm, Freeze, Ice Whisky, Cosy, Holly.

Answers: westernparkgazette.co.uk © Paul Towers

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

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