



# LIGHT UP LEICESTER



*More on Page 3*

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# Hello From The Editor

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

This month we headed off, with a camera, to the luminous delights of the Light Up Leicester Festival. It proved extremely popular, but if you missed it, put it in your thoughts for next year, because it was a cleverly orchestrated, colourful experience and different every night. Visit our Facebook page for a quick video of the opening day.

In our regular features, Helen Knott returns! She attempted to wean herself off Netflix and go back to traditional telly. Needless to say that wasn't a success.

If you have a garden, it must now be raking and sowing time, so Carey Tunstall has some seasonal green fingered advice. There's the latest policing update which focuses on some recent successes they've had in raiding cannabis farms across West Leicester. And there was/are a lot of them tucked away in terraces.

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](http://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.

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

**Spring Fair:** 29 March. St Anne's Hall. 10-1.30pm

**@ De Montfort Hall: Bing's Birthday 1 Apr.** This is Elvis: 4 Apr. Paul Smith - Pablo 9/10 April.

**@ Curve: Room on the Broom 3-5 Apr. Murial's Wedding The Musical: 10 Apr - 10 May.**

**@ Little Theatre: 1-5 Apr. Macbeth 16 Apr-3 May. Bobby Davro 7 May.**

**@ Y Theatre: Antiques & A Little Bit of Nonsense 1 Apr. Macbeth/Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde 7-9 April.**

**@ Guildhall: Free Guided Tours: 1,6,9, 12, 19, 28 Apr. 11.30am, 1pm, 2.30pm. Candlelight A Tribute To Coldplay 5 April 7.30pm, 10 May 5.30pm.**

**@ 02 Academy: Blue Tones 3 Apr. Rhythm of The 90's 4 Apr. Guns 2 Roses 5 April.**

**@ The International: BeMused 5 Apr. Spandeskue Ballet 12 Apr. The Rollin' Stoned 12 Apr. (Tributes)**

**@ Metal Monocle: Memorial Charity Day. 20th April @ Sue Townsend Th: Matilda Jr (Musical) 25/26 Apr.**

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# LIGHT UP LEICESTER

The clock tower and Jubilee Square became the centre points of the midland's biggest light festival earlier in March

Light Up Leicester debuted in 2020 and restarted after Covid in 2022, so organisers are hoping to top the 10,000 visitors who attended the last festival. And it looks like they may have done just that.

Visitors had four nights to enjoy some spectacular free light installations and interactive displays starting with a colourful evening parade on Wednesday and culminating in giant inflatable horses prancing down New Walk on Saturday.

An illuminated bicycle parade, pop-up performances, street food, night market and fun fair all added to the festival atmosphere. The digital light show of Leicester's history projected onto the Cathedral walls was a particularly effective and very popular centrepiece.

Even if the weather was a little chilly, it did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the thousands of people milling around Jubilee Square and Hummerstone Gate enjoying the rides and displays.

Light Up Leicester is produced by the city council, BID Leicester, Leicester Cathedral and Art Reach with funding from Arts Council England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Global Streets, PPL PRS and the Highcross. *RP*



## Westcotes Library

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**Tuesday** 10am-7pm

**Wednesday** 10am-7pm

**Thursday** 10am-5pm

**Friday** 10am-5pm

**Saturday** 10am-4pm

**Sunday** 12pm-4pm

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Christmas may be long gone, and the next one will be here before we know it, but unfortunately last time, we missed out a letter about local donations to the Woodgate Community Food Bank.



## LETTER BOX

The Ainsdale Road area residents once again generously donated to the Woodgate Community Christmas foodbank, now in the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

The area we have collected, the number of people and the size of the donation increases every year. We collected a huge quantity of staple foodstuffs and toiletries, but we also had so many kind donations of biscuits, chocolates and other Christmas treats. We delivered our collection to the foodbank on the 19<sup>th</sup> of December to allow it to be distributed in time for Christmas.

Thanks to Oliver, particularly with flyers, Julie, Nicola and Tarja for kindly housing collection crates, John Langley at the foodbank for staying late to accept our delivery.

Most of all, huge thanks to all the kind and caring residents, for giving so generously once again.

Info: [www.woodgatecommunityfood.org.uk](http://www.woodgatecommunityfood.org.uk)

Jason Wilson



## MOSQUE PLAN REFUSED

Plans to build a mosque on Mostyn Street, near the corner to Hinckley Road have been refused.

Plans submitted by the Help Foundation to demolish the current building and replace it with a large two story mosque were knocked back by planning officers following a local consultation.

The construction of a two-storey mosque and school were also refused in February 2023.

Objections to the scheme included the effect on off-road parking for nearby residents and increased traffic on narrow streets.

## HUGE COUNCIL TAX INCREASE

Council tax payers in Leicester are having to dig even deeper from April as a 4.9% rise hits us in the wallet.

This is the highest possible increase and has been put down to city and county councils struggling to deliver services despite £millions in expected cuts.

Criticism that the Leicester City Council is not focusing on priorities but is instead spending money on projects like the Jewry Wall Museum have been firmly rejected by City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby.

Failure to balance the books could result in Leicester Council joining Nottingham and Birmingham by declaring a Section 114 notice which means that the city would become technically bankrupt.

**UK Government's Home Energy Efficiency Scheme – ECO4**

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A new Government scheme is available to households with an old “Non-Condensing” boiler. The manufacture of these Non-Condensing boilers was stopped in 2005 as they are very inefficient and will be costing you £100s a year in wasted energy, also parts for Non-condensing boilers are becoming increasingly unavailable.

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# KNOTT'S LANDING

I am feeling a hundred gazillion years old right now because I just sat down and watched terrestrial free to air television for the first time in ages. With all the innovations in streaming and life just being busy, the very idea of waiting for someone to tell me when I can watch the show I want to see - now seems insane.

I want it when I want it! Not at 9pm because that's a scheduled break or the watershed. I'm tired. I want to get to bed early. Why should I wait to see Have I got News for You on a Friday? I'm lucky if I'm still conscious at 9pm. I cannot count the times I've been woken up by the 10 o'clock news having set out to watch something that starts at 9pm. I'm a product of the capitalist system, and I want to consume on my own avaricious terms darn it!



And yet there are times when I don't want to have to make a choice. I just want it to flow over me like a stream of consciousness or a giant chocolate orange and brandy gateau. Great things, not just cake, have been discovered that way. I would never have known about The Big Bang Theory, Professor Brian Cox or Married At First Sight Australia without just letting the TV play to itself in the corner.

Black and white films used to be a soundtrack to a Saturday morning and there are some amazing performances and stories in those films. Stories I would never have picked up on were it not for the gogglebox humming away in the corner of the room. It's worrying that kids will never accidentally come across a movie like Whiskey Galore, the Titfield Thunderbolt or A Brief Encounter unless they drift across Talking Pictures on channel 82. They play everything from elderly, obscure black and white movies and tv shows to Thunderbirds, Rumpole of the Bailey and Chuck Norris films. Can these compete with the short attention span needed for 30 second clips of a cat punching a dog? Probably not even Chuck Norris can do that, so I find myself in the position of being simultaneously angry with terrestrial television and angry at the internet streamers.

I guess that's state normal then.

*Helen Knott*

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# CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



**Temperatures have crept up and the sun has emerged from its slumber.** It's still a bit chilly though, but I'm ready for it! As spring takes hold, March and early April are busy and exciting times in our gardens. With longer days and milder temperatures, there's plenty to do to prepare for the growing season ahead.

One of the first tasks is tidying up after winter. Clear away any dead leaves, cut back perennials that have been left over from winter and prune shrubs such as roses to encourage healthy growth. Early-flowering shrubs like forsythia can be pruned once they have finished blooming. Weeds also start to appear, so tackling them now will save effort later in the season.



March is an ideal time to start sowing seeds. Hardy annuals such as poppies and cornflowers can be sown directly outdoors, while tender plants like tomatoes and peppers should be started indoors in seed trays. If the soil is warm enough,

early vegetables such as carrots, lettuce, and peas can be sown. It's also a good time to chit potatoes by placing seed potatoes in a light, cool place to encourage strong shoots before planting them out in a few weeks.

Lawns begin to grow again in March, so giving them some attention now will pay off later. Raking out moss and dead grass, aerating compacted areas, and applying a spring lawn feed will encourage healthy new growth. The first cut of the year should be done with the mower on a high setting to avoid stressing the grass.

Spring-flowering bulbs such as daffodils and crocuses bring much needed colour to the garden, and once they have finished flowering, deadheading will help direct energy back into the bulbs for next year. This is also a great time to plant summer-flowering bulbs like lilies and gladioli for a vibrant display later in the year.

Wildlife is becoming more active, so providing suitable food and fresh water for birds will support them through the breeding season. Cleaning out bird boxes before new occupants arrive is also a good idea.

With a little effort now, the garden will be set for a beautiful and productive year ahead. March is a time of renewal, and by getting to work, we can make the most of the coming season. Happy gardening!

**Carey Tunstall**

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# Martin Page

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## March Police Update

**A 14-year-old boy has been sentenced after pleading guilty to sexually assaulting women in Newfoundpool last year.**

The boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons due to his age, was sentenced after pleading guilty to sexually assaulting two women and other serious offences including the use of a knife in public and attempted robbery.

The youth, who was 13 years old at the time of the offences, was given a three year and six months custodial sentence at a Young Offender Institute when he was sentenced at Leicester Crown Court on 4th March.

A man has been jailed for a minimum of 26 years after he was found guilty for his part in the death of Junior Osborne on Narborough Road.

Following a trial at Leicester Crown Court, Clifford Alvarez was found guilty of murder and possession of an offensive weapon. He joins four others who were convicted of manslaughter and Nero McLean who was convicted of murder.

Hundreds of cannabis plants with a value of nearly £500,000 were seized last month by officers in West Leicester as part of a nationwide crackdown.

Leicestershire Police took part in Operation Mille along with forces from across the UK which was aimed at locating cannabis grows and arresting those behind them.

Following on from previous enforcement in 2023, this operation targeted addresses in Newfoundpool. It included seven warrants executed under Section 8 or Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act which netted more than 450 plants.

Warrants were executed in Tudor Road, Pool Road, Oban Street, Vaughan Street, Ruby Street and Hawthorne Street. Additionally, four operational cannabis grows were dismantled, growing equipment, was seized along with more than £1,000 in cash. One 19 year old man, was arrested and charged in connection with the cultivation of cannabis. Four prohibition orders were issued against dangerous properties, which will require remedial reconstruction and repair work before being licenced for re-letting and, very dangerously, four electricity meters had been bypassed but were later repaired and made safe.

Earlier in March, officers, together with Leicester City Council, secured a 3 month closure order at an address on Noble Street. This came following reports that the location was being used for drug abuse, criminal damage and associated anti-social/nuisance behaviour.

There has been an overall reduction in issues, with only one breach of the order being committed. An individual responsible for this breach was identified, arrested and charged.

## THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE AIR

Every year, at around this time I see a steady stream of clients whose eyes are driving them nuts! First tree, then grass and plant pollens are released into the air. They are completely harmless but an unlucky 20% of us experience a reaction to them which we call hay fever. This reaction is intended to protect the body from attack by harmful things like viruses or bacteria. Unfortunately, sometimes the body gets it a bit wrong!

The key symptoms of Hay fever are both eyes itching and watering; the conjunctiva (the transparent membrane that covers the white of the eye) may be swollen and it will be pink to some degree. The eyelids may be slightly puffy, too.

**CAN IT BE AVOIDED?** You can try to dodge exposure to the airborne pollen by staying indoors if possible. Wear close fitting "wrap-around" type sunglasses, fit pollen filters in your car and use the recycle air feature of the car's aircon. Do not rub your eyes – this encourages the inflammatory cells to break down and increases the irritation.

**AND IF THAT DOESN'T WORK?** Several types of eye drops are available without prescription from a pharmacist. The most common one is Opticrom. These work by stopping inflammatory cells from reacting to the pollen.

Unfortunately, it takes around a fortnight to build up its effectiveness, so you need to start using the drops before the Hay fever season starts and keep using them throughout the season.

If your eyes are already streaming, then there are over the counter drops which will help such as Otrivine Antistin. These combine an antihistamine with a vasoconstrictor to reduce the swelling and block the inflammatory chemicals. They work quickly BUT can only be used for seven days.

**CONCLUSION:** Hay fever can be a real nightmare at this time of the year but, with a little forward planning, we can avoid the worst effects. We know roughly when the pollens are going to fly so make a note on the calendar to start with the Opticrom two weeks before and you've got a head start. Further, take any action you can to avoid exposure and you should be set to enjoy the spring.



*Sponsored article by Alan Bellamy from Bellamy Eyecare 156 Fosse Road North*

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**1 Across:** Feels daft **1 Down:** Trivia **2D:** Warming breakfast **3D:** Beautify **4D:** Saucy bean **5A:** Important trapeze artist **6A:** Deep sea **7A:** Use to water down.

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

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