

## PUMPKIN TO TALK ABOUT!



*Centre Pages: Halloween Takes Over The West End*



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## Hello From The Editor

**Welcome to the November edition of the Gazette.**

In this issue, the traditional Halloween Pumpkin Race took place on Western Park. The spookiness seemed a little muted this year but kids still successfully went trick or treating, hauling sacks of sweet goodies home. The annual Pumpkin Roll took place on Western Park but, spook central was as always the Crows Nest, hotly followed by Braunstone Gate. See the pictures on the centre pages for proof!

In other news, the council want your views on clamping down on HMOs and also on plans to create a conservation area around Fosse recreation ground. Local author Susan Barton has a new book out about the history of West Leicester's parks, Helen Knott suffers floppy arms syndrome after having her covid booster and flu shots and we'll find out about Leicester's National Gas Museum.

Shauna Ashton from the Fosse policing team, has their update and Carey Tunstall has the month's gardening advice and the ever present Braintazing sudoku and crossword lurk on the inside pack page.

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# Events Diary

**Free Thurs Club:** 2pm. **Meet & Eat:** Weds 5pm. Robert Hall, 147 Narborough Rd.

**Hall @ St Anne's, Letchworth Rd:** Knit & Natter: 1.30pm, 4th Tues. **Weds Club:** 2.30pm, 1st Weds.

**Musical Memory Box:** 1st & 3rd Tues 10.15am

**Pram Club:** Weds 9.30-11.00am. **Fri Coffee**

**Morns:** 10.00am. **Free Tea/Coffee @ Community Hub:** Weds, 2-4pm.

**Family Friends:** Term time 4th Mon. St Paul's & St Augustine's Centre, Kirby Rd. 2nd Sat at New Parks Methodist Ch. Contact Sarah on 07465 431 585.

**Free drop-in Coffee Morns:** Tues. 10-12 noon. St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Glenfield Rd East.

**Perfectly Edible UK's** Community Shop. Fri & Sat. Fri 11-2/3pm. West End Centre, Andrewes Street.

**Xmas Craft Fayre:** 27-28th Nov. 11-4.30. Guildhall.

**Curve:** Festival of Choirs X - 27 Nov. **The Smeds**

**& The Smoos** - 1st-31st Dec. **A Chorus Line** -3-rd 31st Dec. **Rocky Horror Show** - 10th-15th Jan.

**@DM Hall:** John Bishop -24 Nov, Jools Holland -25 Nov, Stereophonics - 26 Nov, Rick Wakeman - 1st Dec. **One Night of Queen** - 2nd Dec.

**Little Theatre:** Cinderella - 10th Dec-2 Jan.

**Y Theatre:** Suspiciously Cheap - 2 Dec. **Bon Jovi Experience** - 3rd Dec, **Two Mr P's** - 4th Dec.

**Snowman & The Snowdog:** Newark Houses Museum until 20 Feb.

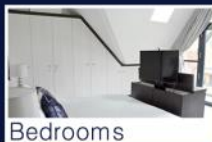
**Upstairs@ The Western:** Improv-24th Nov, **Brazen-** 26th Nov, **Crafternoon & Claw & Order** 4th Dec,

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# PUMPKIN TO TALK ABOUT

On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> October the Western Ward Community Enterprise roused the Western Park Pumpkin Roll from Covid induced slumber for its fourth outing and thankfully, this year, the weather was on our side. If you have never come along to this particularly seasonal event before, where have you been?!



Over 50 children, adults and spectators joined in the fun as competitors brought along their pumpkins, most of which had been beautifully decorated, to the grassy area behind the boules club.

After registration and taking the short walk to the

top of the "Official Rolling Hill", groups of young and old took turns launching their prize squashes downhill, chasing them as fast as possible to the bottom.

There was plenty of delicious cake and hot drinks available to refuel and warm up the rollers as they continued dashing up and down the hill.



There were some wonderfully spooky Halloween fancy dress costumes adding to the fun and with some highly decorated pumpkins on display. It helped us raise a fantastic £271 towards Project Hive.

To keep up to date with our plans visit [projecthive.org.uk](http://projecthive.org.uk) or on Facebook at [wwwceleicester](https://www.facebook.com/wwwceleicester)  
**Kristian Naylor**

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# KNOTT'S LANDING

**Ms Knott deeply regrets she's unable to luncheon today... or dine, but especially party...** I'd be no use at a party right now. If someone yelled at me to "Put your hands in the air like you just don't care!" I couldn't do it. You will be disappointed. The night will fall flat.

You see, I'm currently incapacitated in the arm department. My upper limbs are unusable. My forelimbs are fallow. They don't work. They are inert, inoperative. Full of latent potential.

The problem is that I have recently been vaccinated to within an inch of my life. Women in scrubs wearing face masks advanced on me with needles, looked sternly at me and announced, "sharp scratch!". I went willingly knowing that I would bask in the glow of my vaccinated status. I was smug that I was not going to let a disease get the better of me if there's a safe and effective prophylactic available. I booked the COVID booster vaccination first when I got a text saying it was availa-



ble. Then I got a message from my surgery to say they had flu vaccines available. These appointments were within 3 days of each other. In hindsight this may have been a mistake.

My COVID arm was sore first, then the flu shot arm started to ache, then I woke up and I couldn't get my arms up past elbow height without it hurting like hell. This is a limiting condition. You cannot reach the teabags when you can't lift your arms above shoulder height. You could probably manage if it was just that but if you are expected to go out and socialise then there are real problems. Ladies are expected to dress up at this time of year. I can't reach my hair to wash it. I can't put my bra on properly and those earrings are definitely not going in. This is sub-optimal for going out.

I tell you this as a warning. Consider me the canary in the coal mine for your festive shenanigans. Do not book your vaccinations too close together or you too could be trapped in your house, unable to lift your arm to reach the lock on the front door. Leave at least a week between jabs. Thank me in the new year.

*Helen Knott*

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Gas, as a major power source, is still very much with us, but how long will it be before it and our traditional boilers and fires are confined to Leicester's National Gas Museum? 2050, if the Net Zero target is met.

Until then, we have 29 years to visit the world's largest and most significant gas history collection, which can be found in the Grade 2 listed gatehouse of Leicester's gas works on Aylestone Road.

From the days when coal or town gas lit London's Pall Mall in 1812 to the 1830s when every large city in the UK had its own privately owned gas works right up to nationalisation in 1947, then onto the conversion to natural gas by 1976 and then back to privatisation in 1986. It's a long story and one that can be relived at the National Gas Museum.

The Museum is run by a charitable trust and was first opened by the British Gas Corporation in 1977, covering two floors containing 4000 items, a lot of which are in storage. But, if you've ever wondered how gas can power a washing machine, iron, hairdryer or even a radio, the answer is here!



In the 19th Century gas was generally used for street lighting and to illuminate factories and it wasn't until the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851 that cooking with gas took off after ovens went on display to the general public. These were big, bulky and very expensive affairs but when some gas companies offered to rent them out with a pre-pay coin slot - they became affordable and popular. The thermostat was invented in 1927 and then gas cooking really took off. And the rest, as they say, is history.

To find out more and to check November opening times visit: [nationalgasmuseum.org.uk](http://nationalgasmuseum.org.uk)

**Ed Foster**

# BEER FEST IS BACK

The Western Park Beer Festival has returned after a 26 month absence.

Once again, thirsty hordes of local beer fans descended on St. Anne's Community Hall, Letchworth Road, for the first time since September 2019.

Covid 19 almost seemed to be a thing of the past as over 250 locals tucked into 16 barrels of quality brewed ale, lager and cider during two packed sessions on November 13th.

This was a ticketed event but organisers hope to hold a full family festival in September next year.



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## SUFFRAGETTE SCULPTURE

**New College Leicester is the new home of a unique sculpture of pioneering suffragette Alice Hawkins.**

The college was presented with the bust after Year 10 student Gracie Miller won Leicester City Council's essay competition.

The competition sought to find a deserving school to become custodians of a unique piece of artwork produced by Liverpool sculptor Philip Garrett which has been kindly donated to the Alice Hawkins Legacy Group.

Having had to put celebrations on hold due to Covid, New College was finally able to host a presentation event on 5<sup>th</sup> November. The statue was presented to the school by Leicester West MP Liz Kendall and Peter Barratt, the great grandson of Alice Hawkins.

The event also marked the end of New College's Parliament Week. It included a presentation to the student parliament from Liz Kendall, talking about her role as a Member of Parliament and the importance of democracy and the work of Parliament. Liz was joined by the Great Grandson of Alice Hawkins, Peter Barratt, who provided an overview of his great-grandmother's role in the Suffragettes and her contribution to equality and involvement with Parliament.

Sera Shortland, Head of Citizenship at New

College, said: "It was fantastic to welcome Liz Kendall MP and an actual relative of Alice Hawkins to our school to celebrate Gracie's achievement."

"Winning the essay competition has inspired us to design a corridor of outstanding 'women leaders for change'. Alice Hawkins takes centre stage but a year 10 student has also created artwork of Baroness Doreen Lawrence, mother of the late Stephen Lawrence and British activist, Amika George, to sit alongside Alice as more recent great British women. The artist will also receive a certificate of appreciation for her hard work and fantastic artwork."



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# SPOOKTAKULAR

West Leicester became un-alive over the Halloween weekend as dozens of small ghosts and ghouls wandered about trick or treating, collecting sacks full of sweet goodies.

The activities seemed more restrained than last year when we were all gripped by the pandemic. Fewer homes went to town on decorations, and there seemed to be less out celebrating.

However, the Crows Nest was, unsurprisingly, rammed with families, and The Metal Monocle on Braunstone Gate put on a very popular Nightmare Weekend of rock and fancy dress.



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**From Hunting to Leisure - Susan Barton's  
The Story of West Leicester's Parks**

## PARK TO PARK

**At last, it's arrived! After lockdown delays, the book I've been aching to get out is finally here.**

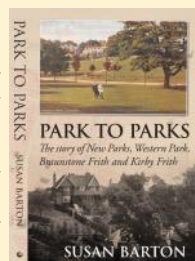
"Park to Parks" explores the story of the centuries-long transformation of Leicester Forest's hunting park, from ancient times via its enclosure to create the New Park in Henry VIII's time, its pastoral past, the creation of a public park and the development of the 20th century communities of Western Park, New Parks, Braunstone Frith and Kirby Frith. There are chapters on the archaeology of the area, its medieval history, the post-enclosure rural farming community and its conflicts with the poorest urban dwellers of Leicester who saw the neighbouring countryside as a source of free food to be poached or scrumpled, while for the prosperous middle-class a country mansion was a status symbol. By the end of the Victorian era the rapidly expanding population of Leicester needed land for housing and for recreation at the same time as country estates around the town began to change hands. Western Park was opened in 1899 as a leisure facility for the West End. This was soon followed by the creation of Western Park Garden Suburb from the mid-Edwardian years with some superb arts and crafts architecture. Post-World War 1, compulsory purchase of more of the farmlands allowed the development of social housing from the 1930s, with the massive construction project of New Parks after the Second World War, followed by Braunstone Frith and Kirby Frith. The book includes sections on transport infrastructure, the turnpike roads, railways and airport that have left their legacies. The book is mostly based on my own original research so includes aspects of our locality's long history not told elsewhere.

Your own ancestor, your house or street might even feature in the story.

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## HMOs CONTROL PLANS

We are being asked for our views on major new proposals to expand the area in which the city council can control the number of homes being converted to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).

Currently, planning consent is not needed to convert a house into a HMO designed for between three and six people to live in. However, where there is evidence that high numbers of HMOs in a particular area is having a negative impact upon that neighbourhood, councils can introduce a legal requirement, called an Article 4 Direction, which would mean planning permission is needed for the change of use.

In the West End, the existing Article 4 Direction covers the streets near to De Montfort University's campus and Leicester Royal Infirmary. The latest proposals would extend the West End zone to stretch from Rowley Fields, to Westcotes, Newfoundpool and parts of the Waterside area.

An Article 4 Direction has already been in place since 2014 in several areas of the city, to control the number of HMOs.

The latest proposals will expand, and in some cases join together, those areas to include thousands more buildings in areas where high numbers of HMOs exist.

Leicester City Council has announced its decision to review the existing arrangements, and as part of that to launch a public consultation to get people's opinions on the proposals and detailing where they would come into effect.

The eight-week online consultation gives details of the proposed areas across the city, and offers a chance for people to give their input on the plans. The information from the consultation will form part of the decision-making process over whether or not to extend the Article 4 Direction.

The consultation runs until January 13, 2022. If the proposals go ahead, the extended Article 4 Direction would be in place 12 months later.

Leicester City Mayor Peter Soulsby said: "While HMOs do have role in meeting the housing needs of groups such as short-term workers, lower-income households and students, they also reduce the number of homes available for families, reduce the variety of housing in an area, create more transient accommodation and are potentially linked to increased noise and disturbance from some occupants."

**To take part in the consultation visit: <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/>**



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## FOSSÉ CONSERVATION PROPOSALS

A public consultation has been launched to give people a chance to comment on proposals to designate a conservation area centred around the Fosse Recreation Ground.

The proposed conservation area would include the full 11 acres of the tree-lined park, with boundaries on Fosse Road North to the east, and Church Avenue, Merton Avenue and part of King Richards Road to the south.



Among the landmark buildings in the area are the Grade II Listed St Paul's Church, which dates to 1869, the late-19th century neo-Gothic St An-

drew's Methodist Church, the Estonian House on Fosse Road North and several other fine examples of late-Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraced housing.

The area has a long history, with notable archaeological significance dating back to the Romans. It also provides a well-preserved built history of Leicester's suburban development over the last 150 years.

The suggestion to designate St Paul's as a conservation area was originally proposed by local residents and supported by Fosse ward councillors.

Conservation areas are parts of the city that have special historic interest or architectural qualities that deserve to be preserved and enhanced.

There are currently 24 designated conservation areas in Leicester.

Alongside the proposed designation of the new St Paul's Conservation Area, the city council is also planning to extend the existing West End Conservation Area to include Dulverton Road and its townscape of late 19th century houses, many of which retain their original features and character.

You can comment on the proposals until 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov at [www.leicester.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/consultations)

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*There aren't many novels set in Leicester, but Tony Shelley has found one by one of Britain's most important authors.*

## TIME OF HOPE

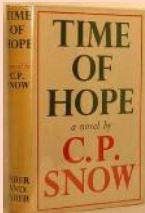
Time Of Hope, published in 1949, is the third in a series of novels with the collective name of 'Strangers and Brothers', written by one of Leicester's most prolific authors, C.P. Snow.

Born in 1905, Snow was educated at Alderman Newton's School, eventually winning a scholarship to Christ College Cambridge and gaining a PHD in Physics.

What makes the Time of Hope, a very interesting read is the fact that it is based in Leicester and gives a rich colourful description of life in the city in the early 1900's.

Its central character, Louis Eliot, is based on Snow himself, who was born and raised in Richmond Road. The book opens in 1914, and there is a lovely description of his first visit to the County Cricket Ground on Aylestone Road, and he talks about the Pavilion Windows, glistening in the sun. The pavilion of course is still there.

There are many other references to well-known Leicester locations, like Hastings Road, Bowling Green Street, Victoria Park, The YMCA and the



long, gone pub 'The Victoria', on Granby Street, which is now a convenience store. There are eleven books in the series, but none describes Leicester as well as Time of Hope.

**Tony Shelley**

## LETTER BOX



Regarding the article from Tony Shelley in the October issue; it brought back many happy memories. Robinson & Pickford was a lovely company to work for, I met many a good friend there and today am still a close friend of my good mate Paul. I well remember Margret Bonshaw who ran the social club; she was a lovely women and by god did she give us some brilliant nights out, usually at the Glen Hall in Glen Parva or the Bell hotel in the city centre, and those fantastic days out. I hated working in the hosiery except for my time at this company. It would be wonderful if someone could arrange a reunion. I also seem to remember that they had a making up dept in Ibstock, but not sure if this is correct, perhaps someone could throw some light on this?

**Ken Naylor**

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e: [info@kirt-accountants.co.uk](mailto:info@kirt-accountants.co.uk)[www.kirt-accountants.co.uk](http://www.kirt-accountants.co.uk)**Nov Police Update**

In the early hours of Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> November, police were called to a report that seven men, who were in possession of weapons including baseball bats, a knife and what was believed to be a BB gun, had broken into a house on Glenfield Road near Fosse Recreation Ground.

A man in his 30s, who was in the property, suffered serious injuries in the incident including stab wounds and pellet wound injuries. He was taken to hospital for treatment.

Two other people who were in the property suffered injuries which are not believed to be life-threatening or life-changing.

The suspects were reported to have left the property, heading down Glenfield Road towards Franche Road. Reports suggest the suspects may have then got into a van to leave the area.

Detectives are appealing to anyone with any information or CCTV or dashcam footage to get in touch by calling 101 or reporting online at [www.leics.police.uk](http://www.leics.police.uk) quoting incident 79 of 7 November.

**The local team have been really busy over the last few weeks.** A walk through The Rally with a drug dog resulted in a male arrested for possession with intent to supply Class B drugs. He has been released under investigation pending further enquiries.

A stolen motor bike was recovered quickly following information from the public – Thank you, without your help this would not have happened.

A search warrant was executed on Dunton Street where a cryptocurrency mine was located. Again, a huge fire risk due to the equipment overheating.



We've also seen 3 vehicles seized for no insurance. There has been a rise in the number of reported thefts from motor vehicles, so please can I ask everyone not to leave anything on display in vehicles, keep doors and windows locked.

**Sgt Shauna Ashton**

# CAREY'S COMPOST CORNER



**This year I'm experimenting by taking some hardwood cuttings.** It can be a slow process as they can take many months to root. I'm going to give Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea* or *mid winter fire*) Weigela and Spirea a try once the leaves have fallen. The plan is to place them in outdoor containers after cutting the tops at an angle, just above a bud. I'll then dip the straight cut base in hormone rooting powder and insert two thirds of the 6" cutting below the soil. I'll be keeping my fingers crossed and, hopefully, I will have new plants this time next year!



Dogwood

There is still time to plant bulbs this month, especially if the soil is still warm. Bulbs such as tulips, narcissi and crocus can be safely planted until the end of the month. For a winter colour injection, it's still okay to plant violas, pansies and wallflowers, but if this is done towards the end of the month, I like to add some grit to the soil to improve drainage. In addition, whilst the soil is still warm, I like to add mulch such

as bark, compost, or leaf mould to my garden. This is good especially if there are bare patches where I've taken out spent annuals or I'm using it to surround perennials which have been cut back. It's really important to protect vulnerable tender plants from the cold. Either move them into a greenhouse or conservatory or protect them with garden fleece. I like using garden fleece as it still lets in some moisture and light whilst reducing the risk of frost damage.

My vegetable plot is quite bare at the moment, but I have planted garlic, onions and shallots. These are covered in cloches which helps to prevent frost/snow damage. The garlic needs a period of cold to establish root growth. I'm still mowing my lawns as grass continues to grow when the temperature reaches 5 degrees or more. I am also removing any fallen leaves from the lawn as they block light and moisture which is still required by the grass. If it's still mild it's also okay to scarify, aerate and top-dress.

And finally, please keep the birds well fed during these colder months as they can really start to struggle. It's also good to keep your bird bath full and make sure it doesn't become frozen and therefore inaccessible - the same should be applied to your garden pond if you have one. I put rubber ducks on the surface of my pond so that it doesn't completely freeze over, and they are easily move-able which enables oxygen and ammonia exchange through the hole in the ice which is left.

Carey Tunstall

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

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