



WE'RE READY... AGAIN!

NEW NORMAL AS WEST END PREPARES TO REOPEN FOR THE SECOND TIME



More on Page 4



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Hello From The Editor

Welcome to the July edition of the Western Park Gazette.

Well, that was fun... Not. Nevertheless we're back after a three month hibernation. I'd like to say we're raring to go and are overloaded with bags of enthusiasm! But getting back into the swing of things has been like pushing a stubborn elephant up hill while wearing roller skates and surgical mask.

The extended lockdown has been an extra level of frustration for many. In fact we've had to reduce the number of pages as a result and only just scraped through. Covid-19 and its successors will be messing around with us for years to come but it's time to break cover as West Leicester tentatively reopens.

We find out how our local bars plan to keep us as infection free as possible, Helen Knott copes with a lockdown shopping trip. There's updates from the local police, Project Hive, the local Beer and Western Park Festivals. Tony Shelley roams the empty streets with a camera and our green guru, the other Tony, has some timely gardening advice.

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- 2: If you have to go out, stay 2 metres apart.
- 3: Keep washing your hands regularly.
- 4: If you have symptoms, get tested immediately.
- 5: Only leave home for essential travel or to get tested.
- 6: Single-adult households (those who live alone or with dependent children only) can still form a support bubble with one other household
- 7: You are still able to meet in a group of up to 6 and only outdoors, provided strict social distancing is followed
- 6: Go to leicester.gov.uk/coronavirus for city wide updates.

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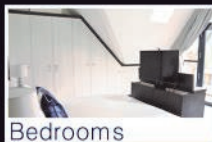
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The Covid-19 Lockdown has been a frustrating time for all of us but especially for local businesses. Our hospitality and "face to face" service industries have been particularly badly hit and were struck again with the extra two week lockdown.

While the rest of the country enjoyed a July 4th Super Saturday celebration, our bars, pubs and non-essential business stayed shut but it has given some extra time to put protective measures in place.

Local hairdresser, Andrea Banks-Staszak has contacted her clients with a list of her safety protocols when she reopens. These include, no waiting inside, a temperature check, sanitisers, protective gowns, masks and equipment. She says: "I need to protect my clients and myself - things will be very different. Luckily customers have been understanding."

The West End is known for it's many bars and pubs, all of which have been suffering during the lockdown.

The West End's biggest pub, The Crows Nest, has gone all out to provide a safe environment for staff and customers. Manager Ray Cooper says: "We don't know when we'll properly open but we've kick-started early with a takeaway Sunday roast service while we get ready."

"When we do open, everyone will have to sign in. The details help keep pubs safer as we get back to normal. Going down to 1 meter has helped but we're keeping it at 2 meters in the carpark where there's

more space and tables. We have bar screens, face masks, visors for staff and disposable plates. It's all about safety and maintaining high standards."



Tommy Coombes, owner of the Metal Monocle, on Braunstone Gate, has put a one way system in place, a one in, one out and hand cleaning station by the toilets, enhanced hygiene and a table booking system.

A similar policy is in place at The West End Brewery with bar screens, table bookings, track and trace and a ban on anybody who has displayed coronavirus symptoms for 14 days. Josh Grey (front cover pic) said: "Like everyone we're a bit new to this, so please bear with us, we're doing everything in our power to make the WEB a safe and enjoyable place to return to."

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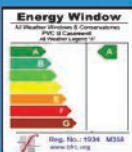
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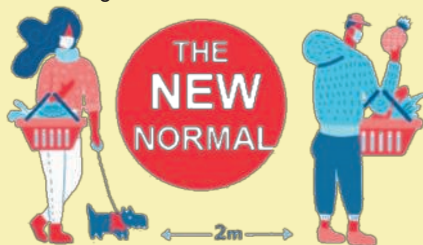
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KNOTT'S LANDING

In December when we drew up the 2020 bingo card of crazy things that might happen (doesn't everyone do this?) I had things like: Donald Trump dies on the toilet eating a peanut butter and bacon burger; the zombie apocalypse; asteroid crashes into the moon; Queen is a contestant on the Masked Singer. I thought it was a good list. The trouble is, this year has taken crazy to a whole new level. My list is amateur hour compared to the reality being thrown at us right now.



So far in the last week I've seen headlines including 'China develops duck army'; 'Radioactivity Hike seen in Northern Europe, source unknown'; 'Leicester gets first local lockdown'. When the real world is this crazy there aren't many satisfactory options to help us get through.

Shopping has always been a decent way to blot out the horror of the real world. It occurred to me a while back that shops have become like casinos. They are designed as shiny, comfortable destinations with air conditioning that hide you from weather, time and reality. I never thought I'd be using it to escape from a global pandemic.

Real life buying was weird but I wanted it after months of shopping on the internet. Going to Primark was unexpected and not my first choice – don't judge me, my child has had his spring growth spurt and had no trousers!

When we arrived there was a queue of people but then it started to rain. The queue melted away and we walked straight in. Nightclub style we were counted on a clicker and no-one mentioned we were going through a time slip. Inside it was like nothing had happened. No-one was wearing masks, social distancing was not in evidence, children were running around touching everything. For a brief time everything was normal. The last eleven weeks hadn't happened. Then we went to pay and rounded a corner to be confronted by people in masks and the 2m dots on the floor. Back to reality with a bump.

The thing is, that brief moment of normality was glorious. I crave it. As this year shows no sign of letting up in the crazy stakes, perhaps taking an hour in a palace of purchases can help me stay sane.

Helen Knott

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SAFE IN A HEARTBEAT

A life saving piece of equipment has been installed at the community hall on Letchworth Road.

Thanks to the generosity of the local community, enough money was raised at the Spring Fayre last year to install a local community defibrillator. It has been attached next to the notice board on the front of the Hall roadside to Letchworth Road, just up from Westfield Road crossroad.

Retired GP and member at St. Anne's Church Dr Paul Archer explained: "Being a very busy community hub, the hall and church host lots of people and as such the availability of a defibrillator provides a potentially life saving facility for the local community".



Doctor Archer added: "The value of a defibrillator is to treat an individual who has suffered a heart attack and whose heart is no longer beating regularly, but instead is fibrillating, which means the heart muscle is quivering but no longer beating to maintain an effective circulation. The importance of rapid treatment is essential, while CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) is maintained until the defibrillator can be applied. The defibrillator is ready for use at any time and gives step by step automated instructions on how to use it, and is coordinated with the ambulance service".

If anyone in Western Park areas is interested in a familiarisation session run by a Rapid Responder from the ambulance service text Paul Archer on 0771 3673 233. The sessions will be held subject Covid-19 safety guidelines.

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Western Park Festival Back In 2021

As you probably know Western Park Festival involves a huge amount of planning over a number of months. The current pandemic and blanket lockdown is worthy of a celebration, once it is safe to do so. The Western Park Festival would be the perfect opportunity to allow us all to meet with our neighbours, friends and family to celebrate local music, clubs and activities. But after careful consideration and planning limitations, we have decided to cancel Western Park Festival 2020. We feel as though it is our duty to make sure that festival goers, performers and traders are safe. It is also important that we ALL support our NHS.



We look forward to Western Park Festival 2021, which will be our 10 Year Anniversary. Let's do something bigger and better then! We would like to thank all musicians for your auditions this year and apologise for this cancellation in these difficult times.

To volunteer to be involved with the planning of WPF 2021, contact bookings@zanderevents.co.uk



PROJECT

hive

Update

Project Hive is run by the WWCE, a group of local residents raising

funds to redevelop the former Eco House into a community space.

It's safe to say that the last few months haven't really gone the way we had envisioned when we were planning 2020. Coming off the back of a very successful 2019, we were hoping to go full steam ahead and get things physically moving with the building this year. As the ongoing situation has developed, we quickly realised that many of the plans we had would need to go on the back burner.

What has been hugely heartening is the way that our community, the very reason we exist, has rallied around and strengthened its bonds despite the limitations to us actually being together. It has galvanised our determination to see this project through to completion and to give this community the new space it deserves.

That being said, we are delighted that we can announce the return of the **Western Park Scarecrow Trail** for 5th & 6th September. It's an event that by its nature can comply with whatever social distancing measures are in place at the time.

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Last year it was great to see so many members of our community out and about on the streets on both days and feel the buzz that created.

What we need now to make sure it's even better that last year's event is lots of our lovely, creative residents to sign up to be scarecrow builders. We've made that process easier than before and you can now follow the links on our website or the event on our Facebook page to complete the online form. More details about the event will be available there too. We are asking for £5 per registration fee with all proceeds going to our continuing fundraising efforts. The theme for this year's entries will be "Heroes", remember that heroes come in many shapes and sizes!

Find out more about WWCE and Project Hive at our website wwce.org.uk or on Facebook @wwceleicester



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EMPTY STREETS - 2 CAMERAS

As a diarist, I've been recording the Lockdown in words since it all began several months ago. I also decided to make a visual record, so almost from day one, I've been wandering the streets of the West End, mostly my end of the district, making images of the deserted streets with very mixed feelings.

In many way ways it reminded me of the late 1950's - early 1960's when there was nowhere near the amount of traffic that there is today. Never more so on the Hinckley Road at midday, where my wife and I could cross the road with ease, on our way to Western park. With two cameras, one digital one loaded with black and white film, I photographed the silent streets, closed shops, rainbows in Windows, or chalked messages of hope on the pavements and walls.



It was Eerie. I just snapped away, day in day out. Back home, I developed the films and downloaded the digital images, only to be overcome again by what I saw on the Mac screen, frame after frame of emptiness, lonely pictures, as I came to call them. As the Lockdown eases, I'm carrying on with the project, which I'm tentatively calling 'Capturing The Silence'.

When I shot the first images of the empty shelves and the mild panic in Tesco, on the night of the Stay Home announcement, I never thought I'd still be making images of the Covid-19 pandemic fallout in June.

What I'm truly looking forward to is the opening up, when that will be is anybody's guess.

Tony Shelley

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BEER FESTIVAL WILL RETURN

Leicester and Leicestershire people are often called Chisits from "Owmuchisit?" If this suggests we're guarded with our cash, Western Park Charity Beer Festival is no different.

Since cancelling the March 20th Pop-Up Pub at St Anne's Church Hall, we've been number crunching behind the scenes. Nobody, as you can guess, wants to seek festival sponsorship from local businesses in the current climate.

Fortunately, back at November's AGM, we kept enough in reserve to cover the event's beer and running costs.

But no-one, we can tell you, did so imagining today's scenario.

Right now, it's unlikely that September's annual beer festival will go ahead despite our ability to fund it – and that's because bringing several hundred people together raises other, more serious issues.

Sadly, the reality of Covid-19 is it kills people. The festival committee itself is mourning the loss of Annette Burgess, a committee member's aunt, who, despite living in Suffolk, came up to Leices-

ter to help at the beer festival with her husband Malcolm.

While we are sure the beer festival will return, as yet we don't know when and in what shape.

What we can say is that having raised £42,600 for local causes since 2015, the festival will continue to support our home city and county and, for the present, each other.

Until then, we look forward to serving thirsty Western Parkers once health and safety is re-established and, in the name of companionship and charity, we can get together over a beer once more.

From the members of the Western park Charity Beer Festival



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July Police Update

Welcome back The Western Park Gazette. In spite of the current pandemic, policing in our communities continues unabated. Like all organisations we have had to adjust and adapt our practices. I'm proud to say that there was never a time where we thought that we might struggle, such is the commitment and professionalism of our people. A special mention and heartfelt thanks to all the police volunteers who stepped up to offer their time and skills to support the communities in which we serve.

The regulations accompanying lockdown are without doubt some of the most draconian within a democratic society. They are of course, a necessary measure in the protection of public health. You have been without doubt, tremendous and unrelenting in your daily sacrifices in order to abate this terrible virus, to keep our NHS operational and to stem the spread of this infection to those most at risk of its devastating effects.

The Police response to the regulations has been one of engagement, explanation, encouragement, with enforcement being the last resort. At the time of writing, there have been 55 penalty notices issued on the West Area, 405 notices across the force.

This is testament to the approach we have taken in balancing fundamental rights and freedoms with the necessity of the current regulations. Criminal activity, however, does not stop. Your teams continue to enforce drugs warrants and to identify and arrest those who seek to steal from you. There has been a recent cluster of pedal cycle thefts, but thanks to the keen eye of one resident and some good quality CCTV, your teams recognised the offender who was quickly brought to justice. To keep abreast of any emerging crime trends in your area and up to date prevention advice, I would encourage you to sign up to the Neighbourhood Link at www.neighbourhoodlink.co.uk

Your Teams have been busy tackling hidden crime, of the type perpetrated behind locked doors. During lockdown, domestic and child abuse become all the more concerning when there is no one around to see, observe, or speak out on behalf of victims. We have worked hard with our partners to ensure these people are not forgotten and their voices heard. In some cases we have had to use our emergency powers to protect children from further harm. There are local and national organisations available to support, United against Violence and Abuse (UAVA) at www.uava.org.uk and the National Domestic Abuse Helpline (0808 2000 247 – Freephone 24 hrs).

Don't forget to look after your own wellbeing. The month of May saw Mental Health Awareness Week, the theme being one of kindness. www.mentalhealth.org.uk has some good tips and signposting to keep your wellbeing in shape. As lockdown starts to ease over the coming months, I hope to report upon the many amazing community events which your teams will no doubt wish to support. In the interim, look after yourselves, your family and don't be a stranger to your neighbours (but remember social distancing).

Sgt Ed Jones

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Tony Huxley's Compost Corner



After several months of lockdown and an extra couple of weeks thrown in for good measure, I'm sure you've all been busy in the garden building mosaic patios from beer bottle tops, and garden irrigation systems from used latex gloves and empty hand sanitiser bottles. If Corona virus hasn't made you get your garden pandemic prepared then you need to take a long hard look at your hirsute self because this may be just a rehearsal. If yet another wave of infection hits our city how ready is your garden a second time around? Covid 20 could be waiting in the wings, quite literally! Could we be just one misplaced fruit bat dropping away from the complete collapse of modern civilisation and eating the neighbour's cat?

The garden can provide sustenance, medicine and so much more. Even if you don't have a vegetable patch, salad days are waiting for you in the borders. Campanula, Alchemilla, and Alliums all have edible leaves, some Day lilies have edible flowers and nasturtiums and pansies have both edible flowers and leaves. Even weeds like dandelion, fat hen and chickweed can supplement

your 5 a day.

You don't need an orchard, you can still find edible fruit on *Amelanchier* (also called Juneberry) and *Chaenomeles*.

Many ornamental bamboos can provide a meal with species like *Phyllostachys nigra* producing edible young shoots. Cut them when they're young, peel off the outer leaves and then cook until tender.

Bamboo canes can also make fishing rods when you need to eat the goldfish.

Scientists may well be trying to develop a toilet paper tree, but in the meantime you can still wash your hands if you have Soapwort growing in your garden. Both the roots and leaves can be used to make a natural detergent. And if the chemists have run out of painkillers try a cup of Feverfew tea, or chew on the bark of the White Willow. It contains a chemical called salicin, which is similar to aspirin.

Of course, this could all be a distant memory by Christmas, along with thoughts of stewing Tiddles with a sprig of Rosemary.

Tony Huxley



Amelanchier



Soapwort



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Martin Page

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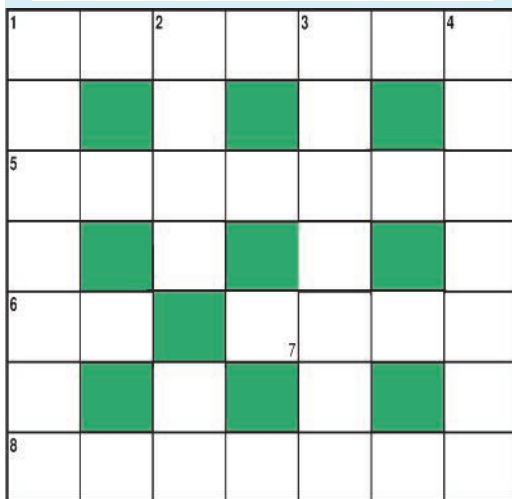
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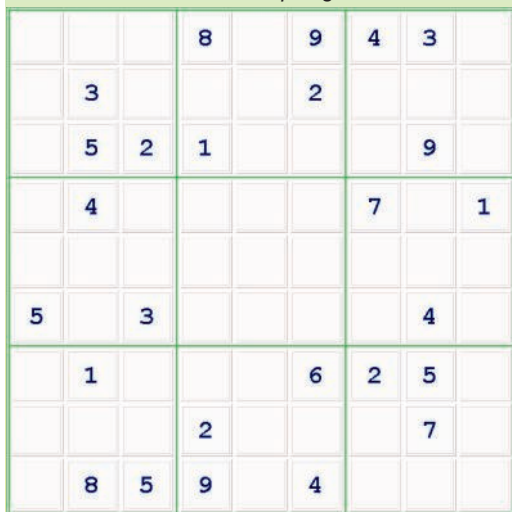
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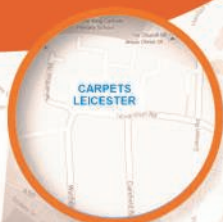
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