

# the Castle Brom Post



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February 2024 Issue 79



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## FILL UP AT THE GARDENS... AND REFILL

Historic Gardens to sell popular 'refillable' eco products as part of its green ambitions.



Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens

Castle Bromwich Historic Gardens re-opens to the general visitor this month – in time to see the emergence of the early spring flowers that have been cultivated there over many years.

The Trust looks after over 40 acres of historic green and natural space in the area and takes its environmental mission seriously. From February the small courtyard shop will have some additions to its homemade jams and locally made honey and beeswax soaps.

The Trust have teamed up with Miniml, the Yorkshire based friendly chemical company, to get access to a small range of eco cleaning products: washing up liquid, hand soap and surface cleaner and customers can come to the shop to fill up their own bottles.

Anji, one of the Gardens' Front of House team said: "We make sure we use eco-safe products when we do the cleaning here, so it really makes sense to share that option with our visitors."

General Manager Glynis Powell agreed, "Like us, our visitors want to do the best by the planet and 'refillables' are a great way to save on single use plastics and too many expensive shopping journeys. Visitors tell us they just can't find anywhere locally

where they can, so we're trying to change that."

The Shop is free to enter and open when the Gardens are open (Weds- Sunday 10.30 -3.30pm).

Anji added "We're starting with just a few products to see what people think. People can bring their own bottles or get one from us that they can use again."

Come round sometime and join in the circular economy – and why not check out the snowdrops and aconites in the Gardens while you're here.



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The Post Newspaper Group is an independent hyper-local tabloid newspaper publisher distributing 2 titles with over 14,000 copies to homes and businesses in Coleshill and Castle Bromwich each month, free of charge.

Our main aim is to provide hyper-local news and information to the community where it would otherwise not be accessible. We also offer the most effective platform for local businesses to promote themselves to their target audience. This benefits the entire community and improves social-cohesion.

Any views, articles and columns expressed in this publication are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the Publisher, nor indeed their responsibility.

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**Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce**

## Chamber reaction to inflation figures

Cameron Uppal, policy and public affairs advisor at Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, said: "This morning's CPI announcement has confounded many city analysts that were predicting a minor fall in the rate of inflation."

"After seeing record rates of high inflation last year, it is evident from discussions with our members that inflation is still a concern for local businesses going into the start of this year."

"This is highlighted in our latest Quarterly Business Report where 30 per cent of businesses revealed that inflation was more of a concern than three months ago."

"In what is likely to be a General Election year, and with the Spring Budget imminently on the horizon, it will be interesting to see what measures the Government look to introduce to ease inflation and reach their own target of getting inflation down to two per cent."

"As a voice of business in the region, advocating for the needs of our members, we are continuing to lobby the Government on tackling underlying cost pressures firms are facing-coupled with entrenched recruitment challenges, easing supply chain disruption with our European counterparts and advocating for business rate reforms."

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## New Year, New Me

The start of a new year marks an opportunity to pause, and think about where we would like to be in the future. There is often the temptation to draw up a list of unrealistic goals, placing pressure on ourselves to achieve a complete overhaul of our current lives. Setting unachievable goals can have the opposite effect on our mental health and lead to stress, anxiety and burnout. While it is important to have aspirations rooted in our values and personal ambitions, we also need to make room for small changes. Small changes, focused on our physical and emotional wellbeing, often build the foundations we need to reach bigger goals.

Putting mental health at the top of a New Year resolution list is an important place to start. There are many ways to make small changes to our daily routine that improves our wellbeing; practicing mindfulness, being physically active, resetting sleep routines, healthy eating and spending time outdoors. Start by focusing on one or two small changes. Remember new routines take time, you can always get back on track if faced with setbacks. Some changes can make a big difference, so take one step at a time.

For many people, the new year can be difficult. It is a time we take stock and reflect on the past year, and anxieties we have for the year ahead. This can be particularly challenging if we find ourselves overwhelmed by difficult thoughts and feelings. Seeking mental health support and talking with a therapist can help to understand life's difficulties such as grief, family difficulties, trauma, coping with life changes. Therapy is a safe place to discover new ways to approach challenging situations. If you are worried about your mental health it is important to seek professional support.

Dr Danielle Grey is a Clinical Psychologist and the Clinical Director for the Purple House Clinic, Birmingham. The clinic is based in Coleshill and offers private psychological health care. For more information visit [www.purplehouseclinic.co.uk](http://www.purplehouseclinic.co.uk) or call 0121 820 7851.



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## Coleshill Drama Group

Following the huge success of our November production, when we had three nights packed with very appreciative audiences, Coleshill Drama Group now presents "A Play, a Pizza and a Puzzle". For one night only, Saturday 24th February, the comedy "Strictly Sex Factor on Ice" by David Tristram will be performed at Coleshill Town Hall at 7.30pm. As you may glean from the title, this play is great fun! Director Anne Bravey brings her vast experience to see the cast through the antics of putting on a show.

The play will be followed by a pizza supper and a short fun quiz with prizes, and the possibility of more antics to make you laugh. All tickets are priced at £15 and are available from the usual Coleshill High Street outlets - Coleshill Library, Gascoignes of Coleshill and Cafe on the Hill. Coleshill Drama Group is most grateful to these outlets and their lovely staff for providing a local place for ticket sales. Tickets are also available online at [www.coleshilldrama.co.uk](http://www.coleshilldrama.co.uk) or telephone Sue Wallace on 01675 462674. Tickets must be purchased or ordered in advance to allow catering numbers to be known. Our licensed bar will be open and free car parking is available opposite the Town Hall in the grounds of Chantry House.

Don't miss this one off night of entertainment by the Group which has been bringing theatre to Coleshill for over 90 years. The Group is always looking for new members to join the "team", has for theatre is truly a team activity. It is not just the actors you see on stage, it is the direction and production team, the set design and construction, the backstage crew, the lighting and sound technicians, the front of house staff, bar and refreshment managers. If you would like to find out more or become involved in any of those activities and be part of our award-winning Group, please come along to this evening and contact Sue Wallace on the number above.

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Coleshill Drama Group presents...

# A Play, a Pizza and a Puzzle!

The play

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by David Tristram

a pizza and a short quiz.

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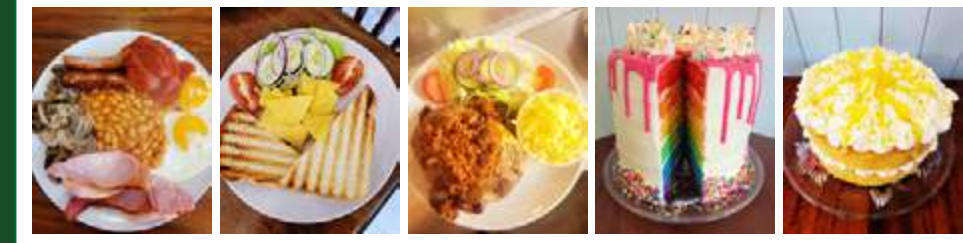


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### Water Orton Cricket Club

Happy New Year to all our regular supporters, sponsors and players. We are now finalising our social calendar for 2024 and will keep you all up to date in the forthcoming editions of the Coleshill and Castle Bromwich Post. Details will also be displayed on our external notice board and our main notice boards, just inside the club entrance. We have some fabulous tribute acts already booked and are just finalising some Quiz Nights and Live Bands so we look forward to welcoming you at these future events.

**Saturday 2nd March**  
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Imagine this...

You've made a Will, stating that, in the event of your death, you intend for your spouse to inherit everything, including your share of the family home. But what if your spouse needs care in later life? Your spouse may be expected to pay for their care themselves... but care fees are getting more and more expensive every year, costing anywhere between £26,000 and £52,000. How can they afford to pay for their care fees and leave some money as inheritance for your children?

This is an upsetting scenario... and unfortunately, it could happen to any of us without the right protection.

The sad truth is that around 200,000 family homes are sold every year to pay for care fees. Estates are drastically reduced- sometimes to nothing at all- to pay for care, leaving beneficiaries with little to no inheritance. The lower limit for care fee means testing is currently set at £14,250. However, your loved ones' inheritance could be even less than this simply because the home and other assets were not protected in the right way.

Don't leave your home open to any risks.

All of this can be avoided- with careful planning and professional advice, you can protect your home and savings so that your children can benefit as much as possible. Putting yourself in control means you'll prevent government authorities and other parties getting their hands on your assets.



### For Couples

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necessary. The capital share you have in the property will also be protected. The property is also safeguarded from local authority means testing.

The ideal scenario is that half the property is protected from loss, and the other half is disregarded by local authorities. What this means for inheritance is that at least half of the property's shares will be passed down to your children.

This plan of action is applicable even if you have a mortgage!

Future stress and heartache for your family and beneficiaries can be avoided, but you must act sooner rather than later. If you fall ill and require permanent care, or if you unfortunately lose mental capacity for any reason, it will be too late to protect your home and assets.

### Act now!

Sadly, many people put off planning for the future until its too late, leaving children and loved ones devastated to realise that the situation could have been easily avoided. The sooner planning is put into effect, the more effectively we can help you ensure that your assets go to those you love ... not those you don't!

### Do you have Savings?

While the family home is usually the most valuable asset, we can also help you to protect your savings. Speak to us today to find out the best way to protect your assets.

Protect your Home and your Savings from unnecessary, avoidable losses. Accord can help ensure your loved ones benefit as much as possible from your estate.

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## Water Orton Ladies Club

Well here we are again 2024 and the start of another great year for Water Orton Ladies.

Last year after a wonderful New Year lunch to start the year, we looked forward to a varied program of speakers, who took us on a wild holiday via a slide show, to a village at the time of the English Civil War, on a voyage on the ill-fated Titanic and treated us to a look round the gardens of Calke Abbey in Derbyshire. We tried singing in sign language and learned about the once great pearl industry in Birmingham. We were out and about too - a visit to Shrewsbury in Spring and to Trentham Gardens in Autumn. A very busy and very enjoyable year!

We shall start this New Year with lunch at Grimscoote Manor Hotel on January 18th, an event, which we very much look forward to and ahead, we have a another great program of speakers and special events. This year, our club is raising funds to support the Water Orton Scout Group and we have a program of great fund raising events lined up, a Quiz in March, a Craft & Table Top

Sale Day in June and a Skittles Evening in November. We shall be taking to the water on a boat trip down the Trent in June and making a visit to the British Ironworks Centre in September. Lots to do and lots of enjoyment to look forward to!

Our first fundraiser for the Water Orton Scouts, our Quiz will take place on 22nd March at Nether Whitacre Village Hall at 7.30pm. Teams of 4 - 6 people, a fish & chip supper, B.Y.O drinks and tickets are just £10.00. We hope you'll come along - it will be a great evening supporting a great cause. Please book your tickets with Liz on 07811 147728

Visitors to our club are always welcome. We meet at The Pavilion in Openfield Croft in Water Orton (B46 1RE) on the third Thursday of each month from 2 - 4pm - a friendly afternoon, with an interesting speaker and lovely tea and cake. Why not make a visit to us one of your New Year Resolutions!

Liz Tranter Chairman 07811 147728



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## Anti Social Behaviour - Water Orton



11th January Coleshill SNT attended Water Orton due to reports of anti social behaviour occurring in the area of Long Leys Court. Despite the group of youths leaving the area upon Police arrival, initial attendance gave officers PC 2300 Thompson & PC 1372 Breeze an opportunity to engage with the local residents and take on board their concerns. Going forward, patrols will be conducted in the area as we look to tackle the issues that are occurring.

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# Hello from your local Slimming World groups



We've had a fabulous January, with all of our groups welcoming more members than ever. As we look towards February, and Valentine's Day, love and hearts will be all around us, so this month we've brought you a couple's story of how they're getting ready for their big day. Plus, some tips on looking after your own Heart Health.

There's also a special valentine inspired recipe for you to try. ♥

Wishing you all a happy and healthy month ahead...  
Toni x (07971 686 698)

## They both said 'Yes' to happy hearts!



Valentines' day signals hearts and love in the air and here's a couple of love birds who between them have so far lost 6 stone. Sharon and Neil joined Claire's Slimming World group after a surprise wedding proposal from Neil. Sharon says, "It was a complete surprise, one I'd waited for 30+ years for!" We've been together since we were 14 years old, and I knew straight away I wanted to lose weight to feel my best for the big day. We booked our dream wedding in Cyprus for September 2024 and together we walked through the door of our local Slimming World group.

Neil says, "From the off we loved that with just small changes we could still eat our favourite meals like spaghetti bolognese and curries and have good size portions too! It's been an important journey for me as my dad died at the age of 47 because of heart problems, so it was important that I started to look after my own heart health. I love representing us men too and spreading the word that Slimming World is not just for girls."



Heart disease causes more than one in eight male and one in 14 female deaths in the UK, so (while it's not the most cheerful of topics) knowing how to keep your heart healthy is vitally important.

Excess weight is a major factor that puts our heart at risk. Heart disease is also linked with high blood pressure, raised cholesterol levels and type 2 diabetes – conditions related to being overweight. The good news is by joining Slimming World and making positive changes to your lifestyle, you can reduce all these risks.

### Here's how to help keep your heart in good shape:

**Aim for a healthy weight:** Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight can reduce your risk of a heart attack and losing 10% of your body weight starts to bring a whole host of health benefits, including significantly reducing blood pressure, cholesterol levels and the risk of heart disease.

**Preparing food the Slimming World way will help you eat for a healthier heart:** Choose lean cuts of meat, trim any visible fat off, remove skin from poultry and opt for fat-free dairy.

**Plan in some oily fish:** Aim for two portions of fish a week, one of which is oily. The omega-3 fatty acids found in oily fish thin the blood, lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of a fatal heart attack.

**Fruit and veg are your friends:** They contain vitamins, minerals and antioxidants that reduce the risk of heart disease. Plus, they're all Free, so it's easy to eat five-a-day or more on the Slimming World plan!

**Focus on fibre:** Fibre slows the absorption of fats and eating foods rich in soluble fibre, eg oats and pulses, helps lower harmful blood cholesterol levels.

**Sprinkle less salt:** Too much can raise blood pressure. Cook your own meals from scratch to avoid the hidden salts in processed foods.

**Include some unsaturated fat:** Limited unsaturated fats (especially in place of saturated fats), can help us maintain healthy cholesterol levels.

**Move more, more often:** Becoming more active can reduce the risk of developing heart disease by 35% and reduce the risk of high blood pressure and cholesterol levels. We help you build up, step by step, at your own pace – no matter what your starting point.

**Get the booze balance:** Regularly drinking alcohol increases the risk of developing high blood pressure, making a heart attack or stroke more likely.

**Stub it out:** Smoking is thought to contribute to at least 15,000 deaths from heart and circulatory disease each year in the UK. The incredible news is, by stopping smoking now, your risk of a heart attack will halve in one year.

**Stress less:** While studies don't directly link stress to heart disease, they do point to the coping mechanisms some people adopt, like smoking, overeating and drinking.

## Raspberry and cherry jellies

Luscious layers bursting with fruity flavours... There's so much to love!

Ready in 15 mins (plus 9 hrs chilling) Serves 4 | ½ Syns per serving



### Ingredients:

- 11.5g sachet sugar-free raspberry jelly crystals
- 100g fresh or defrosted frozen raspberries, plus extra to decorate
- 12g sachet powdered gelatine
- 160g pot Müllerlight No Added Sugar Cherry yogurt

### Method

1. Put the jelly crystals in a measuring jug. Add 150ml boiling water and 100ml cold water and stir until dissolved. Allow to cool.
2. Divide the raspberries between 4 deep, individual heart-shaped or round ramekins in a single layer. Divide the cooled jelly mixture over the top, so that it just covers the raspberries. Cover with cling film and freeze for 15-20 minutes, or until just starting to set.
3. Meanwhile, put 100ml boiling water in a measuring jug. Add the gelatine, stir until dissolved and leave to cool. Whisk in the yogurt and divide the mixture between the ramekins. Chill for 6-8 hours, or until firmly set.
4. When ready to serve, dip the ramekins into warm water for a few seconds, then carefully turn out onto small serving plates. Serve immediately with the extra raspberries.

\*Switch the raspberry-and-cherry theme for all-out strawberry! Use a sachet of sugar-free strawberry jelly crystals, fresh strawberries and a 160g pot of Müllerlight Strawberry yogurt.



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### Monday

**Castle Brom** The Baptist Church, 5.30 & 7.00pm Claire - 07917867577

**Tile Cross** St Peters Church, 4.00 & 5.30pm Nataley 07939 949136

**Yardley** St Edburghas Church Hall, 7.30am, 9.00am, 3.30 & 5.30pm Jacqui 07814 675180

### Tuesday

**Coleshill** The Catholic Church (sacred Heart & St Teresa) 3.30pm, 5.00pm & 6.30pm Toni 07971686698

**Kingshurst** Seeds Of Hope, St Barnabas CH, 5.00 & 6.30pm Diane 07432 123206

**Kitts Green** Evangelical Church, 5.30pm Becki 07864 872816

**Shard End** Aylesford Hall, 9.00am & 10.30am Donna 07516 726534

### Wednesday

**Castle Brom** Arden Hall, 9.30am Diane 07432 123206

**Castle Brom** St Clements Church, 3.00, 4.30 & 6.00pm Nataley 07939 949136

**Marston Green** The Parish Hall, 3.30, 5.30 & 7.00pm Jacqui 07814 675180

**Water Orton** The Link, 5.30 & 7.00pm Jayne 07453 348184

### Thursday

**Castle Vale** St Cuthberts Church, 5.30pm & 7.00pm, Richard 07733820994

**Chelmsley Wood** The Fordbridge Centre (by Asda), 5.30pm, Jacquie 07957133435

**Sheldon** St Thomas More, 4.00, 5.30, 7.00pm, Jayne 07453 348184

**Smiths Wood** SJB Centre, 9.00am, 5.00 & 6.30pm Nataley 07939 949136

### Friday

**Chelmsley Wood** The Family Tree, 9.00am Jayne 07453 348184

**Sheldon** St Thomas More Church, 9.00am Claire 07917867577

### Saturday

**Chelmsley Wood** Three Trees Community Centre, 9.00am Michael 07957 510533

**Chelmsley Wood** The Family Tree, 8.30 & 10.00am Jayne 07453 348184

**Castle Brom** The Baptist Church, 8.00 & 9.30am to Donna 07516726534

**Bordesley Green** St Pauls Church, 9.00am Maria 07974 805252

**Sheldon** St Thomas More, 7.30 & 9.00am Jacqui 07814 675180



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# More than 20,000 dogs returning to Birmingham for Crufts 2024

Plenty of paws are heading to the NEC in Birmingham for Crufts 2024, taking place from 7 – 10 March, with tickets on sale now.

Organised by The Kennel Club, Crufts 2024 will run from Thursday and through the weekend with a four-day action-packed schedule celebrating our four-legged friends and all things dog. The event will showcase over 200 diverse breeds and see dogs from all walks of life put their best paw forward in fast-paced and fun competitions including agility, heelwork to music, flyball and obedience. For those keen to shop till they drop, over 500 stands selling all sorts of doggy delights will cover 25 acres of the NEC.

The family-favourite Scrufts final will see the nation's pets compete for the 'top dog' title and on Sunday evening, one of five very special finalists will be crowned as the winner of The Kennel Club Hero Dog Award, as voted by the public. Following four days of competition, one canine Crufts competitor will put their paws on the coveted Best in Show trophy, which in 2023 was taken home by Orca, the Lagotto Romagnolo, whose 'tail never stops wagging'.

The popular Discover Dogs area will be welcoming over 200 different breeds, of all shapes, sizes and personalities, enabling visitors to learn more about the variety of our four-legged friends from breed experts and discover which canine might be the right companion for them.

Over the four days Crufts welcomes over 20,000 dogs, 150,000 people and sees over 8 million TV viewers tune into the Channel 4, More4 and All4 broadcast.

More information and tickets for the event are available on the Crufts website: Crufts.org.uk. Tickets are free for under 8s, and advance tickets start at £14 for children (aged 9-15) and concessions, and £21 for adults.



Crufts Agility 2014 - Credit Yulia Titovets - The Kennel Club



Corgis at Discover Dogs at Crufts 2023 Credit The Kennel Club - Annabel Lee-Ellis



Cocker Spaniel at Discover Dogs Crufts 2023 Credit The Kennel Club - Ellie Smeaton

## Celebrities share their 2024 goals in support of Mary's Meals



TV stars and siblings, Scarlett and Stuart Douglas support Mary's Meals

Jean Johansson, Eilish McColgan, Gary Maclean and Scarlett and Stuart Douglas encourage others to take on new challenges while fundraising for charity

Running, baking and craft-making are just some of the activities that celebrities are taking up at the start of 2024 as we all embark upon our New Year's resolutions.

Jean Johansson, Eilish McColgan, Gary Maclean and Scarlett and Stuart Douglas are all supporters of international school feeding charity, Mary's Meals.

Mary's Meals feeds more than 2.4 million children every school day in 18 of the world's poorest countries including Haiti, Malawi and Syria. The promise of a nutritious meal encourages children into the classroom, so that instead of working or looking for food, they can gain an education and hope for a brighter future.

There are a number of different ways to fundraise for the charity and top TV and sporting stars are asking others to share in their goals for the year ahead to help feed more hungry children in 2024.

Scottish long-distance running champion Eilish McColgan, who is training for this year's summer Olympics, is encouraging people to sign up for Move For Meals to help them stick to their New Year's fitness plans.

She says: "The Move For Meals challenge is a really simple way to turn your moves into meals and make a life-changing difference to hungry children across the world. From walking to running, swimming and playing football, you can take part in Move For Meals in any way you choose."

Meanwhile, if you're looking to brush up on your baking skills this year, celebrity chef Gary Maclean is urging families to pull on their aprons and fundraise through Raise Some Dough.

The MasterChef: The Professionals winner says: "A bake sale is a great way to perfect your favourite cake, while raising

funds to enable this incredible charity to reach the next child waiting for Mary's Meals. Baking is also an excellent activity to keep the kids entertained and by Raising Some Dough, you can help instil that charitable spirit in your little ones too!"

The start of a new year often sees people take up new hobbies, including arts and crafts. A Place In The Sun presenter Jean Johansson believes sewing, knitting or crocheting can be a wonderful way to unwind, while fundraising for those in need through Make For Meals.

Jean says: "Maybe you're already a nifty knitter or a master maker, or perhaps 2024 will be your first foray into the world of crafting. Either way, you can turn your creativity into life-changing meals for children. By simply selling your crafts to family and friends, or setting up a making marathon fundraiser, you can raise vital funds for Mary's Meals."

And if you're perhaps lacking motivation to maintain those New Year's resolutions, why not team up with a sibling or family member to tackle them together?

Brother and sister-presenting duo Scarlett and Stuart Douglas have joined forces to Double The Love this January. Until the end of January, donations made to Mary's Meals will be doubled by a group of generous supporters, up to £1.1 million.

Scarlette says: "Stuart and I are competitive siblings and we're always challenging each other to achieve our goals."

"At the start of this year, we'll both be Doubling The Love and donating to Mary's Meals. The fact that Mary's Meals can feed a child for a whole school year for just £19.15 is an amazing feat. And with Double The Love, £19.15 will feed two children for a school year, so there's never been a better time to donate!"

To find out how you can support Mary's Meals while achieving your 2024 goals, visit [marysmeals.org.uk](http://marysmeals.org.uk).



## Scott Bevan History Column: Silver Denarius

The oldest coin that I've ever discovered. This silver denarius was minted in the year 138bc, making it 2,160 years old!

It was struck in Rome by a man named Paetus (you can just about make out his name on the reverse of the coin, 'PAETVS'). It shows the helmeted head of Roma on the obverse & the Dioscuri galloping right on the reverse. If you're not familiar with the Dioscuri, they were twin brothers from Greek and Roman mythology also known as Castor and Pollux. They were said to have been excellent horsemen and the two brothers were also part of the crew on Jason's ship, the Argo. Their sister was also non other than Helen of Troy. The coin itself is very worn and with good reason. I discovered it on my friends farm where I've had quite a few Roman finds, including several other silver denarii. After some deliberation, the museum declared the silver denarii part of a scattered hoard and the coins were put through the treasure process, before being disclaimed (meaning there was no interest from the museums in acquiring the coins and so they were returned to me). The museum believe that the hoard was buried towards the end of the first century AD. They've come to this conclusion as the most recently minted coin from the small hoard originates from the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian who reigned between 81 & 96 AD.

Therefore it could not have been buried before his reign & there seems to be no coin of an emperor later than Domitian, so it's unlikely that it was buried too long after his reign, otherwise you'd expect to find later coins. Therefore this denarii was in circulation for the best part of 250 years! Which isn't unusual for republican denarii believe it or not. An article that I read recently suggests that in the first century AD a denarius was roughly a days wage for a Roman soldier, so we can assume that it had a fair bit of spending power. Some people like their coins to be in pristine condition so that they can see every minute detail, but often, finding a coin in that sort of condition means that it was probably dropped not long after it was minted. It hasn't got the wear and distress of a coin that was carried in a purse and that changed hands on a regular basis. This coin however, well this coin spent almost 250 years being traded across the extent of the Roman Empire. It was changing hands before, throughout and after the time of Christ. I often say to myself and others 'if this item could talk, oh the tales it would tell...' but of every item that I've had the good fortune to discover, this is the one. I think that if this coin could talk, it would keep me captivated for days and I love it



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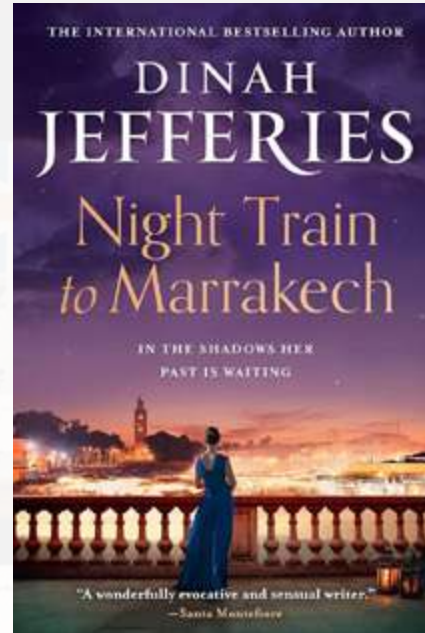
# Castle Bromwich Library Book Club

## Night train to Marrakech by Dinah Jefferies

In 1960s Marrakech a young girl travels to meet her estranged grandmother. Vicky Baudin steps on to the train through Morocco looking for the truth about the woman who gave her father up for adoption decades before. Clemence Petier lives in a kasbah on the edge of the Atlas Mountains, her background shrouded in mystery. But the past holds secrets that threaten them both.

*This is the third book in a series, but it reads perfectly well as a stand-alone. A beautifully descriptively written book that really brought the place to life. It is a story of secrets, betrayal, and danger. The plot is gripping with lots of twists and turns. If you like stories about families and secrets set in exotic countries, you'll love this one.*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member

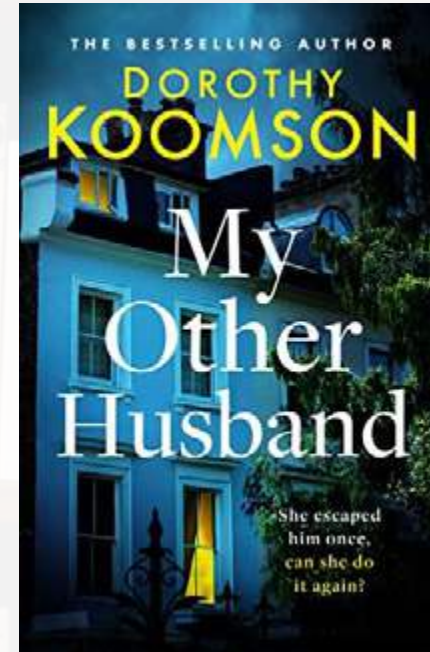


## My other husband by Dorothy Koomson

Cleo Forsum is a bestselling novelist turned scriptwriter whose TV series, 'The Baking Detective' is a huge success. Writing is all she's ever wanted to do, and baking and murder stories have proved a winning combination. But now she has decided to walk away from it all - including divorcing her husband, Wallace - before her past secrets catch up with her. As Cleo drafts the final ever episodes of the series, people she knows start getting hurt. And it's soon clear that someone is trying to frame her for murder. She thinks she knows why, but Cleo can't tell the police or prove her innocence. Because then she'd have to confess about her other husband.

*This was a totally engrossing tale of past crimes and control, and tension and suspense are in plentiful supply. There are lots of twists and turns which keep you gripped right until the very last page. A brilliant book, that I would recommend over and over again.*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member



## Child of the ruins by Kate Furnivall

Two families divided by war. An entire city on the edge of disaster. 1948, Berlin. World War II has ended and there is supposed to be peace; but Russian troops have closed all access to the city. Roads, railway lines and waterways are blocked and two million people are trapped, relying on airlifts of food, water and medicine to survive. The sharp eyes of the Russian state police watch everything; no one can be trusted. Anna and Ingrid are both searching for answers - and revenge - in the messy aftermath of war. They understand that survival comes only by knowing what to trade: food; medicine; heirlooms; secrets. Both are living in the shadows of a city where the line between right and wrong has become dangerously blurred. But they cannot give up in the search for a lost child.

*This is a great novel about three women, each fighting their own demons in post war East and West Berlin. The story is disturbing, absorbing, horrific, uplifting and totally wonderful. Don't miss it!!*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member

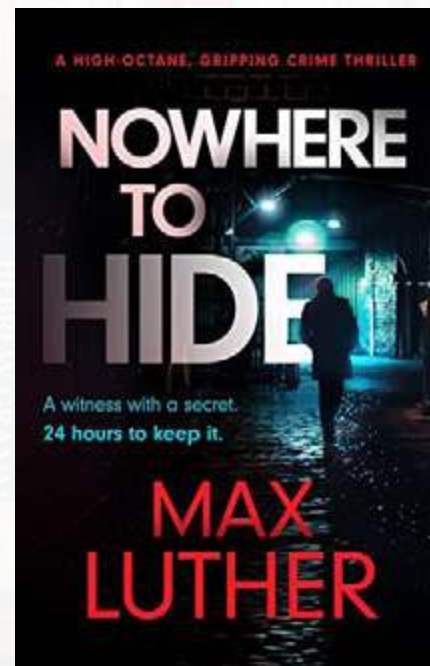


## Nowhere to Hide by Max Luther

When the witness protection program fails catastrophically, Sarah Bennett is forced to go on the run, narrowly escaping with her life as she is hunted across London by the organised crime group she is imminently due to testify against. With the National Crime Agency compromised, private bodyguard Alex Drayce is hired to find Sarah and keep her safe. But with Britain's most powerful criminals on their trail, he'll need to use every weapon in his arsenal to keep them both alive. Because one thing is certain: Sarah knows something these people want to keep hidden, and they'll go to any lengths to keep it a secret.

*Be prepared for a fast-paced, action-packed, thrill-ride from the beginning to end of this book. I loved the page turning suspense. I highly recommend reading!!*

Review by Castle Bromwich Library member



**Cllr Martin McCarthy,**  
Castle Bromwich Ward  
(Solihull MBC)

## February update

Welcome to February in Castle Bromwich, it is good to see our daylight hours beginning to lengthen once again. Our Councillor New Year's resolutions have focussed on making our area a safer and tidier place to be.

We would like to record our thanks to our Castle Bromwich litter pickers for all their work over many years that keeps our area clean and tidy.

Keeping our School Children Safe, new 20MPH speed limits.

Consultation on the introduction of 20 MPH Speed limits for roads around Castle Bromwich Infant School is now complete with responses to this being generally supportive.

The new 20 MPH limits will be introduced over the coming months on the following Roads: -

Selworthy Road, Windleaves Road, Hazelhurst Road, Wyckham Road, Elmfield Road, Hawthorne Road, Heatherleigh Road and Yew Tree Road.

This coverage should also reduce the rat running through this area that has blighted these roads for so long.

Many thanks to all residents who responded to our Consultation.

### Pavement parking.

Many drivers think that parking two wheels up helps traffic flow but the reality is that parking at the kerb helps to moderate the high traffic speeds that are so often a threat to all our safety. And enough safe space is allowed for pedestrians and disabled wheelchair users that are often forced onto the road.

Currently parking two wheels up is illegal in London but not yet in Solihull, What do you think? Should this change?

### Chewed up Grass verges.

We have received several complaints about chewed up grass verges, often Delivery vehicles are mentioned, this damage costs us all money to repair, we are looking for picture evidence to enable the Council to address this, if you see evidence of this please send a picture to our email address given below.

Traffic Regulation orders have been approved to address school parking issues on Bentley Road, Springfield Road and Marlborough Road.

### Lanchester Park update.

The Football Pitch continues to be damaged by off-road vehicle use.

We continue to push for signage reminding off-road car and bike riders that the area is an SMBC Public Park and that such careless vehicle use is Prohibited.

### Keeping our through footpaths clean and clear.

The leaves on the New Street to Wentworth have been reported for removal.

I will be walking many of the other paths during the month to establish any maintenance needed.

### Solihull Apprentice show 2024.

This is a great opportunity for young residents to learn about available apprenticeships and meet experienced apprentices.

This will be held during National Apprenticeship Week on 7 February 2024 at North Solihull Sports Centre between 4 and 8PM. Free parking is available on site.

### Regular Councillor Surgery at Castle Bromwich Library.

My next monthly surgeries are scheduled for Monday the 5th February and Monday the 4th March these take place at the Library at 14:00, no appointment is required, please email, or call me if anything urgent comes up in the meantime.

Our councillor emails are martin.mccarthy@solihull.gov.uk alan.feeny@solihull.gov.uk and leslie.kaye@solihull.gov.uk

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\*cost excludes cremation, burial, doctors or minister's fees. All costs are correct up until April 2021

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**Saqib Bhatti MBE, MP for Meriden**

# February update

Dear Resident,  
Despite record policing numbers delivered by this Conservative government and record funding, the Labour Police and Crime Commissioner has failed to combat crime in our communities and in our borough. I am in no doubt that my constituents and residents across Solihull borough have been let down by successive Labour Police and Crime Commissioners. With a record uplift to almost £800m there really is no excuse. The rising levels of crime leaves me under no illusion that we are being short changed. None of us should have to fear for our lives, families or our property.

Following Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, writing to the Home Secretary a consultation has been launched into the transfer of the powers of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to the Mayor of the West Midlands. This consultation is aimed at those living and/or working in the West Midlands and offers a chance to have your say on the structure of police governance across the region. I would encourage everyone to get involved and make sure their voice is heard. You can register your views on the topic by visiting the following website <https://www.gov.uk/>

government/consultations/west-midlands-police-and-crime-commissioner-functions-transfer or by emailing your views to [wmpcctransferconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:wmpcctransferconsultation@homeoffice.gov.uk).

I fully support the merger of the role of Mayor of the West Midlands and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The mayoral model is best placed to succeed in holding the West Midlands Police to account and make our community safer. This would allow a more joined-up approach to police governance, allowing crime prevention to be considered when allocating regeneration funds and developing more innovative programmes to tackle the root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour.

Over the last eight years crime across the region has more than doubled under the PCC model, despite in recent years the West Midlands Police seeing an increase in funding and recruitment. What is clear is that this is a leadership failure and a change in governance is necessary. In the next year, the West Midlands Police will receive a record £789.4m of funding from the government, this must be used to effectively tackle crime across the region and deliver the police service that our community deserves. The political failure of the Labour police and crime commissioner leads us to one conclusion; it is time for change.

I am so pleased to welcome the government's new record National Insurance cut. This will reduce tax for hard-working people by implementing the largest ever National Insurance reduction, meaning that 27 million employees across the country will benefit from their National Insurance contribution being lowered. This cut will reduce Class 1 National Insurance from 12% to 10%, meaning that employees will pay over 15% less on National Insurance. For the average person with a salary of £35,400, they will save an extra £450 per year. The average self-employed person will save an extra £350 per year.

The changes being implemented mean that for those on the average salary, personal taxes will be lower than in any other G7 nation. This is the government making good on their promise to cut taxes, having halved inflation taxes can be lowered in a responsible way that helps to grow the economy.

Lastly, I hope you and your loved ones had a lovely New Year. As ever, my office remains open and we are conducting surgery appointments, so do not hesitate to book a slot. My contact details can be found below:  
[saqib.bhatti@parliament.uk](mailto:saqib.bhatti@parliament.uk)  
0121 711 7029

## U3a – Magic memories

Just letting you know what you've missed if you didn't come to our Castle Bromwich u3a meeting at Arden Hall on Wednesday.

Mel Harvey, a much travelled magician had us in stitches with anecdotes and magic tricks.

We had great fun along with tea and mince pies.

Our next meeting is on 31st January 2024. 1.30 pm at Arden Hall. Start your new year making new friends and learning new skills.

For further details ring 0121 770 1538 to speak to Dave or Helen.



You never know what you're going to see at the u3a!



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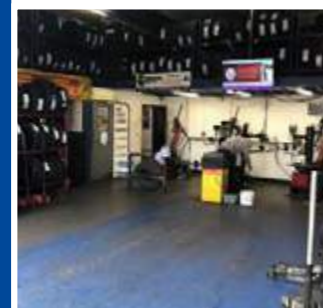
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# News from St Clement of Alexandria Green Lane, Castle Bromwich (known locally as St Clements Church)



A New Year is like an unwritten chapter in a book, or a complete book with blank pages, which you need to fill throughout the coming year. You are in charge, write the stories you want on those pages, make plans and then strive to follow them, which means filling the pages of the new book. Sarah of Manor Park Brides dressed the War Memorial for Remembrance on behalf of Castle Bromwich Parish Council and always dresses her windows to celebrate certain events throughout the year. This coming year St Clements' Crafters Group will be making daffodils in support of Marie Curie, an amazing charity that the Church has raised funds for in previous years. Also the Group will be helping to replenish red/white/purple poppies in readiness for the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in November - although this seems a long way off many knitted/crochet/paper daffodils and poppies will be needed. Sarah once again will be using these hand-made contributions for her amazing displays.

December was once again very busy. It's the start of Advent (from Latin adventus, "coming"), in the Christian Church calendar, the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas. Decorations can hold many memories that take us back to years gone by and our knitted Manger once again took pride of place in Church, reminding us all of those knitters who came to the Oasis Café, formed friendships and gave us a special gift. Much was planned and eaten from Christmas Lunches to Festive Teas, crafts to make, Father Christmas to visit, even Entertainment. Who knew we had such talented members of the congregation who stepped up to play the organ, guitar(s), sing and recite those poems and best of all we could all join in with those wonderful carols, some taking us back to our childhood. In the rush, take time to meet with family and friends. What the

coming year will bring, we have no idea, but it's important to remember Jesus said "love one another as I have loved you".

Thank you to Jenny Watts who has kept us informed about her allotment. Here she gives us her Autumn/Winter update, a bit shorter as we await the coming of Spring. We are now in the process of tidying up the allotment. We are weeding the beds and covering them with cardboard as this helps to suppress the weeds and protects the soil from the harsh winter rains which can wash away nutrients. Some beds are always left un-weeded as this gives somewhere for beneficial insects to hibernate. We have pruned all the fruit bushes as this helps them to produce more fruit next year. All the strawberry runners have rooted and been potted up ready to enjoy some delicious strawberries next summer. Kale, leeks and chard are continuing to give us some great harvests which are especially welcome when not much else is actively growing!

Overall this year has been a challenging growing year mainly due to the wet weather and lack of sunshine which meant the plants couldn't grow as well. However, we are looking forward to the next growing season. There will be more updates during the coming year.

### 4th Castle Bromwich Brownie Pack

We have ended 2023 on a high note having had a very successful year! We have taken our Brownies away on two weekend pack holidays where our girls have gained new skills and grown in confidence. We have enjoyed and celebrated all the Seasons in our traditional way.



We have celebrated parents' days, made crafts for Easter, had a Halloween Party, and commemorated Remembrance Day by making decorated lanterns and we closed the year with our Christmas Party with Santa as our special guest! To put the icing on the cake our own Brown Owl and Leader of the Pack received her 30 year long service Guiding Award which was presented to her in front of all our parents. Brown Owl joined us as a Brownie, and stayed with us while joining Guides, Rangers and later became a Young Leader prior to obtaining her Guider's Warrant at the age of 18. She is indeed "the Brownie who never left!" During Brown Owl's Guiding career she has supported Castle Bromwich District as a Mentor, District Commissioner, and now Leader of our Pack. Brown Owl has been involved in Activity Days, International Camps and much more. It is fair to say she will continue her time with the Brownies with an ever-increasing love of Guiding!

If you are interested in your daughter (who should be aged between seven and nine) joining us, then please go to the Girlguiding UK website under the Parents Registration page, and select 4th Castle Bromwich Brownie Pack to fill in your

daughter's details. We will then get an email from Girlguiding UK and we will be happy to contact you directly.

Who are the Holy Dusters of St Clements? It's a question we are often asked, they were given their name by Alma Spink who was a member of St Clements for many years and it stuck! Friday morning is a hive of activity from making sure the Altar is "dressed" in the correct colour to polishing (my goodness they get through some polish!!) steam cleaning, Henry comes out, painting to general small repairs. They come together to decorate the Church at certain times of the year. All through the week someone pops in to make sure all is "spick and span" for the coming week.

After all that singing we are in need of Refreshments and once again St Clements has a team, who with teapot in hand are ready to fill those mugs and yes there are biscuits, even cake on those special occasions for anyone who wants to stay and chat. Those that make the tea/coffee for us all to enjoy are an important part of Church life and together with the Holy Dusters we couldn't do without you. THANK YOU.

A reminder of our Beetle Drive on Saturday 9th March starting at 3 pm, which is the day before Mothering Sunday, no prizes for guessing what the theme will be !!

For further information about St Clements and Hope on Smith Wood where you can find times of Services, Groups and Events please visit our social media pages.

If you want to know more about our Services or Groups you can get in touch here:  
Phone: 0121 748 5550  
Church Website: [www.stclementschurchcb.co.uk](http://www.stclementschurchcb.co.uk)  
Facebook: [www.facebook.com/stclementschurchcastlebromwich](http://www.facebook.com/stclementschurchcastlebromwich)  
Email: [office@stclementschurchcb.co.uk](mailto:office@stclementschurchcb.co.uk)

# The Story of Castle Bromwich Parish Church

By David L Adams

At this remove in time, we can have no conception of the day-to-day organization of life in Wody Bramewice at the end of the 12th century – but these were very disturbed times.

We have no idea if Gervase de Pagnall's Charter of 1175 granting the right of serving Aston Minster church and its daughter chapels to the monks of Tickford Priory, near Newport Pagnall, gave any other indications.

Did it also signal its change from a rustic wayside shrine to a stone-built, fully consecrated chapel?

Quite what, or who decided on that change, we shall never know but we, here at the now Parish Church, have long held plans to remove some of the oak paneling from the interior walls of the Chancel. This will give us a better chance to date the stonework which lies behind.

It may, for instance, disclose medieval wall paintings as exist in Curdworth Church – although of course, at the time of the Reformation these would have been concealed under coats of limewash or it might show styling features that will help to indicate the date of the building. Until this work is carried out we shall not be able to move forward on this aspect of the puzzle – but this is only the first part of the mystery of our construction – the next part is even more complicated.

The opening paragraph refers to the uncertainty of "who called the shots?" in medieval Wody Bramewice – but this question is not exclusive to our area. My history of the Church of England (Revd. Jeremy Morris 2022) says "who appointed the parish priest? In some parishes it was either a monastery or, in a few cases, a wealthy layman who had perhaps funded the building of a church" – perhaps in our case?

Wody Bramewice was growing – now occasionally being called Chastel Bramwyck – with yeomens homes and perhaps the De Pagnall or De Somery tenant, building a substantial house where the Hall is now.

The need for extra space for the congregation must have been becoming apparent – again who made the decision? Whether to build "from scratch" or maybe a portion of the castle structure was becoming redundant – early recycling!?

Even in our remnant of the Forest of Arden, sizeable timbers were becoming very scarce, so re-use was not uncommon. We have no actual knowledge of when the church was extended but, let us suppose we reached say, 1347 – the twentieth year of the reign of Edward III (Plantagenet) Success at the battle of Crécy, where the English (Welsh) longbowmen slew the flower of the French nobility, had just occurred. Perhaps the euphoria of the victory had encouraged the considerable effort required to take down the framing of the former hall of the Castle and prepare it for the short but arduous journey up the hill and across the Chester Road.

My sketches show the nave in the early stage of construction and how it may have looked when it was first in use – say approximately 1355. Sadly the work would inevitably have been affected by the spread of the Black Death which, in some areas, caused a loss of one in three of the population! We need a dendrological survey to accurately establish the age of the timbers. This won't pin-point the construction date but it will give us a start from which we can use styling features in our assessment of the date.







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# Looking to ditch ‘New Year, New Me’ resolutions? Then do it with me, one day at a time

**By Hannah Jones**  
Editor-in-Chief of InYourArea



*KICK THE HABIT: Chances are those pesky promises you made to yourself to be a better/thinner/fitter/nicer you in 2024 have already failed and this is why you shouldn't worry*

I've not read her diaries and haven't seen her films, but a friend sent me this Bridget Jones reality check a few days ago, bang on the stroke of midnight on January 1.

She pointed out to me that nobody summed up the utter futility of making New Year's resolutions better than everybody's favourite spinster who scribbled: "New Year's resolution: Drink less. Oh, and quit smoking! And keep New Year's resolutions."

Now I don't drink and I gave up the occasional cuppa and mentholated peace-maker chaser about 25 years ago, so I can play the smug card there.

But over the years I've been guilty of over-indulging, over-thinking, under-exercising and under-keeping-in-touch, convincing myself it was OK to live on the Edge of Reason in December (thanks again, Bridget) because I'd find a new way of being on the first day of January; that THIS year would be THE year I'd change, be better, be wiser, be fitter, be thinner, be.... well, not me. I mean, isn't that always the aim in the bonkers search for Better?

I mistakenly thought for the past 40-(very)-odd years that I would wake up on January 1, take a deep breath and then a big bite out of the global appetite for self-improvement and only read motivational books for company.

A quick look at my phone tells me I'm almost two weeks into the 'New Year, New You' phase, so to stop myself from coming a cropper in the grand game of expectation vs failure and then beating myself up about it which always happened at this point in previous years, I've done something different.

I decided to make a resolution of a different kind: I resolved to not make any in January. I know! Talk about living dangerously.

As long as I care to recall, my New Year's resolutions have all gone belly up a whisker after Day One. I'm a gold medal-winning-fabulous at musing on what my shortcomings are and wanting to try to get a handle on them – the trouble is, I'm useless at committing and a dab hand at forgetting to remember to be good. So by about January 8 my determination to be more sociable, nicer, warmer, sweeter, happier, eat less carbs THIS YEAR blah blah blah have simply failed.

I think - maybe? - I've finally got it into my noodle that it's simply an inhuman expectation to presume you're going to change your life from January 1 and stick with the plan.

It's such a rubbish, cold, boring month to deal with anyway, so why not go for some nice distractions instead of self-flagellation? There's enough time to do a bit of that nonsense when the weather breaks.

What I think is better is to follow that well-worn mantra of attempting to be a better person, one day at a time. There's something in it, you know. Just let me and a Lena Martell song explain.

I once held hands in a room full of alcoholics (I was there with a friend, before you lot get the wrong idea about this teetotaler), who all chanted the same Serenity Prayer with such hope you couldn't help but be inspired. I've been thinking about that a lot lately, about how I was suddenly overcome with the realisation that self-knowledge - and maybe a dollop of forgiveness - really is empowerment.

Everyone in that cold old hall in Bristol tried to infuse each other with strength and encouragement, reminding the person next to them that all they should reach for was to be the best they could be In That Moment, and Do The Next Right Thing when presented with a smorgasbord of temptations.

Alcoholics, or other brave souls tackling addiction in this kind of fellowship head-on, have got one up on the rest of us because they try to live by that pledge every day. Instead of admitting defeat when it goes wrong - and of course it does and it will - they roll over into another 24 hours of possibilities and start again. And again. And...well, you get my drift.

In this way, they're not looking at an elongated stretch of failure like us New Year resolutionites - instead, they're taking change and taking charge one step at a time. For them - and it's a healthy way to tackle destructive inclinations when you think about it - they're not making long-term plans, but realistic day-long ones suitable for all commitment phobes.

Speaking for myself, the times I've signed up to make a grand gesture on January 1 never lasted. But what did stick, however, was that whole cycle of personal disappointment. And who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically nobody. No other kind of psychological bankruptcy is like this one. Defeatism becomes a rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. (There's push!) And the only way you can get yourself back in credit with yourself is to accept that you're entirely fallible. Easier said than done, I know.

Anyway, here it is then, a New Year's resolution with a difference that doesn't start or finish on January 1: It's to not put a name or timescale to my plan to be an incy wincy better version of me in 2024. To get there, and to borrow a piece of advice from Alcoholics Anonymous, I'm hoping God will grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference.

I just hope She's listening.

# Swift treatment for Verruca and warts



## What is a verruca & a wart?

Verrucae and warts are caused by a virus called the HPV virus. The virus gets in and grows in the top layers of the skin. The virus hides itself from our immune system and so can sometimes last a long time on our skin. They can become very uncomfortable when not treated and can spread to multiple parts of the body.



Award-winning verruca treatment available in our clinic  
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## How does it work?

Swift technology works by using microwave energy to treat under the virus causing verruca or warts and creates heat which causes an immune response.

Swift is a convenient treatment and requires no after care, meaning you should be back to your normal day to day activities the same day. Compared to other verruca treatments such as acid treatment, liquid nitrogen and verruca needling which require after care and can limit your activity after. Clinical studies have shown Swift to have an 80% success rate.



**If you would like to learn more about Swift and Verrucas and take look see the Swift machine we have a FREE talk on the SWIFT treatment on 17th Febraury at 10:00. Please call and book in for this half an hour talk at our practice in Castle Bromwich.**

# Free Foot Check ups for February

We all get regular check ups for our teeth but when was the last time you had your feet checked? It is something many of us overlook and neglect, and often until there is a problem with our feet we never think about looking after our feet. So many things can go wrong with our feet, from fungal nails to heel pain, that is pays to have an occasional check up. At Walsh Podiatry we are trying to change this for February by offering anyone a FREE foot check up appointment. This is a 10 minute assessment of your feet where we will look at your circulation, sensation and motion and then give you any specific advice you may need.

Just give us a call and book in for your free assessment in February! **0121 749 6313**  
Walsh Podiatry, 329 Chester Road, Castle Bromwich, B36 0JG, reception@walshpodiatry.co.uk

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## COLESHILL & DISTRICT GARDENING CLUB

**Monday 19th February**

is the Gardening Club's AGM

7.45 at Coleshill Community Centre

2 Temple Way,  
corner of Station Road, B46 1HH

Following this there will be a bring and  
share supper, wine, tea coffee will be available.

**£3.50 for members  
and £5.00 for visitors**

all will be made welcome!!

**For more information contact**

**Meda on 07549037477**

## UK Fostering

In the UK Today there are more than 70,000 children in foster care and the numbers of children entering the care system continues to rise. There is a desperate shortage of foster families to meet this growing need and we need your help! UK Fostering is an independent fostering agency set up by a team of dedicated professionals who are passionate about changing the lives of children.

UK Fostering receives thousands of referrals for children needing foster families every single month and we try to provide families who can meet the needs of these children. We do so by considering the child's heritage, family contact, schooling, emotional needs amongst other criteria. Due to limited number of foster carers available in the sector, we can't always provide the best match for each child. This has got to change.

UK Fostering are currently recruiting for foster carers from all walks of life and ethnic backgrounds so the question we want to ask you is; have you the space in your home and your heart to become a foster carer?

Eligibility for fostering is not restricted by age, sexuality, race, religion or by whether you are in a relationship. Foster carers are required to have a spare bedroom for the child who is matched with them and to have the passion, drive and commitment to help them through their trauma.

When you become a foster carer, UK Fostering provides generous fostering allowances to you, whilst also providing outstanding support and an excellent service to the local authority. This means that UK Fostering carers are highly in demand.

Many of our foster carers have been kind enough to share their stories on our social media so you can have a look for yourself and follow our team in the Midlands at [https://www.instagram.com/uk\\_fostering\\_midlands/](https://www.instagram.com/uk_fostering_midlands/) or <https://www.facebook.com/MidlandsUKF>

If you are interested in fostering (even if you are not sure if you are eligible) please get in touch for a chat with our friendly team who will be happy to explore with you.

**Ring us on 0345 222 0518**

**Email: [info@ukfostering.org.uk](mailto:info@ukfostering.org.uk)**

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## Come Home Safe – Teachers Teach, Drivers Drive

We were appalled to hear 16th January that the government are unwilling to consider changes to the Transport Act 1985 Section 19 and 22 permit schemes for schools.

As we said when we launched our Call to Action of 16 November last year, the law and regulations which govern school minibus transport is both unjust and confusing. It's potentially unsafe for the pupils and staff involved and also the general public. The current law is not fit for purpose.

Many private schools are required by law to operate at the cutting edge of best practice of minibus operation by having an Operators (O) Licence, which is commendable.

In contrast, state schools and other private schools (including those registered as charities), are covered by regulations, principally Section 19 under the Road Traffic Act 1985. This results in poorer safeguards for pupils and drivers.

The Section 19/22 document states that it is "not a legal document and doesn't provide a definitive interpretation of the legislation." It further states that DVSA staff "can't advise on the legality of your operation once the permit is granted. You should seek your own advice if you're in doubt about this."

It is evident that there a two tier safety approach within the current legislative framework and the confusion produced is unsafe.. This is outrageous!!

### Our view

After discussion with many people within education and elsewhere, it is clear that schools have two choices in this unjust and potentially unsafe situation:

- Legislate for best practice – which means all school minibus operators operate under an O Licence.
- Use commercial minibus and coach operators to provide school transport.

These can co-exist and there are currently excellent examples of both models of practice in different schools, with many thousands of schools not owning minibuses at all.

Overall, the way forward is to implement O Licence legislation. To ensure safe practice for all, the law must be simple, succinct, straightforward and routinely enforced and recorded.

So we are looking for urgent support from Government to redress the current inequality in safety regulation in safety for young people and teachers alike.

This is a matter above politics, it is a matter of life and death.

**Stephen and Elizabeth Fitzgerald**  
07904101583

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- ✓ 99p bar (7pm-10pm) on selected drinks
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# Pet Page

## Henry's Friends - Dog walking service

Hello, I'm Michelle and I run Henry's Friends Dog Walking Service. I have extensive knowledge of rural walking in the wonderful B46 countryside.

I offer adventurous small group walks (3 dogs), for dogs who can go off lead, are friendly towards other dogs and people and have good recall.

These are varied rural walks along country lanes, over field footpaths and through woodland. In warmer weather, a splash and a swim in a stream are also included!

I also offer paired walking, for dogs who can't go off lead but do like other dogs. These are a mixture of local walks and sometimes walks further afield.

Various walking equipment can be used (if deemed suitable), to give your dog 'on lead freedom,' so that they can be paired up with a pal for a fun trip out.

Individual walks are for either one dog on its own or multiple dogs from the same household who prefer to be walked alone.

This can be for many reasons: reactivity, nervousness or because they are puppies or elderly dogs who require just a short stroll. Maybe your dog is recovering from

a medical procedure or an injury etc or perhaps you just want your dog to receive undivided human attention and interaction. Whatever the need, just ask. Walks are available at weekends too. This is such a useful service to call upon.

My pet pop-in visits are great for puppies or elderly dogs, who need some company during the day. Food and water can be refreshed and a short walk or potter round the garden can be given.

I can also provide pet sitting in your own home, so if you'd like a couple of hours or a day out or even a weekend away, then your dog's care needs can be covered.

All services are discounted for multiple dogs from the same household.

So whether your dog is an avid adventurer or just prefers a peaceful pootle around the block, Henry's Friends Dog Walking Service, hopefully has something for everyPAWdy and all at very reasonable rates.

Weekdays or weekends, whatever the weather! Hope to meet you and your dog soon.

## Here are some top tips for winter dog walking

- Grit, salt and de-icer. During the winter months, there is likely to be grit and salt on the roads and pavements, which is bad for your dog's feet and can also make them ill if they lick their paws, so remember to give your dog's paws a rinse in warm water when returning from your walk.
- It is really important to let your dogs sniff. It's how they get so much of their information. There is a lot of communication going on between other dogs, from what they can sniff. It's really good for their well-being. So please let them sniff when you're out and about; it is important.
- Depending on the age and breed of your dog, you may need to consider building up the duration of walks. Don't go from a 10-minute walk to a 2-hour one for obvious reasons. We know how much we can ache if we do any exercise, so bear that in mind. If your dog is not used to walking, build up the duration gradually. If you have an older dog or young pup or are just generally unsure about how long you should be walking your dog, then always speak with your vet.
- Be aware that not all dogs are off-lead and can go off-lead; some dogs have injuries or are rescues that may have had traumatic experiences and may be undergoing some rehabilitation work. So, if your dog goes off the lead, please do your best not to just let your dog approach other dogs without seeking permission first.
- Keep your dog away from frozen water, such as lakes, ponds, and rivers, as it's impossible to tell how secure the surface is. If you think they will be tempted to jump in, keep them on a lead.
- Don't forget the poo bags, and always have more than you think you will need; just like us, our dogs are not always like clockwork, so it's always handy to have spares in case.
- Ensure you wash away any de-icer that might have spilt when topping your car up as this is highly toxic to dogs.
- Snow can become trapped in dogs' paws, so keep their hair short between their pads to help this.
- Ensure you keep your dog and yourself safe when walking in the dark. There are lots of USB rechargeable collars for your dog available, as well as reflective coats, leads, and flashing lights. Wear lighter colours yourself and invest in a good torch.
- Depending on your dog's breed, size and coat, it might be necessary for your dog to have a coat depending on the weather conditions, but it will vary from breed to breed. But remember to do what is right for your dog and ensure they are comfortable.
- Make sure you keep yourself safe, walk in lighter areas that are well-lit, ensure your mobile phone is charged and you have it with you so you are contactable and make sure someone knows where you are.
- Please remember that it's a legal requirement to have a tag on your dog's collar with your surname, your address and your postcode. While it's not a legal requirement, I'd also recommend your telephone number on there.

## Birmingham Dogs Home - Forever homes



### August

**Breed:** Presa Canario

**Gender:** Female (N) **Age:** 2  
Meet August, a 2-year-old Presa Canario cross who is looking for her forever home!

August is a sweet and affectionate girl who loves nothing more than cuddling up on the sofa with you and

playing with her toys.

August is a quick learner, and she already knows her basic obedience commands such as sit, give paw, and recall, although she has been known to push her luck on occasion, so does need further help learning basic manners.

Despite being young, August has a lot of energy and can be boisterous, but this just means that she needs regular exercise and mental stimulation to keep her occupied. August has been fully HalTI trained in our care, to make walks more enjoyable. She would

be best suited for Quiet home with owners who are willing to commit to these needs and keep her calm. August would do best as the only pet in the home, where she can receive all the attention and love she deserves. August is very under socialised with other dogs and does need to be the only dog in a home, but she would strongly benefit from additional socialisation whilst out on walks.

If you are interested in adopting August, please contact the centre on 0121 643 5211 to enquire.

## Calling all dog owners in B46 and a bit beyond!



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Are you looking for a reliable, qualified, and dedicated dog walker? Then Henry's Friends Dog Walking Service is here to help.

What I offer:

- **Dog walking:** rural or town walks
- **Pet visits:** check-ins to ensure your dog is happy and comfortable
- **Pet sitting:** company in the comfort of your own home, when you can't be there.

Contact Michelle at Henry's Friends Dog Walking Service for info:

Call or text 07757 699434

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## PRESSURE GROUP'S PLAN TO SECURE URBAN GREEN SPACES FOR THE PUBLIC

The Open Spaces Society<sup>(1)</sup>, Britain's oldest national conservation body, has made a host of recommendations to secure urban green spaces for public enjoyment.

These recommendations have been published by the House of Commons' Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs Committee, which last year conducted an inquiry into the ecological, environmental, and human benefits of green space, and the most effective solutions to making cities greener and nature rich.

The society proposes among other things:

A full review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>(2)</sup> to take proper account of open spaces.

A national plan for open spaces, with a standard for the amount of green space to be provided, and ring-fenced funding to secure good-quality spaces close to people's homes.

A mandate on developers to provide open space as integral to all major development, and to dedicate that land as town or village green<sup>(3)</sup>, so that local people have rights of recreation there and it is secure for ever.

An improved process for Local Green Space<sup>(4)</sup>, with stronger protection to ensure that local open spaces are not vulnerable to development.

An amendment to permitted development rights and permission in principle for development so that new development does not adversely affect public rights of way.

Says Nicola Hodgson, case officer for the society: 'The government has missed significant opportunities for tackling the urgent nature and climate crises. It has failed to bring forward strategic policies that would enable the planning system to work positively for nature and people.'

'The current open-space provisions and policies in the planning system relating to the disposal of open space are designed mainly to assist developers rather than to protect existing green space. Mitigation measures may not even benefit the same neighbourhood as that which has lost green space.'

'We say that the planning system must give the same or greater priority to the protection and creation of open space as it does to other infrastructure requirements. Provisions to secure robust legal protection and funding for long-term maintenance of urban green space must be addressed urgently. Councils should be adequately funded to improve access for recreation and protection of open space using the powers available to them [see the society's guidance to local councils].'

'We look forward to the report from the EFRA committee, and hope that it can make a real difference to open space protection and provision,' says Nicola.

[www.oss.org.uk](http://www.oss.org.uk)

1. The Open Spaces Society was founded in 1865 and is Britain's oldest national conservation body. It campaigns to protect common land, village greens, open spaces, and public paths, and people's right to enjoy them.

2. The NPPF was first published in March 2012 and last updated in December 2023.

3. Town and village greens are land where the public has enjoyed 20 years informal use without permission or challenge. A landowner may voluntarily dedicate a town or village green without such evidence. Once registered, the land is protected from development by section 12 of the Inclosure Act 1857 and section 29 of the Commons Act 1876, and local people have legal rights of recreation there in perpetuity.

4. Local Green Space is included in the NPPF (paras 105-107) and is designated by planning authorities when the local or neighbourhood plan is introduced or updated. The effect of designation is not clear, the NPPF merely states that 'policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts'.



Kingsmead Field in Canterbury, Kent, voluntarily registered as a town green by Canterbury City Council in 2019.

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# Interiors & Decorating

## Platinum February Update



We thought we'd start the year off by looking at some of the various decorative features of houses and the history behind them as well as giving you some ideas on how to go about decorating them. Many of these features started life with a practical purpose that was eventually no longer necessary and so they became purely decorative. Other features were decorative from the start.

**Cornice:** This is more commonly known as coving and is used to cover the join in the corner between the ceilings and walls. Historically it was a standard feature in most properties but maybe less common in more modest houses. Large stately homes would have very ornate designs inspired by classical architecture with the most intricate designs reserved for the most prominent rooms and rooms that would host guests.

**Dado Rail:** A dado rail is a thin strip of wood that runs around the whole room at a height of around ninety centimetres. They are more common in period properties such as Victorian and Georgian houses and are rarely installed in new properties.

This is a shame because they can offer many varied options for decorating. They were originally introduced in the Georgian period when furniture such as chairs would be leant against the walls- the dado rail prevented the furniture from damaging the walls. Once the Victorian era was underway they started becoming more of a decorative feature until they eventually stopped being used. They were re-introduced in the early twentieth century as a purely decorative feature. Most commonly these days they are painted with white gloss, satin or eggshell in line with the rest of the woodwork. It can however be very effective to use darker colours on the woodwork to make it more of a feature. Another interesting look is to paint the dado rail the same colour as the walls for a more subtle feature. It can also add interest to use a different colour or variation of the colour on the walls above and below the dado rail.

**Picture Rail:** Very similar to dado rails these are usually situated closer to the ceiling and were originally used to hang pictures from. If you visit any stately homes or watch historical period TV dramas you may have noticed pictures hung from chains attached to the picture rail. These days they are purely decorative and as with dado rails usually painted to match the rest of the woodwork. The area of wall above the picture rail is known as the 'frieze' and is usually painted white as part of the ceiling but interest can be added by experimenting with different colours. As a point of interest, although these days the frieze is simply a small section of wall, it was originally an ornate plaster moulding that ran from the cornice down to the picture rail.

**Skirting Board:** This is the wooden trim that runs around the base of the walls. It was introduced to disguise the transition between wall and floor and to protect the walls against knocks and bumps. As dado rails fell out of favour in the Victorian era skirting boards became bigger and more of a feature. These days they are often very minimal and simplistic in design.

**Ceiling Rose:** Rarely fitted these days, a ceiling rose is traditionally a very elaborate circular plaster moulding that would be fitted to disguise where the light is attached to the ceiling. When they were first introduced people were still using gas lights. The elaborate design of the ceiling roses was intended to catch the smoke that rose from the gas lights. They were also often designed with holes in them to allow the fumes to escape between the ceiling and the floor above. They are now only installed for decorative purposes and can be a very effective way of adding interest to an area that is often over looked. They are usually painted the same colour as the rest of the ceiling. Anyone that has painted a very intricate ceiling rose will know that it takes a lot of patience to ensure you cover all the difficult corners in the design.

**Architrave:** This is the strip of wood that frames the doorway- sort of an extension of the skirting around the door frame. Its function is to hide the usually untidy join between the plaster wall and the door casing and also to cover any cracking caused by shrinkage and movement between the two. The word architrave comes from the beam or lintel that sat on top of columns in classical architecture.

**Corbels:** These are ornamental brackets used to decorate archways in many period properties. They can be very imposing so they require a room with a lot of space but when done well they can turn an otherwise bland arch into a stunning feature.



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## Independent Scrutiny Panels



Do you want to learn about and see how the police should be using their powers and give us your honest opinion about how we are doing? If so, joining our Use of Police Powers Scrutiny Panels may be of interest to you.

In our Scrutiny Panels you will have the opportunity to watch Body Worn Video of Stop and Search or Use of Force (which includes an officer taking hold of someone's arm, using handcuffs, deploying a police dog and using a baton, irritant spray, Taser or firearm) and provide your honest feedback on how we did.

We are committed to increasing transparency with all communities across Warwickshire and our Scrutiny Panels play a key role in this.

We welcome applicants who live, work and study in Warwickshire. We are particularly looking for people who have been subject to stop and search or use of force, or knows someone who has, to consider applying.

To apply the application form can be found here [Independent scrutiny panel](#) | Warwickshire Police or email [EDHR@warwickshire.police.uk](mailto:EDHR@warwickshire.police.uk) for more information.

## Independent Advisory Groups

We are asking for people from all communities and backgrounds to come forward to help Warwickshire Police keep your communities a safe place to live and work.

By joining an IAG you'll be invited to provide vital advice on different issues such as critical incidents, policies and procedures and the impact they may have on your communities. Although we cannot always act on everything, when we can't we will explain why, and we will always value your ideas and input.

We are reshaping our IAGs, so this is an exciting time to join. If you are interested or would like more information please visit our website [Independent advisory groups](#) | Warwickshire Police or email [EDHR@warwickshire.police.uk](mailto:EDHR@warwickshire.police.uk) and we will be in touch.

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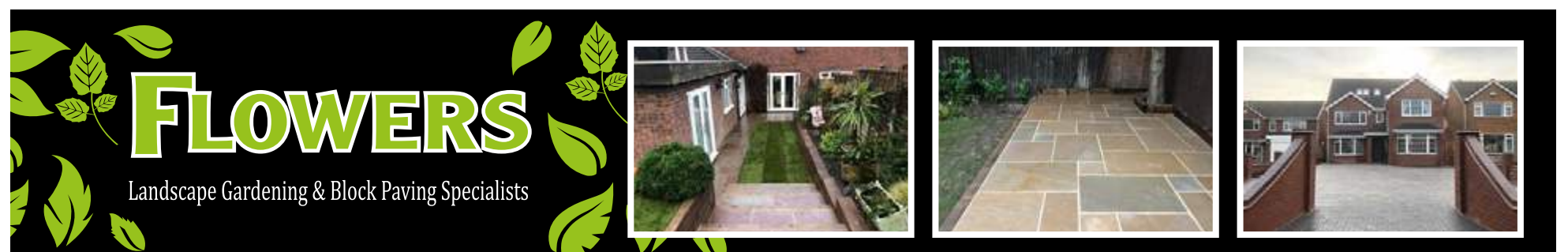
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## Attention Craft Stall Holders



**Water Orton Cricket club is holding a Craft Fair on Saturday 23rd March 2024.**

If you are interested in booking a table, please contact Daphne on **07784088163**. There are limited spaces, so it's first come, first served.



# Local Sports



## Congratulations to Water Orton cricket team after a success 2023/24



Water Orton Cricket Club (WOCC) picking up Div 3 champions trophy. Shaluka, WOCC first team capt, picked up the trophy at an award ceremony held at Edgbaston cricket ground. First team players and the club chairman, Pete Cole, were also in attendance and proudly collected the award off Oliver Hannon Dalby

Skipper shaluka devinder was quoted saying " its been a real tough few years for the club, so it's so pleasing that we are ushering in a new era with success by winning trophies and enjoying our cricket again" water orton that field three sides on a Saturday, the first eleven will now compete in the second division of the Warwickshire cricket league. Shaluka added " We've had some really talented players join our ranks over the last couple of seasons and we've been able to give them the chance to showcase their skills, hopefully this may encourage anyone looking for a new challenge to come and get involved"

Award winner was the WOCC's very own Podge, who picked up best player... Podge has had a successful season with 30 wickets, an average of 4.60 runs per wicket. The best match figures were 6 wickets for 3 runs including a hat-trick . A great performance fully deserving best player award.



Shaluka first team capt and WOCC chairman Pete Cole collecting the awards at Edgbaston



Pete Cole with Podge and Ibrahim Alikak

Podge said "It was a pleasure to receive this award on a personal level and for the WOCC which has been my club since a child (a few years ago now admittedly). It just shows that hard work individually and togetherness as a team can grind out the result we needed to put us in a position for promotion in the 2023 season. More of the same this season will put us in prime position for promotion in 2024. I wouldn't have been anywhere in the run in for this award if it wasn't for the rest of the lads so

a big thanks to all of you."  
#UPTHEWOCC



Podge being presented with his award by Warwickshires cricketer Oliver Hannon Dalby

Many thanks Andrew Walker



# Local Sports

## 2024 Will Be A Tough Year For Coleshill Endurance Athlete Paddy Doyle



Regardless of the winter weather conditions, former Paratrooper and ex RAF / Army Reservist Paddy Doyle will be digging deep to maintain his fitness levels, aiming to achieve not only his 850th career physical fitness challenge and World Record but the 900th milestone. Doyle will be adding to his sporting feats target sport categories which will be archery and rifle disciplines.

"I have been having skills training with GB archery and will have coaching from the National Bore Rifle Association in January kayaking, mountain biking, cross country military speed marches combined with target sports will be demanding but I am looking forward to it."

Doyle's aim is to achieve the global World Fitness Endurance Challenge Record Title of 1000 physical strength speed stamina feats covering the most sporting disciplines, Scotland's multi World Record Holder and rated GB fittest man William Cannon set the target in 2021, to date Cannon has over 630 records and Doyle has 839.



## Water Orton Cricket Club Social Events 2024/25 is a new Season, with new beginning's and new ideas!

Experience the newly developed website for information of events, matches, cricket teams, venue hire and membership opportunities.

Please enquire for more information via the below website and email address.

New Website: [www.waterortoncc.com](http://www.waterortoncc.com)

New Email contact address for membership, venue hire, cricket matches, recruitment and ladies and junior sections.

Please contact: [enquiries\\_wocc1@outlook.com](mailto:enquiries_wocc1@outlook.com)

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages available for members

**So, what is on at the WOCC.....**We have the following tribute acts and events booked FOR YOU to experience these are super great nights.

Elton John 2nd March, Lionel Richie 28th Sept, Rod Stewart 12th Oct, Tina Turner 16th November. Tickets are available upon request via the email address, please list in title for your preference. They are limited and do sell out.

We have the Cheltenham Gold cup day



T10 tournaments running throughout the year

Teams of six, various teams play each other via a league and knockout system throughout the day, with the bar open and entertainment planned for other teams and spectators to enjoy.

We also will hire the venue out for occasions, again please enquire for availability and costings

### WANTED

Cricket Players for the first team div 3 Champions and second Saturday teams. Sunday team players are also required.



Sponsorship opportunities, match day player of the match, why not have a sponsorship board to advertising your business to players and spectators, or even sponsor a player and have your company logo on social media.



Juniors girls and boy's players of all ages for those willing to learn and those players developing into the district or county players. We have experience coaches to help push you in the right direction and we will give you the opportunity to play and hopefully be put forward into the Warwickshire cricket trial program. Alan Dabbs is running the juniors/ladies

### Water Orton Cricket Club Youth Section

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Starting Friday 12th April 2024

Mini Storks (boys & girls) 4-7 years old.

**4.30-5.30pm**

Beavers (boys) 8-11 years old.

Hens (girls) 8-15 years old.

**5.30-6.30pm**

Academy (boys & Girls) 12-15 years old.

**6.30-7.30pm**

We also provide ladies coaching sessions on a Thursday evening starting at 6.30p.m. on 18th April 2024 Water Orton Cricket Club, Coleshill Road.

There are opportunities at Water Orton Cricket Club for players and parents. This is a community club supporting community interests and pushing the development of players.

We are always after new coaches and will listen to new ideas. If you would like to play or help or lean to run a team, we can help you achieve this with the right guidance and courses being offered by Warwickshire county cricket board Men, ladies, girls and boys teams, players, coaches and helpers are all welcome at the WOCC.



# Coleshill Town F.C.

## Coleshill Town FC match reports

All Northern Premier League Midland Division games

Monday 1st January 2024

Sutton Coldfield Town 2 v 2 Coleshill Town

A visit to our near neighbours, and a reunion with ex manager Cameron Stuart, his back room staff, and several ex CTFC players. A very even first half was turned on its head just before half time when Alex Smith was sent off, unfairly picked out as the culprit for a goal mouth melee. Coleshill unexpectedly took the lead just after the break, a fine solo goal by Sam Fitzgerald but then it was backs against the wall. The home side equalised just after the hour but Town re took the lead when Chris Cowley scored direct from a corner, although Captain Niall Rowe claimed he got the final touch. Sutton piled forward and got their second ten minutes from time and then Coleshill held on for a well earned point.

Saturday 6th January

Coleshill Town 2 v 2 Corby Town

Another good game between two evenly matched teams. The first half finished goalless as the two sides cancelled each other out. City took the lead within three minutes of the restart. Jonathan Letford then equalised on the hour mark, his first for the club, and he deserved that for the hard work it puts in. Cambridge scored from the penalty spot two minutes from time and it looked like it was a defeat for Coleshill but the Coleman levelled the score in the dying seconds with a shot from Alex Tomkinson, with his rarely used right foot.

Saturday 13th January

Lye Town 3 v 1 Coleshill Town

An action packed game, numerous chances at both ends and both goalkeepers pulling off save after save. Lye took a narrow lead on the stroke of half time. Early in the second half Coleshill had a great shout for a penalty but it mattered little as Niall Rowe lashed a corner into the roof of the net to level the scores. It could have gone either way but Lye's forward pair proved the difference as between them Lye scored two more to secure the points.

Saturday 20th January

Cambridge City 4 v 3 Coleshill Town

Coleshill started brightly but found themselves 2-0 down by half time. A rollicking at the break made a difference and Jonathan Letford pulled one back, Cambridge went 3-1 up, Letford scored again and a George Washbourne cracker levelled the scores at 3-3. After being two down a draw would have been a great result but the home team scored a winner with one minute left on the clock.

## Coleshill Fown FC. Juniors mini soccer

### We have a new sponsor!

Thank you so much to Leon Brown and LNR Grabhire Ltd.

Coleshill Town FC Mini Soccer has produced teams for CTFC Juniors for the last four years and Leon was part of the coaching staff in the initial stages. His sponsorship now means the Mini Soccer is sustainable and we can continue producing teams season on season.

### THANK YOU!

Mini Soccer sessions are on a Friday evening 4.30-5.30 at Coleshill Town Football Club, Pack Meadow, Packington Lane. B46 3JE for players Reception to Year 4. All abilities welcome. First session Free then £15 for 4 sessions.

For more details contact Alan on 07791740976

## Water Orton & District Tennis Club



First can we wish all our members, neighbours and club sponsors a belated Happy & Healthy New Year, which hopefully will be another successful year for our community club.

We are now planning our calendar and setting up our membership groups for 2024, for which all newcomers will be made welcome. There are a few spaces for Saturday morning junior coaching groups, adult beginners group on a Tuesday evening, and our Cardio Tennis fitness group on a Friday evening. There are a spaces in our ladies session on a Thursday evening, from 6.00pm until 9.00pm, just drop in as and when you can at a time to suit you.

Our adult improvers group on a Tuesday evening, has several spaces so if you have played before but not for a while, then this is the group for you. Our mixed adults on

a Friday from 7.00pm also have a few vacancies, as we intend to expand some of the groups numbers.

Its a very welcoming friendly club and all standards and abilities are made to feel welcome. Our coaching team are all LTA trained and DBS accredited. They are there for you if you need any help. Come and have a few "taster" sessions before you decide on becoming a member.

If you want to find out more about us, times costs etc just text our Club Secretary Paul Messenger on 07538 601246 or e-mail [paul.messenger82@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:paul.messenger82@hotmail.co.uk) and we will get all your questions answered and details returned to you as soon as possible.



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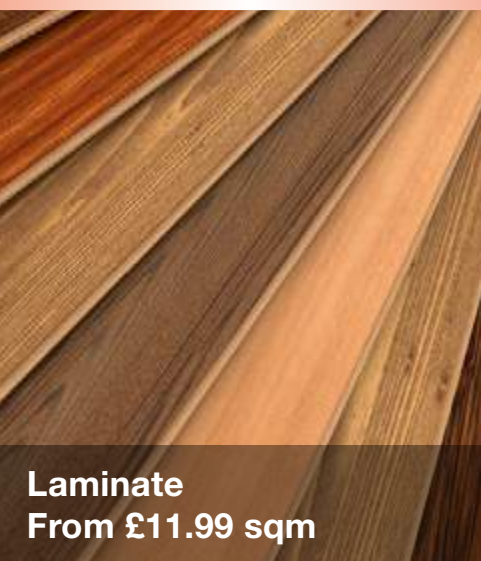
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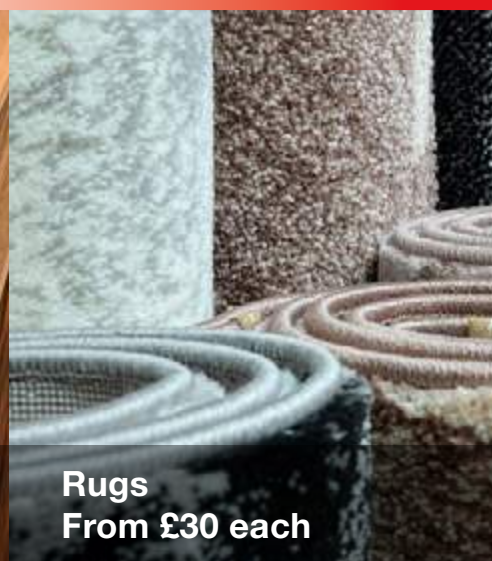
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