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Wednesfield magazine

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Dear Reader,

Well...we made it!

10 years ago, I had the daft idea to start a magazine and as I live in Wednesfield, I thought that would the ideal place to start.

They said it wouldn't work...They said there wouldn't be enough content to fill a magazine every two months. Others said, give it a try and see what happens.

I did and we're still here. And it's all down to you, the readers, our hugely valuable advertisers and those who contribute...So thank you for being part of the adventure. Read more about this journey on page 16.

I'm writing this in mid-January, so the New Year, New Me thing is still going well.

This year I turn 59, so I'm not yet knocking on the door of the big 6-0, but I'm at least walking down the path. Like many men of my age, I've gained a few pounds over the years, and in my adult life, apart from a month, here and there, I've regularly consumed a fair amount of alcohol.

I've been a member of the local gym for about 10 years, but you'd never know as my calorie intake has far exceeded the amount I've burnt off on the treadmill and rowing machine, so it's all been a bit pointless.

I'd really like to get out and do more; walk up hills, visit stately homes etc, but the demon drink makes me so lethargic, that on a weekend, half the time, I'm too hungover to get moving. So...this year I want to break that cycle and start living a bit healthier.

Of course, when you read this, it'll be three or four weeks after the 1st January, but that doesn't mean you have to wait til next year. Start tomorrow, or better still, start today!

I've already noticed a difference. I feel livelier, more focussed and my eyesight has definitely improved – and that's after just a couple of weeks.

Let's see if ${\rm I}$ can keep it up. Progress report in the next issue.

Due to the increasing cost of print, more than ever, our advertisers are vitally important to the to the continuation of this magazine. Please have a look at their adverts and if you do purchase anything from them, PLEASE TELL THEM YOU SAW THE ADVERT IN THEWEDNESFIELD MAGAZINE!

The next issue will cover April and May and will be out on 29th March so if you want to be in it, please contact me by 8th March.

Enjoy your read!

Simon



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A Choir of Friends

It's a cold Tuesday evening in January and Michael Todd has brought a birthday cake to the City of Wolverhampton Choir's first rehearsal of the year. He has just turned 88 and wants to celebrate with his friends, including conductor Hannah Spedding. Between Michael and Hannah (17) there is an age gap of seven decades, but they share a love of choral music. Michael, who sings bass, says, "I can't imagine not singing. I've been singing in choirs since I was 11. In those days, you were expected to sing at school. That was how you learned music."

One of the reasons classical choirs are shrinking is because many schools no longer have choirs. St Peter's in Wolverhampton, where Hannah will be taking her A levels this summer, is one of the exceptions. Hannah sings in the school's senior choir, plays in two school bands, and is a member of St Peter's Collegiate Church choir. She's also preparing for the role of Morticia Addams in the school's production of The Addams Family musical!

So why, with so many opportunities to make music with people her own age, does Hannah choose to spend her Tuesday evenings conducting the City of Wolverhampton Choir? "Conducting the choir is an extremely rewarding job," she says. "I get to experience the choir's growth and development, not just as musicians but as friends. They are an extremely welcoming group who are always open to trying new music and building their skills!"

Brian Bosworth (tenor) first joined the choir in 1962, when it was called the Civic Choir. As he recalls, "Concerts were held in the Civic Hall with





100 singers, the CBSO and London soloists". The choir is now a fraction of that size, but Brian says, "I still enjoy learning new pieces and getting the thrill of discovering in rehearsal how the different parts blend together so beautifully."

One of Hannah's favourite memories is a recent one: "Members invited as many people as they thought would enjoy singing and, with a great turnout, had a lot of fun singing traditional carols together in our last rehearsal before Christmas!"

While the choir has played a key role in keeping people like Michael and Brian mentally and physically active during retirement, it should be a useful stepping stone for Hannah, who hopes to study music.

Find the City of Wolverhampton Choir on Facebook or contact info@cityofwolverhamptonchoir.org.uk.

The City of Wolverhampton Choir rehearses at St Andrew's Church in Whitmore Reans on Tuesday evenings (7.30-9.30 pm) in termtime and welcomes new members.

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Please see answers on page 47

Across 1

- Loss of hair (7)
- 5 Royal male (4)
- 8 Permit (5)
- 9 Musical performance (7)
- Curved structure (4) 11
- 12 Noblewoman (8)
- Backless seat (5) 15
- 16 Jack in a pack of cards (5)
- 19 Contemplate (spiritual) (8) Egyption goddess (4) 21
- 23 Small onion (7)
- Flat-bottomed boat (5) 25
- 26 Grasp, clutch (4)
- 27 Proof of payment (7)

Down

5

6

7

24

- Assigned (9) 2
- Daybreak (4) 3 4
 - Ordinary, unremarkable (6)
 - Ornamental fish (3) Approaches (5)
 - Underwater detection device (5)
- Slapstick circus performers (6) 10
- Listen surreptitiously (9) 13
- Mail service (6) 14
- Effigy, maybe bronze or marble (6) 17
- 18 Benefit, advantage (5)
- 20 Volatile flammable liquid (5) 22
 - Adept, capable (4) Chop, clip (3)





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Walsall Council Receives £75k Veolia Grant for Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve

Walsall Council has recently been awarded a grant of £75,000 from the prestigious Veolia foundation. This grant will be used to enhance Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve, in the hope that it remains a thriving and biodiverse habitat for both flora and fauna.

As part of the funding, Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve will undergo a range of improvements, including the clearing of vegetation, upgrading path works, and enhancing the ponds. The reserve's entrance will be rejuvenated with the installation of a new notice board, ladder board sign, and a remarkable sculpture. Additionally, two new disabled-friendly entrance gates will be introduced, promoting inclusivity and accessibility.

In addition to the Veolia grant, a smaller grant has also been secured. Walsall Council has been awarded £2,059 from the Tree Council's Branching Out Fund for planting trees and hedgerows around the site. These additions will not only enhance the aesthetic appeal but also bolster the ecological value of the reserve.



Councillor Gary Flint, Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces at Walsall Council, said, "The grants received are a testament to our commitment to safeguarding and enhancing the natural heritage of Walsall. Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve is a cherished treasure that not only supports a rich diversity of plant and animal life but also provides a tranquil space for local residents and visitors alike.





"The enhancements enabled by the Veolia grant, coupled with the support from the Tree Council, signify an exciting future for Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve. Walsall Council looks forward to continuing its efforts in promoting biodiversity and preserving this invaluable ecological gem for generations to come."

• Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve is a wetland site located in the borough of Walsall, West Midlands, UK. The reserve is managed by Walsall Council and supported by local volunteers. It serves as an important refuge for various plant and animal species, contributing to the region's ecological diversity.

- Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve, nestled in the heart of Walsall, is a precious wetland site that showcases the region's natural beauty. The reserve's historical significance dates back to the last ice age, where the land was shaped by the melting glaciers, resulting in vast wildflower grasslands, marshes, and ponds.
- Once a quarry for sand and gravel, as well as a coal and clay mining location in the 19th century, Fibbersley Local Nature Reserve now features disused railway lines, ponds, and flooded quarry pits. This diverse landscape plays host to an array of plant species, including celery-leaved buttercup, fool's-watercress, and yellow iris.
- The reserve provides a sanctuary for numerous amphibians, boasting a regionally significant population of great crested newts. The presence of herons, willow warblers, linnets, and yellowhammers add to the rich avian biodiversity, with The Friends of Fibbersley recording over 70 bird species in 2016 alone.

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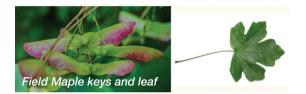
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Wildlife in Wednesfield

One of the things that I enjoy about winter is seeing the shape of trees without their foliage. I've never been too good at identifying the trees, shrubs and bushes that we have here in the UK and every winter I try to learn to see their shapes and then attempt to carry that through into the spring. The tree that I've particularly concentrated on trying to learn to identify this winter is the Field Maple.

The Field Maple is our only native species of maple and, like its exotic Canadian cousins, is capable of producing maple syrup, although it's a long process and fraught with difficulty.

The tree is characterised by small, dark green, shiny leaves, with five lobes and rounded teeth. They fade to a rich, golden yellow before falling in autumn. The 'keys' or seeds are similar to sycamore seeds but are often tinged pinky-red and don't hang down but stick out horizontally.



The Field Maple can grow to 20 metres in height and perhaps a little more It produces the hardest, highest-density timber of all European maples, which is a warm, creamy-brown colour with a silky shine.

Traditional uses of the wood include wood-turning and carving and its wood is also popular for making musical instruments, particularly harps.

In terms of wildlife, the Field maple is attractive to aphids and their predators, including many species o ladybird, hoverfly and birds. Lots of species of moth, such as the Mocha, feed on its leaves.

The flowers provide nectar and pollen sources for bees

and birds, and small mammals eat the fruits.

Locally, the Field Maple can be found along the Wyrley and Essington Canal and in Rough Wood so keep an eye out for it. The other tree/shrub that I've looked out for over the winter is the ubiquitous privet. Now, I know what you're thinking, privet?!!!, but yes, privet. The species that many people have in their gardens is Japanese privet, but our own native private has one of the most beautiful perfumes of any of our wild flowers, is much better for our wildlife and to the untrained eye is almost



indistinguishable from the Japanese plant.

The easiest way to tell the difference is in the leaves with wild privet having smaller, oval and more elongated leaves than its Japanese cousin.

It is widespread across the country and is one of those bushes that once you start to see it, seems to be everywhere. In the autumn, wild privet produces black berries which are highly poisonous, but loved by birds and there is a large moth, the Privet Hawkmoth, that depends on it exclusively for its caterpillars to feed on.

The Privet Hawkmoth is a large colourful moth, and its caterpillars are striking and absolute whoppers! Locally, again, the best place to see (and smell) wild privet is along the curly Wyrely.



And finally, keep your eyes open for skeans of wild geese flying back to Greenland and Iceland to breed and for large flocks of Fieldfares and Redwings going home to Scandinavia to breed. I had hoped for Waxwings this year, but although there were a few more than usual, it wasn't really a Waxwing winter; never mind, perhaps next year. And listen out for bird song, because Spring is just around the corner.

Well, that's it for this issue, so don't forget to look up, look down, look all around and keep enjoying our wildlife.

Dave H - wildlifeinwednesfield@google.com

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10 Years and Counting!

By Simon Archer (Editor and Publisher)

So, we made it! The Wednesfield Magazine is officially 10 years old!

I'll be honest, even I didn't think we'd make it this far. As I said on page 6, many doubted the viability of a magazine dedicated to Wednesfield, but others were more encouraging and well, we're still here, so we must have done something right!

It's not been without its challenges. A personal battle with cancer in 2016, the loss of a parent in 2017, a pandemic – which meant not publishing two issues in 2020 and war in Ukraine that pushed up print prices in 2022/23.

But anything worth having shouldn't come easy and let's take a moment to mention the huge support I've had from local businesses, some who've been with me since day one. For those that haven't worked it out yet, it's advertising revenue that makes the magazine work. I have pretty hefty overheads with printing, production (Graphic Designer and computer system) and distribution, plus a few other costs. I have to sell a few ££££s worth of advertising, just to break even (and there have been a few times, especially during lockdown when that's all we did), so I can't stress enough how much I need the readers to continue to support those businesses who invest in the magazine. Without them, we disappear!

I also couldn't have done this without my trusty and reliable band of distributors, who go out in all weathers to Hilda, Doris and Fred (other OAPs are available) are able to keep up to date with what's going on. Not to mention my Graphic Designer, Nic, who works tirelessly to make the pages look good.



I must also mention those who have contributed features over the years. Some such as Ray Fellows are still sending me things to put in and I know lots of you love reading about the old Wednesfield. We've also had regular features on gardening, health and fitness and Phil Bateman has shared news of the canal in previous issues. Dave Hampton now keeps us informed of Wildlife matters and the number of features on schools, churches, clubs, charities and similar organisations is countless. In fact, there can't be many people that haven't been in, or at least been linked to something that's appeared in the magazines.

On a personal note (and I may get emotional writing this bit), it's been an immense pleasure meeting you all. Some of those who I've met with have left us now and others have become really good friends. I've learnt so much about the area that I live in – and I hope you have too.

I hear people say they have the best job in the world.....load of rubbish! I have the best job in the world!

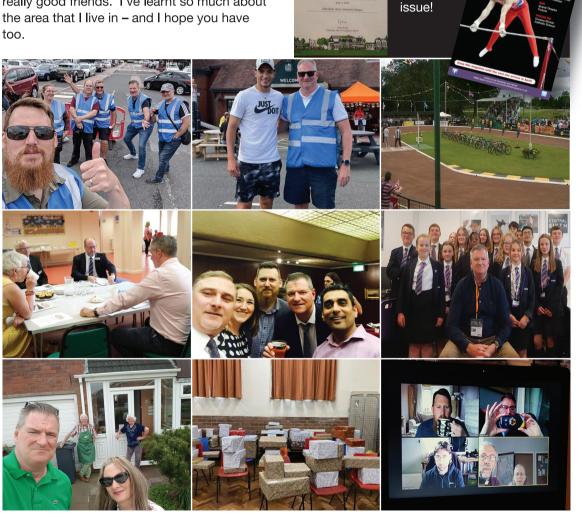
I've been asked when I'll retire. Why on earth would I want to stop doing this? As long as I think people still like and want to read the magazine, I'll keep producing one.

Hopefully, in 2034, I'll be writing another piece, to celebrate reaching 20 years!

Wednesfield

Please keep reading and sending in suggestions for articles – and buying from advertisers......and thanks again!

Our first



Sureena Brackenridge



I'm Wolverhampton born and bred. I live here, work here and have raised my family here. I'm not a career politician, I'm a Deputy Headteacher.

Growing up in Wolverhampton gave me the values I have today. Life was tough back then, but it shouldn't be today. We need change; a fresh start for Wolverhampton and Wilenhall.

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William Felgate, father of Mrs Compton, contested the Will on the basis that it had not been duly executed, she was not of sound mind when it was signed, and that she could not possibly understand or approve its content. Mr Felgate was in considerable financial trouble at the time and stood to gain if the Will was invalidated. The solicitors defended the Will on the basis that Mrs Compton fully understood what she was doing when she gave her instructions to them, and she knew that the document being presented to her on 29 August was the Will she had employed them to write. One of the doctors acting as a witness had specifically asked the question "this is your Will, do you wish this lady (Mary Ann Flack) to sign it?" to which she had replied "yes".

The court's ruling on the matter is still relevant to this day. The Will was deemed to be valid on the basis that Mrs Compton had capacity when she gave her instructions to Mr Parker, the Will was in keeping with those instructions, and she knew that it was her Will even though she may no longer fully appreciate its exact terms.

It is more common than you may think for a person's cognitive powers to significantly decline in between giving instructions and a Will being prepared. Also, we are now at a point in time where we may be living longer, but lack of mental capacity in old age is increasingly becoming an issue as a result. The safest course of action when making a Will is always to seek professional advice first, particularly where questions of mental capacity or vulnerability are going to be concerned.

For more information you can call 07789 520910 or email info@bensonwilliams.co.uk.





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Wilde West Ambitions

Wolverhampton Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) fighter Tim Wilde is targeting 'a big 2024' after his highlight reel knockout, despite having had spine surgery just 16 weeks before the bout.

Known as Tim 'The Experiment' Wilde, the Wednesfield man knocked out American, Mike Hamel with a devastating right hand in November and it was his first fight back from lumbar discectomy surgery, which involves shaving down the affected spine disks.

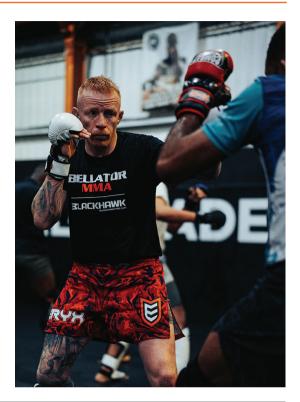
Magazine Editor Simon Archer interviewed Tim, while he was away training in Poland, to find out a bit more about his journey.

• When did you first get into fighting and in what discipline?

I started martial arts at the age of around 7/8. I first started training in Shotokan Karate at Seamless Tubes in Wednesfield, Wolverhampton.

What weight do you compete at?

I currently compete at a contracted fight weight of 155lbs or 70.3kg which is lightweight in MMA.





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Where (and where) do you train? Days/times?

I train 6 days a week, Monday to Saturday. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday I train twice a day normally 2 x 2/3 hour sessions. Wednesday and Saturday I train once (harder intensity) and I rest on Sundays. Most of my sessions are in Birmingham with my team Renegade MMA.

• Who trains you (current and previous)?

I train with elite level MMA fighters like Leon Edwards, Fabian Edwards, Tom Breese and many more, including fellow black country fighter Jai Herbert. I use various coaches from striking to wrestling to strength and conditioning.

How many fights, wins, losses have you had?

My current professional record is 17 wins 4 losses and 1 draw. My amateur record for MMA is 9 wins and 1 loss. So a total of 32 MMA fights.

What about titles?

I have won British and European titles on regional shows at both amateur & professional. My goal now is to win a world title in a big promotion.

· What was your proudest moment so far?



My last fight was my USA debut and wining that fight by KO against a highly touted American wrestler is up there as one of them for sure!

Who is your Manager?

I am managed by Nima Safapour from Moments Fighters Management.

Any advice for beginners?

Enjoy the journey and work hard and remember you never stop learning

What's next for you?

I am ranked 9th in the world in Bellator MMA and I want to win a world title in Bellator MMA or PFL MMA and currently I am waiting for an answer on which route I will be taking. The powers that be are currently deciding what the path is for me until I know I just keep focused and training hard.

 How long do you plan to carry on competing?

I have enough people around me and in my team who will tell me when I should call it a day. I feel great and having the best performances of my career so retiring isn't even in my mind.

Who would you like to thank?

I would like to thank all my sponsors, my team, my manager and all my coaches. Also a big thank you to everyone who supports me and follows my journey.



Please tell the businesses where you saw their advert.

'We're investing millions in the Black Country,' says West Midlands Mayor Andy Street

Millions of pounds in investment in the Black Country is regenerating town centres, reclaiming derelict brownfield sites and improving transport links – and there is lots more to come.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street says that huge amounts of investment are creating jobs, and giving people the skills they need to seize new opportunities. Schemes include:

• Work has begun on the new £8.1 million City of Wolverhampton College training facility as part of the City Learning Quarter vision. Due to be completed in July, it will secure hundreds of jobs in the local economy and create learning opportunities for thousands of students – specialising in engineering and automotive, including electric vehicles.

• £20 million will help fund Wolverhampton's Green Innovation Corridor, which aims to build on the city's growth as a centre for sustainable construction and create skilled jobs for local people in the emerging green economy.

• Just over £2 million will fund the historic Grand Theatre's innovative plan to buy a neighbouring 1800s building and turn it into an adjoining venue. This will allow the theatre - which just turned 129 years old - more space to host creative and performing arts activities.

• The family-run Wolverhampton company Drywall Steel Sections has secured £13 million to convert a long-derelict site into industrial units. The successful firm is already preparing to move to a new purpose-built factory on a brownfield site nearby, but the new units – for small businesses – are expected to create around 150 new jobs.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street said: "As Mayor, it's my job to ensure that investment comes into our region, and right now there are lots of innovative and exciting schemes underway in Wolverhampton.

"Bringing in major investment is key to the renewal of the Black Country, whether it's to support the high street, improve transport links, create training opportunities or find new uses for old derelict sites.



ANDY STREET: West Midlands Mayor Andy Street says a 'transport revolution is improving how local people get around the region.

"Working together with the Government we are seeing millions of pounds coming into the city that will make a real difference to local people's lives, creating job opportunities and boosting the local economy."

Innovative schemes are just the ticket for bus users

Andy Street says the region's bus network is on the road to a better future, thanks to innovative ideas that are driving up passenger numbers.

Andy said: "Buses are the backbone of our public transport network, providing hundreds of thousands of people with vital services every single day.

"Passenger numbers on our buses are now above pre-pandemic levels, but we are leading the way in getting even more people to climb aboard – from providing 600,000 free tickets to creating a charter to make sure passengers get a great service."

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is offering thousands of people 'try-before-you-buy' bus tickets as part of a £19 million Government-funded scheme to persuade more people to use the bus.

The incentive is being offered to employers to invite staff who travel by car to work to try the bus instead, meaning 600,000 free bus journeys.



MAN ON THE OSS: West Midlands Mayor Andy Street has helped secure millions of pounds of investment in Wolverhampton.

Andy said: "This innovative idea is just one of many improvements that are revolutionising our buses, with cleaner zero-emission vehicles, bus priority measures on the new Sprint routes improving reliability, and some of the cheapest bus fares in the country."

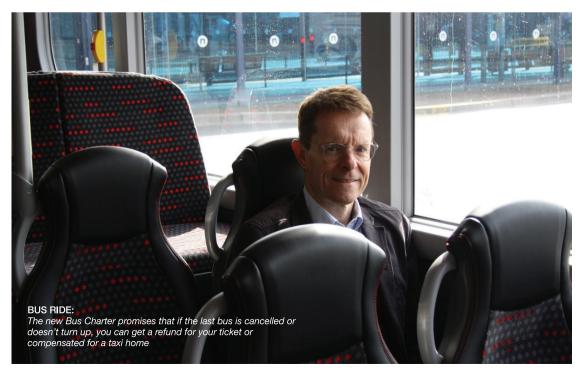
Under the West Midlands Bus Passenger Charter, bus operators have also made a commitment to deliver a minimum standard of service.

Andy said: "The charter makes key commitments to improve safety and reassure passengers, including staff visibility at our bus stations and daily patrols by our Transport Safety Officers.

"For example, the charter also includes for the first time a 'last bus promise', which means that if the last bus is cancelled or doesn't turn up, we'll refund your ticket or compensate a taxi home.

"This kind of innovative idea – along with low fares, network protection, dedicated bus routes, reduced emissions and new railway stations like the one being built in Willenhall – is driving a real transport revolution here in the West Midlands."

Promoted by Max Hopfl, on behalf of Andy Street, both at 1-7 Langleys Road, Birmingham B29 6HR.





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Wednesfield High Academy in the Community

During the Autumn term, we continued with the fantastic work Wednesfield pupils do with the community, from our prefects visiting Bentley Court Care Home, having a festive market open to all and delivering food parcels to those who need it most. We also had our first ever staff panto, performed to the pupils on the last day of term. This is only a snippet of what the parents, staff and pupils so at Wednesfield. Pupils have really demonstrated the Wednesfield Values and we would especially like to thank those parents involved with the Wednesfield Friends group. Without them, we would not be able to put on these events to the level that we do.

We have started 2024 as we mean to go on. We have an improving pupil attendance rate, stable staff body and a number of exciting initiatives for pupils to get involved with such as the new pupil council.

This year will see Wednesfield pupils travel on funded trips through the Turing Scheme to Italy, Sweden and Peru, we cannot wait to see the photos. We also have the launch of the first Duke of Edinburgh award in recent years, with over 30 pupils already signed up. Let's hope the English weather holds out.

This term, our houses (named after castles in the West Midlands) are competing against each other for the house cup through projects which promote being an active citizen. Our charity ambassadors will





be practicing their leadership skills whilst planning an exciting event to promote and celebrate comic relief. Alongside the team competition, there are also individual competitions where pupils are able to earn weekly rewards, half trembly party invites and trips.

The performing arts team are working hard to polish the performance of our annual school show-this year we have chosen Little Shop of Horrors. This will be performed at Dormston Theatre on 18th and 20th March 2024.

We have also had some exciting opportunities to build ambition amongst our pupils and support them in looking at their future plans, 10 of our year 9 pupils represented Wednesfield Academy at a competition at the University of Warwick. Pupils competed against several other schools to design their own holiday company in a French-speaking country. Our pupils were singled out by the keynote speaker for their inclusive business. November 22nd saw our first big careers event of the academic year with all pupils in Years 10-13 visiting out Pathways Careers Event. Over 20 exhibitors attended, including Imperial College London, Bangor University, Newcastle University as well as more local universities like Aston University and University of Worcester. On Tuesday 12th December, 30 Year 7 pupils were invited to the Russell Group University of Birmingham to take part in the Christmas lectures with a focus on Science and innovation.

Moving forward, we are excited to continue promoting our school values amongst our pupil body and involving the local community in our journey. Our next Wednesfield Friends events include community bingo on Thursday 8thFebruary from 6pm – this event is open to all. We also have our Year 7 'Just Dance' event. These events encourage community spirit both inside and outside of the Academy. Please see our social media pages and website for further information.

Interview with Mitchell Lane



If you look at reels (videos) on social media, you may well have seen someone with a local accent, doing recipes for meals under a fiver.

Meals By Mitch have been a big hit with local people – and those further afield – as we all look to make a few savings as utilities, food and interest rates have increased massively over the past couple of years.

Magazine Editor, Simon Archer, caught up with Mitchell Lane to find out more about his newfound fame and success.

SA: So, we know you're local by the supermarket receipts you show us on the reels, but where are you from exactly?

ML: I grew up and spent most of my childhood in Bilston, which is probably where the strong black county accent comes from! I'm now living in Wednesfield with my partner and 3 kids.

SA: What schools did you attend?

ML: For my primary school I attended Holy Trinity in Bilston, then for my senior years I went to St Peters in Compton.

SA: Do you have another job?

ML: I still do the same day job which I've done for a number of years now; I work in a factory in Walsall which manufactures nuts & bolts. Of course the passion is with food though, so I try to be as involved with the cooking side of things as possible!

SA: So, are you a professional cook or chef? And where did you learn to cook?

ML: I'm not a professional chef no, I've always wanted to be involved with food... but life's got a funny way of working out sometimes. You get comfortable in a job and next thing you know you've got kids and your in your 30's. I'm just glad to be able to fulfil that love for food now and take part in food shows, TV and cooking workshops etc.

SA: What or who prompted you to start doing the reels?

ML: It started off during the pandemic lockdown of 2020; I was at home and I thought I'd show people how to still make some tasty food while cooking on a budget. Then one day someone on my TikTok asked me whether I could make a meal to feed 4 people for a fiver... then it went on from there.





SA: When dd you realise the reels were becoming successful?

ML: It sounds a bit mad, but it still hasn't really sunk in how successful the reels have become. I'm still going about my day as normal, going to work, coming home, cooking tea etc. My day to day hasn't really changed all that much. I think when I got asked to do the BBC GoodFood show was a bit of an eye-opener into how successful things had become. It really hit home at that point.

SA: How many people watch the recipes?

ML: at this moment in time I couldn't even put a number on it! Some of the videos I've put up have racked up millions of views so it's really difficult to say. Still blown away by the outreach to be honest.

SA: Has there been one that's been a big hit?

ML: There's been a few that have done far better than I'd ever have expected... but the one that blew up beyond belief was the Christmas Dinner video I did in 2022. I basically showed people that you can make a fully loaded Christmas dinner to feed 6 people for 20 quid. I think it got over 6 million views and made Sky News and Newspapers. It was pretty incredible.

SA: I hear you've published a book? Tell me more about that...

ML: Getting to publish a book is probably one of my biggest achievements in life, not many people

can say they've published a book so it's all a bit surreal for me. It was published in April last year and get into the Sunday Times Bestseller lists... which still blows my mind.

SA: So, what next? Another book? TV? Film?

ML: My second book is due to be published on the 18th January... so not long to go! As for everything else, I just take it as it comes and don't plan ahead. I'm not going to get too ahead of myself. Whatever happens, happens. I'm happy with how things have gone up until this point so if anything else happens it is a complete bonus.

SA: Who's your favourite celebrity chef (other than Mitchell Lane)?

ML: Apart from myself, I've always quite liked Jamie Oliver... I always quite like Nigella (for obvious reasons).

SA: Which would be your favourite recipe?

ML: There's so many budget bangers out there... but one that really took my fancy was a roasted red pepper pasta I did towards the end of last year. Managed to pick up all of the ingredients for under a fiver and it was such a fresh tasting meal with a real depth of flavour from the roasted veggies.

SA: If you were on death row, what would be your final meal?

ML: I've always really loved my Caribbean food – would have to say a Curried Chicken, Rice & Peas, couple pieces of homemade fried chicken. Some flavours that would absolutely slap me silly!



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WEDNESFIELD **Community Centre** Pickering Road 3.30pm, 5pm & 6.30pm Dawn 07756 234690

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Windrush Scandal Explained



Who are the Windrush generation?

The 'Windrush' generation are those who arrived in the UK from Caribbean countries between 1948 and 1973. Many took up jobs in the NHS and other sectors affected by Britain's post-war labour shortage. The name 'Windrush' derives from the 'HMT Empire Windrush' ship which brought one of the first large groups of Caribbean people to the UK in 1948. As the Caribbean was, at the time, a part of the British commonwealth, those who arrived were automatically British subjects and free to permanently live and work in the UK.

What is the Windrush scandal?

The Windrush scandal began to surface in 2017 after it emerged that hundreds of Commonwealth citizens, many of whom were from the 'Windrush' generation, had been wrongly detained, deported and denied legal rights. As these shocking stories hit the headlines, Caribbean leaders took the issue up with then-prime minister, Theresa May. There was widespread shock and outrage at the fact that so many Black Britons had had their lives devastated by Britain's deeply flawed and discriminatory immigration system.

Why did the Windrush scandal happen?

Commonwealth citizens were affected by the government's 'Hostile Environment' legislation – a policy announced in 2012 which tasked the NHS, landlords, banks, employers and many others with enforcing immigration controls. It aimed to make the UK unliveable for undocumented migrants and ultimately push them to leave.

Because many of the Windrush generation arrived as children on their parents' passports, and the Home Office destroyed thousands of landing cards and other records, many lacked the documentation to prove their right to remain in the UK. The Home Office also placed the burden of proof on individuals to prove their residency predated 1973. The Home Office demanded at least one official document from every year they had lived here. Attempting to find documents from decades ago created a huge, and in many cases, impossible burden on people who had done nothing wrong.

Falsely deemed as 'illegal immigrants' / 'undocumented migrants' they began to lose their access to housing, healthcare, bank accounts and driving licenses. Many were placed in immigration detention, prevented from travelling abroad and threatened with forcible removal, while others were deported to countries they hadn't seen since they were children.

Their harmful and unjust treatment provoked widespread condemnation of government's failings on the matter, with calls being made for radical reform of the Home Office and the UK's immigration policy. In response to these demands, then Home Secretary, Sajid Javid announced in May 2018 that the Home Office would commission a 'Windrush Lessons Learned Review'.



YOU Could Be Entitled to Compensation!

Why you can claim

Before we start, we should clear up the massive misunderstanding that the Windrush generation is only those who came on the Windrush as it also encompasses the entirety of the Commonwealth who migrated to the UK between 1948 and 1973 and as a result of the Windrush Scandal the Windrush Compensation scheme came to be.

So, if you have you ever had any issues because you couldn't prove your legal right to live in the UK, whether a big or small issue, you could be entitled to compensation.

This could be due to:

- Losing access to benefits, housing and free healthcare
- Losing your job
- Being denied banking
- Missing education or a driving licence
- Being unable to travel
- · Facing problems with
- Detention or deportation
- Impact on life

As a result of not being able to prove your legal right to live in the UK.

WHO can claim?

You may be eligible to claim if:

- You came to the UK from any COMMONWEALTH country before 1988 Your parents came to the UK from any COMMONWEALTH country before 1973
- SOME Close family members (including grandchildren) may also be eligible.

How to claim

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE WINDRUSH COMPENSATION SCHEME, Visit gov.uk/windrush Help Team or call 0800 678 1925

If you need support filling your claim;

- Contact independent advisers We Are Group on 0808 196 8496 to book an appointment at Sian Computers who will assist you in completing your application.
- Contact Sian Computers at 01902 651698 if you have any questions.
- · Or scan the QR code to open up an online questionnaire



Top Winter Walks from the National Trust



Wrap up warm and enjoy some of the best walking trails at a National Trust place near you this winter.

Adventure into the countryside for invigorating cold-weather walks and soak up the beauty of crisp landscapes, cool air, and glowing sunsets. Meander along frosty paths in historic gardens, jump over puddles in parklands, or blow away the cobwebs exploring the hills and valleys of some of our most spectacular places.

Winter is the best time to notice nature and wildlife around you on your walk. Look for pawprints in mud and snow, listen for crisp notes of bird song and spot woodland residents foraging in the silhouette of bare trees.

Warm up after your winter adventure in a National Trust café or tearoom. Thaw out with a hot drink, shrug off the cold with a hearty soup or simply enjoy a well-earned sweet treat.

Put a spring in your step during the colder months with top winter walking trails near you:

Shropshire

Attingham Park

Upon entering Attingham's gates, the views open across 200-year old parkland to the Shropshire hills and the impressive Regency mansion emerges, against silhouettes of cedar trees.

Historic trees cluster in woodland glades and the River Tern meanders through the parkland attracting an abundance of wildlife including herons, swans and geese.

There's a number of walks including the popular Mile Walk which is suitable for pushchairs and mobility trampers, which are available to hire.

Carding Mill Valley and the Long Mynd

With amazing views to be had on a variety of way-marked walks, the beautiful scenery at the Long Mynd is perfect for a bracing winter walk.

The Chalet Pavilion offers the perfect pitstop for a warming drink and tasty treat.

Comer Woods, Dudmaston Estate



Trails crisscross Comer Woods, including the Explorer Trail a multi-use circular trail which begins and ends at the car park. Designed for everyone, including walkers, runners, cyclists and adapted wheelchair users. Stop off halfway along the trail at the Scout Camp, it's a great place to pause for some outdoor games.

A little further along the route, there's a great spot for den building. Challenge your family to build the best woodland shelter before continuing on your way. Follow the tree stump stepping stone path as you head out for more adventures.

Staffordshire

Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses

Blow away the cobwebs with a bracing walk on Kinver Edge. Climb to the top of the hillfort and take in a late winter sun rise or early sunset. On crisp, clear days enjoy panoramic views across three counties, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire.

Shugborough Estate

On clear, crisp days a stroll around the pleasure grounds is great for admiring the views across the whole estate. For frosty trees, the purple sheen of silver birch and wild deer walking through the mist, you can't beat a climb up to the Triumphal Arch and onto Satnall Hills. With the dieback of undergrowth, it's easier to spot some of the mammals which normally use it for cover.



West Midlands

Wightwick Manor and Gardens

Winter is the perfect time to see the structure of the garden, the evergreen geometrical yew hedging appears bolder and the architectural lines of the terraces and balustrades are clearer. Pick up a warm drink from the tea-room and take a brisk walk across frosty lawns, past frozen pools and through crisp woodland.

Moseley Old Hall

Wrap up warm and enjoy a gentle stroll through our garden and woodland. The Knot Garden looks particularly lovely after a dash of frost or a sprinkling of snow.

For more walks and further details visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/walking



Golden Glory

A new book on Wolves marks the 70th anniversary of them first becoming champions of England

Written by Bilston-born Steve Gordos, Golden Glory tells the story of the 1953-4 season which saw Wolves locked in a race with arch rivals West Bromwich Albion to win the First Division, which was then the top flight in English football.

The book takes the reader through a campaign which had Wolves and Albion neck and neck for the title, Stan Cullis's side finally emerging as champions by four points. Albion had glorious consolation by winning the FA Cup with a 3-2 win over Preston in the final at Wembley.

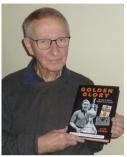
Albion's triumph completed a Black Country Double which had not been achieved before and has not been achieved since.

The book has a report and statistics for each Wolves game with the added bonus of comments on each match by "Commentator" - the Express & Star's Wolves correspondent Phil Morgan.

There are also pen portraits of each player and manager Cullis and his backroom staff.

Led by England skipper Billy Wright, Wolves had

some legendary players at that time - goalkeeper Bert Williams, centre-half Bill Shorthouse, wing-halves Bill Slater and Ron Flowers, and a forward line of Johnny Hancocks, Peter Broadbent, Roy Swinbourne, Dennis Wilshaw and Jimmy Mullen.



"It was a grand side and an

epic season with the ultimate winners uncertain until the last couple of weeks," said Steve who lived in Dover Street, Bilston and went to Villiers School.

"To remember that side you need to be pushing eighty like me and so the book may let the younger Wolves fans know just how good Stan Cullis's team were. For the 'ancient' ones it will revive some great memories."

The book is available from Geoffrey Publications (phone 07906 653104 email corbettnco1@gmail.com)



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Wolverhampton Centre Stage for Kabaddi World Cup

Wolverhampton has won the honour of hosting the knockout stages and final of the men's and women's Kabaddi World Cup in March 2025.

The announcement has been made after the city secured £500,000 from the West Midlands Combined Authority's and HM Government's Commonwealth Games Legacy Fund to support the global event.

Aldersley Leisure Centre, home of top-class international darts and snooker, will stage the quarter-finals, while the newly-transformed The Halls Wolverhampton, will host the semi-finals and final.

As well as staging the group matches alongside Birmingham, Coventry and Walsall, Wolverhampton will also host the opening event as the West Midlands becomes the first destination outside of Asia to host the sport's most prestigious tournament.

It will feature the world's best kabaddi players from leading men's and women's teams, including India, Iran and Pakistan.

Kabaddi is the fastest-growing sport in South Asia, and the second most popular after cricket. Originating in India some 5,000 years ago, the contact sport sees teams broken down into raiders and blockers, with the aim of scoring points by entering opposition territory, tagging an opponent and making it back into their own half without being tackled to the ground. It is now played in more than 50 countries, having grown in stature as a mainstream sport.





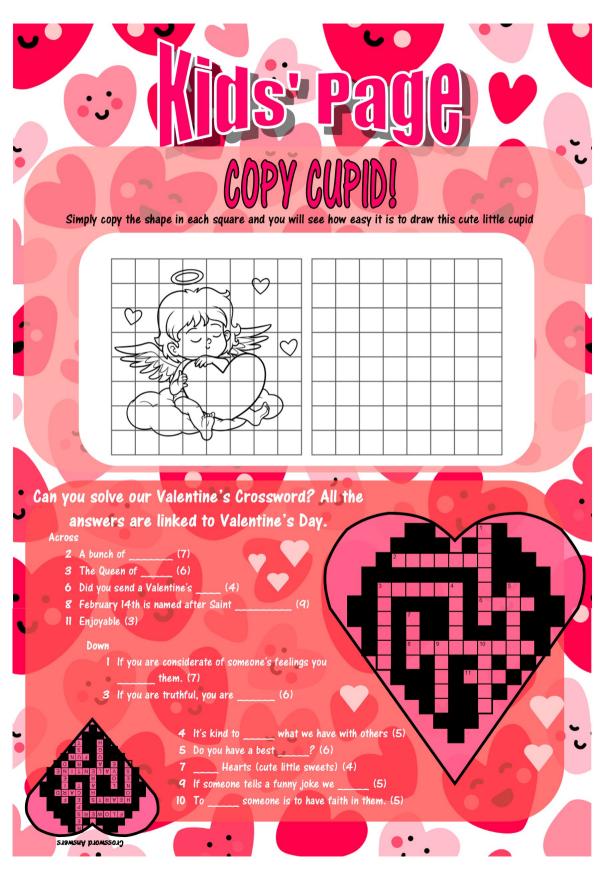
The 2025 Kabaddi World Cup is being organised by England Kabaddi, Scottish Kabaddi and the British Kabaddi League. The West Midlands Growth Company (WMGC), the region's official economic development agency, will support and champion the event to ensure its impact is felt across the West Midlands and the UK.



Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, City of Wolverhampton Cabinet Member for Visitor City, said: "We are delighted to be hosting the 2025 Kabaddi World Cup in Wolverhampton and the West Midlands.

"We're looking forward to welcoming men's and women's teams from around the globe and to hosting the finals, semi-finals and quarter-finals in our city.

"Events of this scale bring direct and indirect economic benefit and put Wolverhampton firmly on the map as a destination of choice for visitors."



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The Wolverhampton Young Citizen of the Year Awards

Do you know someone aged 13-25 who:

- Has gone the extra mile to help others, their community, fellow students, work colleagues or someone in need.
- Lives, works or learns in Wolverhampton?

Nominations for the **Wolverhampton Young Citizen of the Year Awards** are open 1 March to 31 May.

For more information and to nominate visit: www.wolverhamptonyoungcitizen.org.uk





The Rotary Clubs of: Bilston and Wolverhampton West • Tettenhall • Wednesfield • The City of Wolverhampton.



CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON C O U N C I L

Susan Vickers Foundation to Launch

Creating Opportunities for Care Leavers

After the success of Susan's debut book 'Traced' which documented her journey through the 1970s and 80s during times of traumatic racism. Shortly followed by her second book 'Love Susan' which chronicles the reality of life as an adoptee, local broadcaster, Susan Vickers is now set to launch the Susan Vickers Foundation.

Following the enormous support and feedback from both books, Susan wants to address the huge gap that many care-experienced young people have in today's society, so they can enjoy the life experiences they deserve, enabling them to have a full an enriched future.

Susan says, "Remember how we all went to school? Yes, the place where we were taught to read, write, do maths, understand history, and explore geography. Then there were those nerve-wracking exams that tested our knowledge, skills, and abilities."

"But do you know what? Our education wasn't limited to what we learned in the classroom. We read books and newspapers, went on excursions to museums, enjoyed pantomimes, joined clubs, and played sports.

These experiences contributed to our wider knowledge, vocabulary, social skills, and self-confidence. They made us who we are today and helped us take part in society."





Unfortunately, not everyone has had the privilege of these cultural experiences. As a result, disadvantaged young people, including those who have spent time in care, are left out in many areas of employment and society. It's not because they lack ability but rather the confidence to take part.

That's where The Susan Vickers Foundation comes in. The idea is to provide cultural experiences to young people so that they can develop the confidence to know that they belong in all areas of public life.

Working together with local businesses and communities The Susan Vickers Foundation's mission is to help these young people build bright futures through access to education, mentoring, mental health resources, and career development opportunities. We believe that with the right support and guidance, care-experienced people have immense potential to thrive. Our foundation will also focus on developing self-sufficiency, resilience and social skills to help young people transition successfully to adulthood.

"Children who are in the care system, are there through no fault of their own, so it is unfair for them to begin adult life feeling like they are excluded from enjoying life to its full potential," says Susan.

To find out how you could help or to donate head over to **susanvickers.com**.



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Memories of Our Wednesfield



Local Historian Ray Fellows looks back at the opening of King George's playing fields



Kathleen Saunders by the Lily Pond

King George V had deeply at heart the welfare of the rising population, and no happier or more beneficent means of perpetuating his memory could be devised than to provide throughout the length and breadth of the land, recreation grounds, to be known as King George's Fields.

The project had much to recommend it, the need for open spaces, to which young people and children could go for exercise, and games, safe from the perils of the streets. The scheme was a flexible one and could be carried out in each locality, according to its requirements, it enlisted local interest and support, it was helped by gifts of land, as well as money.

Each field would have a distinctive gateway of a uniform type, or other appropriate visible commemoration of his late Majesty, who died on 20th January 1936.

It was on the 3rd November 1936, that King George's Fields Foundation was constituted by Trust Deed. Wednesfield's King George Field was opened in 1939, at a capital cost of £8,500, of which a grant of £1,000 was given by the Foundation; the area covered 13.79 acres.

A contract was agreed between Mr Herbert Clay and Wednesfield Urban District Council for the erection of concrete wall, piers and gates at Amos Lane, Wood End and Tithe Road. The work was completed by the 30th November 1936.

In the park there was a paddling pool, a climbing frame, a pancake roundabout, a chute, large swings, small swings and up on the left opposite the tennis changing rooms was a sandpit.

I always remember the large trees that separated the top of the park from Nordley Walk, you could just squeeze through but on one occasion the park keeper, whose name was Bill, not sure of his second name, but he stopped us kids going through and told us off, that must have been in the early 1960s.

The old park or flower park as we used to call it was laid down in 1925/6. At one time the entrance was at the top of Duke Street by the allotments, as you went in a few yards to the left was the gents toilets, opposite was the ladies toilets that was on the junction of the pathways. If you walked on the path to the right of the ladies toilet after a few yards you came to an opening to the left that led to one of the bowling greens, today that opening is fenced off.

Looking through the fence you are able to see a large stone, this is said to be Harry Downing's stone that was moved from Rookery Street to its present position some years ago.



Gates to King George Playing Field

Continuing walking up the path, after a few yards to the right there used to be another opening that led to another bowling green, in the far right hand corner there was a small building where you could hire some bowls to play on the green, this area is now where the cage is today. The kids play football or basketball there.

Back to walking up the path, just to the right was the Tennis courts with a large green hut that was used as a changing room. Adjacent to the tennis courts was the Sons of Rest Pavilion, this was a brick built hall erected by public subscription in 1947 to provide comfort for elderly men.

The hall was centrally heated and had a kitchenette and was provided with chairs and tables of tubular steel. Many patrons that used the hall were in their eighties. The path to the left of the hall has a slope on it to the bottom gate by what used to be the Church Institute. This is the slope where kids used to bring their home made trucks to race down the slope, the trucks were made out of large pram wheels at the back and small wheels at the front held together by a plank of wood, steering was a piece of string tied near the front wheels, you would pull to steer.

Many a ride down that slope ended up in the large holly bush that used to be on the right at the bottom of the path, oh those grazed knees. At the bottom of the slope turn left and you would be at the back of the school, once St Thomas's now St Patrick's, following the path for around 50 yards to the left was the lily pond that had mushroom like stones connected by a chain, evidently to stop small children getting too close. There used to be two large greenhouses where plants for the park were grown and it was a pleasure to walk around and see all the amazing plants that had been planted.

You can now get from the park to the canal via the Trap makers bridge, this was opened on Monday 7th June 2010, at 11.00.am by City Mayor Malcolm Gwinnett.

The park has changed a lot over the years. Has it changed for the better?

Just one other point about the old park is that the majority of the trees have a small silver plaque with a number, this is to identify each tree. Have you ever noticed them?



Opening of the Paddling Pool 1939

To win a £20 Sainsbury's gift card, just answer the following question;

What year was the Sons of Rest Pavilion built?

Please send your answers to 24 South Avenue, Wednesfield WV11 1QL. Or email me at: fellows.raymond@yahoo.co.uk

Entries must be received by Monday 26th February.

The winner of the last competition was Linda Rowley.

If you have any stories or photo's you want to share, just send them to the above address. There is a History Society Meeting on Wednesday 21st February at 11.30.am in the lounge of the Vine Inn, all welcome



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Wednesfield Technology Primary: A Green Legacy for Tomorrow's Young Minds

In a pioneering development aimed at fostering sustainable education, Wednesfield Technology Primary is set to redefine the educational landscape in Wolverhampton.

The construction of this innovative school, led by Tilbury Douglas on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE), is progressing on the site of the former 112-year-old Edward the Elder school on Lichfield Road. Having stood as a derelict void in the community since 2007, the old school building was demolished in June 2022, marking the beginning of a new chapter.

Designed to inspire fresh approaches to teaching and learning, Wednesfield Technology Primary is being built to Passivhaus Classic Standard and will be one of only 20 Passivhaus schools in the UK. This standard focuses on utilising the very best of energy efficiency and optimal building performance, pioneering the way for a greener future.

The use of eco-friendly technologies and sustainable, low-embodied carbon emissions used in the building's construction creates a naturally healthy and comfortable educational space primed for the wellbeing of pupils. This includes improving air quality, maintaining consistent temperatures all year round, and harnessing natural lighting to boost pupils' concentration, wellbeing and classroom engagement.

Construction of the Academy also includes the refurbishment of the original Grade II listed caretaker's lodge based on the school grounds, preserving a piece of history from the prior school. This is being thoughtfully transformed into a family hub, which will be used to support and work closely with families and the wider local community.





The school will be part of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, a well-established multi-academy Trust with ten school across the Black Country area of the West Midlands.

Sir Mark Grundy, CEO of Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust, said: "We are delighted to be working with Tilbury Douglas on this very special school project. Our new Passivhaus learning space will not only nurture young minds but also cultivate responsible and environmentally conscious leaders of tomorrow. It's more than just a school; it's an investment in the future of our children and our planet.

"As a Trust, we are working hard to reduce our carbon footprint, and this energy-efficient school will help secure the future of our environment for the better. We look forward to working closely with the communities in and around Wednesfield and bringing the best opportunities that a Shireland education has to offer."

Cost savings from reduced energy usage will be reinvested directly into enhancing pupils' education and its specialised technology-based curriculum. This curriculum mirrors the successful model established at Shireland Technology Primary, the Trust's first technology primary school which was recently rated outstanding by Ofsted.

Scheduled to open in September 2024, Wednesfield Technology Primary will feature a 26-place nursery.

Applications for nursery places for children aged 3-4 from September 2024 onwards are now open. Families can apply and find out more by visiting the Wednesfield Technology Primary website. Families applying for reception places will be able to apply for a place via their local authority.





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Useful Information & Telephone Numbers

Community Hubs/Centres

Ashmore Park	01902 552490
Long Knowle	01902 552442
Low Hill	01902 552312
Wednesfield	01902 552218

Local Councillors/MP

MP Jane Stevenson	01902 722026
Wednesfield North	
Cllr Mary Bateman	01922 403960
Cllr Phillip Bateman	01922 403960
Cllr Rita Potter	01902 654599
Wednesfield South	
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	07552 211600
Cllr Ciaran Brackenridge	07890 964296
Cllr Jacqui Coogan	07919 626063
Long Knowle	
Cllr Steve Evans	01902 861498
Cllr Val Evans	01902 861498
Cllr Christopher Burden	07971 843811

Emergency Services

Anti Social Behaviour Unit	01902 551188
Crime Stoppers (anonymous)	0800 555111
Electrical emergency	0800 328 1111
Flood line	0845 9881188
Gas emergency	0800 111 999
Police/Fire/Ambulance	
Police (non emergency)	101
(Out of hours emergency)	01902 552999
Water emergency	0800 7834444

Health Organisations

Alfred Squire Medical Centre	01902 575000
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Dr Libberton & Dr Ram - Cann Rd	01902 739973
Heath Town Medical Ctre	01902 456211
Mayfield Medical Centre	01902 351666
New Cross Hospital (switchbrd)	01902 307999
NHS non-emergency number	111
Raynor Road Medical Ctre	0844 3879400
The Surgery, Woden Road	0845 0724628
Tudor Medical Ctre	01902 384999

Help Lines/Others

Citizens Advice Bureau	. 03444 111 444
Childline	0800 1111

National Careers Service	0800 100900
National Domestic Violence	0808 2000 247
RSPCA	0300 1234 999
RSPB	0845 1200501
Samaritans	116 123

Places of Worship

Church of Latter Day Saints	01902 724097
Corpus Christi RC Church	01902 731189
Dormition of Her Lady	01902 500216
Fallings Park Methodist	01902 733574
Gurdwara Sikh Temple	
Holy Trinity Church Street	01902 722840
Old Fallings Utd Reformed	01902 861961
Our Ladys Presbytery	01902 731189
St Alban's C of E	01902 732317
St Gregory's C of E	01902 783342
St Patrick's RC Church	
St Thomas's C of E	01902 723310
Wednesfield Christian Ctre	01902 689957
W'field Methodist Comm Church	01902 727130

Schools

Ashmore Park Nursery	01902 558116
Coppice Performing Arts	01902 558500
Corpus Christi Primary	01902 866840
D'Eyncourt Primary	01902 558778
Edward the Elder Primary	
Heath Park High School	01902 556360
Long Knowle	01902 558985
Oak Meadow Primary	
Our Lady St Chad's	01902 558250
Perry Hall Primary	01902 558538
St Alban's Primary	01902 558825
St. Thomas' C of E Primary	01902 558963
St Patrick's Primary	01902 556451
Wednesfield High School	01902 558222
Wodensfield Primary	
Wolverhampton City College	01902 836000
Wolverhampton University	
Wood End Primary	01902 558940

Libraries

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Crossword Answers

From page 10



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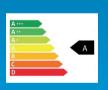
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