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Dear Reader.

Welcome to the April/May issue of Willenhall Life.

The theme for this issue is giving (no, I don't want any money from you!). Actually, it is my birthday on 24th March, but no, seriously, a card will do.

When I say giving, I mean doing things for nothing. People much older than me – sorry Mom and Dad! – talk about when we had a proper community, when people helped each other without wanting something in return. To be fair, I know that still happens, but almost certainly not to the degree that it used to.

I very much appreciate that it's tough out there for many people, with the cost of living etc. but there are a lot of people who have time on their hands and could contribute more to society.

When people think of volunteering, they probably think of working in a charity shop. That's a start and I know a few of them need people to help out, but there's so many more things you can do. I've written a piece in this magazine to expand on this. Please read it and see if there's anything you fancy.

In the last magazine, I mentioned my new healthy regime and promised an update. Well, I managed to go 42 days without an alcoholic drink after New Year's Eve and since then, I've kept to having a few drinks on a weekend and have been a regular visitor to the gym and have managed to reduce my cheese addiction, so, all in all, I think I'm on track for a David Hasselhoff body for the summer – we'll see...

I've also been along to see Ade and Adam at the new Shepwell's Club after hearing lots of good things about this new entertainment venue. I wasn't disappointed. Get down there to see the variety of acts they have lined up and support these people in their new venture.

Finally, an apology for the mix up with the last crossword. I always check the answers match the clues, but this time, I didn't make sure the clues match the grid. Please forgive me.

I hope you enjoy and appreciate this magazine. I couldn't do it without the invaluable support of our advertisers. Please have a look at their adverts and if you do purchase anything from them, PLEASE TELL THEM YOU SAW THE ADVERT IN WILLENHALL LIFE!

The next issue will cover June and July (hopefully, we'll have a good summer!) and will be out on 21st May so if you want to be in it, please contact me by 3rd May.

Enjoy your read!

Simon



Shepwell's

The New Entertainment Venue for Willenhall

A new state-of-the-art entertainment venue has recently opened in Willenhall.

Shepwell Green Social Club in Willenhall has been totally refurbished and renamed Shepwell's after an investment of more than £500,000 by co-owners, Ade Harrold and Adam Hall.

The club is the realisation of a long-held dream for both men, who have other local business interests.

Ade said: "It's taken a lot of hard work and money but we are proud to have a venue which Willenhall deserves."

The Bilston Road club has a new stage, a 12ft x 8ft LED screen, VIP booths, which has an exclusive bar and is designed to create the best atmosphere for big events, whether music or sport.

They also have a pool and darts area, which is separated from the main club and they already have a pool team and would like to add another as well as darts teams and even cribbage and dominoes – pop in for a chat if you want to set one up.



Ade added: "We have changed the name to Shepwell's and our Facebook, Instagram and TikTok accounts have thousands of followers, people have really excited about the reopening. "We have got a new stage and the big screen for football and boxing events, as well as TVs all over the venue, to give it a Sports Bar feel."

Ade said: "We have permission for an extension which will include brand new kitchens, offices and changing rooms for the artists.



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They have tribute acts on a Friday and Saturday (see their social media to see what's coming up) and Karaoke on a Sunday.

They have done a couple of quizzes and will show live football including Champions League and Europa League. They are also planning comedy nights, open mic nights and have a ladies night coming soon.

Entry is free, but on several occasions, so far, they've had to close the doors by 9am as they have reached capacity.

VIP Booths can be booked in advance at £50 for 8 people. To book, message them via facebook or email shepwellbar@outlook.com.

Shepwell's, Bilston Road, Willenhall WV13 2QF

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Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
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10	10				45		
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10		17		10		10	
16		17		18		19	
20			24		22		
20			21		22		
23				24			
23				24			

Please see answers on page 47

Across

8

- 1 Material used to make tents (6) 5
 - Skimpy knickers! (6)
 - Earth, compost (4) Green vegetable (8)
- 9 10 Bendy fruit (6)
- 11 Hard yellowish tooth deposit (6)
- 12 Area, region (4)
- 14 Frozen water (3)
- 15 Nip, chomp (4)
- 16 Expression, brief utterance (6)
- 18 Lightweight waterproof jacket (6)
- 20 Sticky insect trap (8)
- 22 Barrage, bombardment (4)
- 23 Undercover, secret (6)
- 24 Brine (6)

Down 2

3

4

5

21

- Odour, scent (5)
- Group of houses, rural community (7)
- The Beatles sang about a yellow one! (9)
- As well, also (3)
- Coveted film award (5) 6
- 7 Dashing, debonair (7) 11
 - Dictionary of synonyms and antonyms (9)
- 13 Shakespearean play (7)
- 15 House of ill repute! (7) 17
- Bramley, Granny Smith, Cox (5) 19 Extra-terrestrial (5)
 - Container, vessel (3)



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Willenhall Based Will Writer Jim Stanistreet, from BensonWilliams, Shares a Few Thoughts on Lasting Powers of Attorney



I owe Martin Lewis a pint. Whenever he features estate planning on one of his shows he is a massive advocate of advising people to make "Lasting Powers of Attorney", and invariably I get a spate of incoming calls from people following up on his words of wisdom!

It has to be said that he isn't wrong. Scary statistics but in The UK every three minutes a new case of dementia is diagnosed. The condition currently affects over 700,000 people and it is estimated this figure will rise to one million by 2025. One in fourteen people over sixty five are affected, and one in six over eighty. A fairly obvious comment, but the numbers are rising dramatically as we are living longer.

If somebody loses capacity to make decisions and no forward planning is in place the road forward is expensive, stressful, and time consuming. An application to The Court of Protection has to be made for somebody to become a "Deputy". This takes several months, the person who has lost capacity has no say over who is appointed, and the cost will typically be over £2,000, followed by ongoing annual supervision and indemnity charges of around £500. The Mental Capacity Act 2005 enables people to plan ahead for this by creating a Lasting Power of Attorney. This is a document that a person (the Donor) creates whilst they still have capacity to make decisions, in which they appoint somebody else (an Attorney) to act on their behalf if they lose capacity. Three big advantages of an Attorney over a Deputy are there are no time delays (the power would already be in place before the person loses capacity), the Donor gets to choose the Attorney(s) themselves, and the court and professional fees are a fraction of the costs stated above.

This doesn't interfere with a person's right to act for themselves and make their own decisions. The Mental Capacity Act creates a "presumption of capacity" meaning that everybody retains the right to make their own decisions until it is proved that they can't. Attorneys must be seen to support a Donor in making their own decisions for as long as possible, must act in the best interests of the Donor, and must be able to demonstrate that anything they do is the least restrictive course of action based on the Donor's basic rights and freedoms.

Making a Lasting Power of Attorney is inexpensive, brings peace of mind, and doesn't interfere in any way with a person's right to handle their own affairs.

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



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News In Brief

Latest News from Rotary in Willenhall



As was mentioned in the last edition of 'Willenhall Life,' due to the success of the Christmas 'Santa Sleigh' run by the town's Rotary Club, a further substantial donation has been made by the Club to the 'Bridging the Gap' charity in Stafford Street in the town.

On Monday, January 29 a cheque for £750 as presented to the Reverend Mike Batchelor, representing the charity, by Rotarian Simon Sims who organised the 'Santa Sleigh' on behalf of the Rotary Club. A major Food Bank is run by the charity and Rotary Club President Michael Entecott says, "Helping to support charities organising Foodbanks means that a lot of local people who need support in these difficult times are able to access it."

On Friday, February 23, for the second year running and with St. Joseph's Church in Willenhall a 'Race Night' was held in the church hall. Members of the church congregation and friends and Rotary Club members enjoyed another social evening with the proceeds being shared between the church and local Rotary charities.

New Headteacher at Willenhall E-ACT Academy Bringing a Fresh New Energy to the School

I am delighted to be the new headteacher at Willenhall E-ACT Academy, I officially started in post in January but ended up taking up the reins just before Christmas as I couldn't wait to get stuck in! I've had a fantastic welcome and the school is full of brilliant students. I have served as headteacher at several other schools previously and I am determined to bring a fresh energy to Willenhall, with my core aim being to drive up academic standards. My focus is on ensuring that every student at Willenhall is able to thrive in their time with us and I believe my role is to ensure that every day at the school is calm, purposeful, and welcoming for all.

Schools are measured nationally in a number of ways, and it is fair to say that we have work to do to become the school that our local community deserves but I am clear that Willenhall will improve under my leadership. In the five years that students spend with us, my mission is to help them academically flourish whilst also helping them develop and become inspired as young people.



I am proud to be part of the E-ACT family of schools and as part of the trust we adopt their Opening Minds Opening Doors ethos, which means having uncompromising aspirations for all and understanding, celebrating, and working with local communities.

E-ACT won the award for MAT of the Year 2023 at the MAT Excellence Awards and one hundred percent of E-ACT academies have been rated Outstanding or Good by Ofsted for their leadership and management, so I am confident that with the support of the trust Willenhall will be school staff, students and the community can be proud of.

We are introducing new things all the time and have lots of exciting plans for the academy, if you would like to know more, please do get in touch.

By Tim Marston, Headteacher, Willenhall E-ACT Academy



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Step into Spring at National Trust Properties in the West Midlands

With the arrival of warmer weather and sunnier days, National Trust gardens and parks are a lovely way to spend time surrounded by nature. There's a wealth of properties across the West Midlands, and beyond, all with something different to offer. For visiting information and inspiration: www.nationaltrust.org.uk



Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury

See the estate spring to life with vibrant colours across the garden and parkland. Hyacinths, tulips, fruit tree blossom, apple blossom, daffodils and bluebells will all be in bloom at times during spring. In late spring the national collection of camassias will be in bloom.Towards the end of May we'll also see the rhododendrons, laburnum, azaleas in colour in the woodlands.

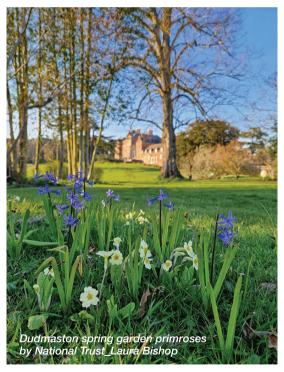
Biddulph Grange Garden, near Stoke-on-Trent

Explore the hidden treasures around Biddulph Grange Garden from quirky design features of Egyptian pyramids grown out of yew to tunnels, stepping stones and a trickling stream running through a Himalayan inspired Glen and the centrepiece of a Victorian Chinese Garden complete with golden buffalo, dragon sculptures and exotic plant collection. Finish a visit with a traditional tea and scone in the former billiard room and pick up a plant to remember your visit from the plant centre.

Clent Hills, near Stourbridge

In spring, the Clent Hills burst to life with the sights, sounds and smells of nature. Bluebell valley becomes blanketed with an enormous number of flowers, blossom appears on trees and you can spot wildlife off the beaten track at Walton Hill. Take in the panoramic view from the four stones.

Dudmaston Estate, near Bridgnorth



Dudmaston comes to life in spring as blossom adorns the fruit trees in the orchard while spring flowers create a changing rainbow of colour in the Dingle. Spring is a time to enjoy the garden and to explore nature at Comer Woods. Join a wellbeing walk through the trees or take part in the Trust 10, a 10k run through the woods. Dudmaston Hall and Galleries have recently reopened, offering a journey through some of the most iconic works of the British Modern Art Movement.

Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses, near Stourbridge

Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses are beautiful to visit in the spring. The cottage garden comes to life and an array of daffodils and snowdrops takes over. The informal garden boasts beautiful apple blossom on the dwarf apple trees in the orchard and the vegetable garden starts flowering.

The unique Holy Austin Rock Houses, carved into the sandstone ridge, are restored and offer a glimpse into the lives of the former cave dwellers.



Hanbury Hall, near Droitwich Spa

From beds of colourful tulips to buds of delicate blossom, Hanbury's gardens are finally waking up. This year, the Ribbon Border is back in the Parterre.

The explosions of stunning, bright colour are carefully planned with thousands of bulbs planted in autumn ready for the following spring. With a colourful array of tulips, daffodils and hyacinths the Parterre is sure to be filled with impressive colour and scent.

Moseley Old Hall, near Wolverhampton

Whether you wander amongst the bluebells or

race through the trees to the top of the treehouse, spring at Moseley Old Hall is a truly wonderful time. Nestled outside of Wolverhampton, Moseley is a natural sanctuary for both people and nature, offering space for all to relax, unwind and connect to the outdoors.



Shugborough Estate, near Stafford

Shugborough Estate comes alive in spring, with beautiful bulbs and blossom, a kaleidoscope of colour, there's plenty to see as the gardens wake up for the new year.

Wander through the arboretum and along the river to see a dazzling display of daffodils, or head to the walled garden where you will see preparations for a productive year.

The Mansion has reopened offering visitors the chance to discover the story of the Anson families travels around the globe. Down on the farm you can meet new arrivals including Tamworth Pigs, and newborn South Down Lambs.



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willing to work, they should be able to find a job that supports their family.

They expect that they shouldn't go bankrupt just because they get sick.

They expect that their kids should be able to get a good education.

They want to feel safe in their homes and secure in their local community.

And they figure that after a lifetime of work, they should be able to retire with dignity and respect. That's about it. It's not a lot to wish for is it?

And although folk don't expect the Council to solve all of their problems, they do know, that with a change in priorities, councils could provide the help they need.

The **Focus** of the Walsall Liberal Democrats campaign in the **Local Election on Thursday 2nd May** centres around three core areas of concern you've said are **important to you**. Those are:

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- Speaking **TRUTH** to Power and the People
- Thorough TRANSPARENCY in all that we do.





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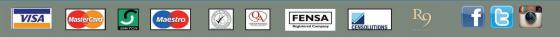
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Shepwell School

A very special learning environment

We are proud that Shepwell School has grown from a small setting that supported 30 young people with medical needs to one that will now welcome 90 pupils.

This is all possible due to the dedication of our amazing team. The majority of pupils who attend Shepwell School have a diagnosis of Autism or are on the pathway to diagnosis. Autism can cause difficulties in perceiving the world and our young people have had to overcome many tricky situations.



Most find mainstream education too overwhelming to access but they thrive with us at Shepwell. Watching our pupils overcome barriers is a joy and a credit to their resilience, focus and determination to succeed. Pupils work hard and many achieve GCSE grades which allow them to transition to their chosen Post 16 setting.

Our pupil's journeys may not always be easy, but we are incredibly proud of all the achievements they make, big and small.

Shepwell School aims to ensure pupils are supported to experience an individualised approach to school life, including:



- Free school meals for ALL pupils
- Breakfast provided
- All cooking ingredients provided free of charge
- Specialist music lessons
- Frequent trips and visits
- Weekly work experience at Albrighton Moat
- Youth club every Thursday
- Weekly visits to a local farm to care for the animals
- Outdoor gym
- Book vending machine and visits to Waterstones to be treated to a book
- Small class sizes and individualise approaches to timetables and learning



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In addition to academic learning, we also support pupils to develop strategies to manage their emotions, helping them regulate independently. Interventions are provided to help pupils embrace and celebrate their neurodiversity and work with this in a positive way. Our learners overcome past traumas to embrace challenges such as working in a shop in Walsall, gaining skills and becoming ready for the world of work.

We would love you to take a look at our weekly headteachers newsletter, available on the school

website. This shows many of the exciting activities that take place each every day, making Shepwell School a fabulous and unique place to learn and thrive!

We would love you to be part of this as we need community governors. Please contact the Headteacher, Lisa Southall on admin@shepwell.walsall.sch.uk to volunteer for this opportunity to help grow our amazing specialist provision that Willenhall can be proud of.





Contact us for a free no obligation quote: **0121 526 2543** George **07958 493 577** Nick **07976 462 482** Unit 6 Victoria New Works, Midland Road, Darlaston WS10 8HE

Lockstock 2024

The 7th annual Willenhall Lock Stock will be on Sunday 1st September in Willenhall Memorial Park 12 till 9pm.

After a record number of attendees in 2023 we are set for a sell out in advance of the day. Willenhall Lock Stock had just 300 attendees on a very wet day September 2017.

Its vision was to give Willenhall a nice affordable day out and support local music and good causes with any profits.

Team Lock Stock is a small number of local volunteers who work throughout the year to attract sponsors, gain permissions, book bands/artists, book concessions, stages, fencing, toilets, sell tickets, market the event and on the day ensure everything works well then clear up.

The last few years team Lock Stock has invested in a small pop-up stage that has been booked by various voluntary bodies and good causes, including EACT Academy, Pool Hayes Academy, Short Heath Lest We Forget, The Knife Angel in Walsall, Love Walsall, Willenhall Town Partnership and The Midcounties Co-operative.





This is a permanent legacy we offer Willenhall and the Brough of Walsall. This year Willenhall Lock Stock marked the 60th Anniversary of the Rolling Stones playing at Willenhall Baths.

It was a tremendous evening and we raised funds for ST Giles Church and H2HU. All of this is only possible because of the towns continuing support for our annual music festival.

Tickets for this year's festival are available from Touch Down Vapes Clarkes Lane and the Spud Van in Willenhall Town centre from April.

Early bird tickets are available for just £5 while the allocation lasts.

The 2 stages have been named after local music legends, and will cater for Rock, Blues, Ska, Bhangra, Brit pop and Soul.

Headlining the Spon Rock Arena will be the Journeymen a local tribute to Eric Clapton. Headlining Sammie's we have Dayton Grey with his band.

We have had some fantastic support from local business who really do help make the whole event work. Last year was the hottest day of the year and we predict more fine weather, singing and dancing.

You are the music.

Luv team Lock Stock xx

WILLENHALL MEMORIAL PARK

Ticket prices Early bird July £5 August £7.50 September £10 Accompanied children under 16 free.



Sunday Sept 1st

MUSIC FESTIVAL SERVING WILLENHALL 11 AM – 9PM

SAMMIES STAGE

DAYTON GREY & BAND SASS BROWN BHANGRA SMASH UP CHAIN OF FOOLS JAMIE FLANNIGAN THE DETOURS HARMZOUSE BAND BRITANNIA BEAT SPON ROCK ARENA

THE JOURNEY MEN HIGH ON ADAMS KRAZYLEGZ THIS IS OZZY NEW SAINTS MOTORKILL MARTIAN SOCIAL CLUB RAT SALAD OBSESSION POOL HAYES Y10

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5

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Walsall Council

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> ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Try this test on your friends and family. First ask them to say the WORDS below and see how fast they do it. THEN ask them to say the COLOURS of the words and see how much harder they find it. This difficulty we have naming the actual colour when it is used to write the name of a different colour is called THE STROOP EFFECT!

blue green yellow brown grey pink black white red purple beige orange



IF YOU DROP A YELLOW HAT N THE RED SEA, WHAT DOES HAPPENS TO IT?

it gets weti

Word Grid Solution

Please tell the businesses where you saw their advert.

WILLENHALL LEISURE & COMMUNITY

0

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C

Willenhall Leisure & Community aims to increase opportunities for the whole community to develop their learning, health, well-being and enjoyment. This is achieved through the organisation of adult learning courses, linking with local clubs/charities and hiring our facilities at evenings and weekends. Our success is based on our ability to create positive relationships with local people, allowing us to really be 'the centre of our community'.

- () 6.00pm 22.00pm (Monday to Friday)
- 9.00am 16.00pm (Saturday & Sunday)
- **(C)** 01902 365 133
- Community.Walsall@E-ACT.org.uk
- E-ACT Willenhall Academy, Furzebank Way, Willenhall, WV12 4BD.
- **E-ACT Leisure & Community Walsall**
- Community_wha



Hiring our facilities: Looking for facility hire? We have a wide range of facilities on offer to suit your needs, whether it be hiring for a club, event or simply just a turn up and play.

- Sports Hall
- Meeting Rooms
- Gymnasium
- Dance Studio • 25m Swimming Pool
- Grass Pitches Floodlit Astroturf
- · Floodlit Tennis Courts
- Drama Theatre
- Floodlit Netball Courts

Have a special request? Then please let us know! Please do not hesitate to contact us to discuss any specific needs you have regarding facility bookings. We are happy to tailor bookings to meet the needs of our customers. Block bookings are available.

Children's Parties: Running out of ideas on what to do for your child's party, then stress no more! We have a range of party packages available at cheap, affordable prices.



Partnership Clubs/Organisations: We strive to be at the centre of our community and can only achieve this through community partnerships. Below are our current, growing partnerships:

- Platinum Gymnastics
- Satori Martial Arts
- Wednesbury Hockey Club
- Bloxwich Hockey Club
- Cresswell Wanderers FC
- Walsall Junior League
- Sheshin Shuko-kai Karate West Midlands Tae Kwon-Do
- GKR Karate
- Leagues4You Netball
- · Electric Model Car Club
- Walsall Wizards Basketball
- The Playscheme
- · Citizens Advice
- Active Black Country
- Willenhall Lock Stock

News: In an effort to promote community engagement accessible sporting opportunities, E-ACT and Willenhall Academy have achieved significant milestone in their utilization of the Opening School Facilities Fund (OSF).

With additional support from Active Black Country, the OSF initiative has been instrumental in helping with the enhancement of sporting facilities at E-ACT Willenhall. This collaborative effort has significantly enhanced accessibility to the facilities for the wider community. Year 2 of the programme saw a focus on a focus on tennis and hockey, offering free, coached sessions to students and the local community of all ages. The allocated funds were used for the delivery of these free sessions and towards new equipment including tennis rackets, nets, hockey sticks and storage containers. Beyond the immediate benefits of the community engagement the upgraded facilities and equipment have also enriched the curriculum offerings at E-ACT Willenhall.







SCHOOL CHRONICLES: THRILLS, TRIBUTE, AND TRIUMPHS

As the new academic year unfurled its wings, our school brimmed with anticipation and promise. Welcoming the dawn of this fresh term, we launched a series of engaging and memorable events, setting the tone for an exciting and vibrant year ahead.

FRIGHT NIGHT 2023



The annual Fright Night Event, themed around a spine-chilling Zombie Apocalypse, proved to be a colossal success. Transforming our school into an exhilarating and frightful realm, students eagerly engaged with the

hair-raising scare maze, navigating through eerie corridors teeming with ghoulish surprises. From blood-curdling encounters to heartpounding moments.

The disco only added to the adrenaline-

charged atmosphere, creating an unforgettable experience that quickly became a favourite among the student body. This spine-tingling event



not only provided an escape from the ordinary but also unified the school community in a collective thrill of spine-tingling excitement and fun, marking it as a huge success.

HONOURING HEROES: A LEGACY REMEMBERED

The Remembrance Service, an annual cornerstone in our school's ethos, becomes a poignant tribute each year as the school community gathers in solemn reflection. This deeply revered occasion serves as a living testament to the courage and sacrifice of our country's heroes. Through emotive speeches, poignant musical renditions, and the dignified laying of wreaths, the service not only pays

homage but also offers an invaluable educational moment for students. It acts as a bridge between generations, connecting the youth with the profound significance of sacrifices made for our freedoms.



This ceremony stands

not merely as a historical tribute but as a poignant reminder of the values these heroes embodied - values of courage, selflessness, and unity. It is a solemn yet empowering experience, instilling in the hearts of students a deep appreciation for the sacrifices made in the past to secure the peace and liberties we cherish today. The legacy of these heroes lives on through our collective memory, ensuring their bravery and dedication continue to inspire and guide us.

REDEFINING VICTORY: GIRLS FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT TRIUMPH

In the inaugural Girls Football Tournament, our team clinched an impressive fourth place overall in the borough, showcasing not only their sportsmanship and skill but also the growth and dedication of our girls' sports programs. This ground-breaking event celebrated athleticism and emphasized inclusivity and empowerment, setting a precedent for future sporting events.



Is Barlow back... for good?

Following last year's release of their charttopping album *This Life*, Take That are ready to return to the stage with a show that promises to enthral. Naturally, their chief songwriter, Gary Barlow, couldn't be more excited.

In June 2023 the iconic pop group Take That announced a grand return to the stage with This Life On Tour – a spectacular 29-date journey across 15 cities, marking their first major outing since their hiatus between 2019 and 2023.

All is set to begin in April with three opening nights in Sheffield and symbolises something of a renaissance for the band. Gary Barlow, the band's esteemed songwriter of 13 UK number one singles, shared his enthusiasm.

"There's an electric feeling about going back on tour, especially after such a relatively long break. This Life On Tour isn't just about performing our new songs; it's a celebration of our journey, our fans and the music that has been part of so many lives," he said.

The tour is named after their current and ninth studio album This Life and to celebrate a fourth decade of music since they first appeared on the scene with 1991 debut single Do What U Like.

Featuring the lead single Windows, the album showcases a matured sound reflecting the band's evolution over the years. Barlow describes it as being "filled with our experiences, hopes and memories. It's deeply personal yet universal. We've poured every bit of ourselves into this album."

The tour will not only cover major cities like Leeds, Dublin, London, Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham but also includes several other UK landmarks, such as Plymouth, Swansea and Nottingham.

After the final UK date in Bristol on Saturday June 8th, the boys will move on to a series of shows in key European cities, including Berlin, Rome and Madrid. Reflecting on the band's journey and the excitement of touring again, the 53-year-old enthuses: "Every time we step on stage, it's a new adventure. The thrill of performing live, the energy from the crowd – it's irreplaceable. This tour, with our new music, feels like we're starting a fresh chapter and we can't wait to share it with everyone."

Known for their dynamic live performances and a string of

hits dating back to the 1990s, they are expected to deliver a mix of new tracks from This Life along with their classic hits, offering a full spectrum of their musical journey.

As Barlow puts it: "It's not just a tour; it's a thank you to our fans, a nod to our past and a toast to the future."



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Charlotte Saddles Up!

Charlotte Powell is moving up in the saddle making world, having recently started her own business after nine years as a dedicated bench saddler in Walsall.

Charlotte, 27 went to Pool Hayes Community School and went into saddle making when she left.

She has now taken a huge leap to set up her own company called The Saddle Lady and in May she will be displaying her work on a trade stand in London after contacting Jay Blades' Craft Works.

Charlotte tells us, "I've passionately crafted 4 to 5 exceptional saddles weekly, setting myself apart in a predominantly male-oriented industry. I took a leap forward to establish my own business, specialising in crafting exquisite leather handbags and accessories.

Having owned horses since a young age, my passion for all things equine led me to pursue a career in saddlery.

A lady I knew at the time opened a new Saddlery business and graciously took me under her wing as an apprentice, a transformative experience that spanned for two years.

Eager to broaden my horizons, I ventured into two further companies to refine my craft. In





early 2023 an unexpected twist led me into the film industry, crafting leather props for equestrian based films, including bespoke saddles for featured horses.

However, the AI strike within the film industry prompted a pivotal decision to forge my own path in the Saddlery Trade.

Today I run my own business called 'The Saddle Lady' where I proudly curate a collection of Leather Handbags and luxury equestrian goods, a testament to the enduring rewards of hard work and perseverance to the aspiring youth.

I believe dedication and diligence are the cornerstones of success, yielding fruitful rewards in due time.

I am dedicated to continuing the legacy of exceptional British leatherwork and am eager to share my expertise and creations with you.

Explore my collection and experience the essence of finely crafted leather goods.

www.thesaddlelady.com



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Volunteering

By Simon Archer



Have you ever done something for nothing? You probably have. Maybe you've put the neighbours' bin out while they're away, or done their shopping when they're ill.

That's really all volunteering is. Being a good person. Helping someone or some people to make the world a slightly better place.

Surely, that's what we all want, isn't it?

Bizarrely, when I was growing up, I was led to believe that volunteers were not to be trusted....Do-gooders was a name I often heard them called. How strange that people who help others should be thought of detrimentally.

I've since realised that those giving out the negative labels were the ones that didn't want to do anything for anyone except themselves and just wanted to deflect their laziness onto others with a bit more community spirit.

Furthermore, when we do these good deeds, we all get a sense of satisfaction (especially if the recipient shows their gratitude).

You'd probably be surprised how many people do volunteering work. Almost a third (30%) of people over 16 years old volunteered with a group, club or organisation at least once per year.



Of course, many of you might struggle with commitment, with work and family obligations, but a lot of volunteering roles might allow for this.

I used to help at a local foodbank and we managed to come up with a rota system that enabled everyone to do what they could, when they could.

Time is also an issue, so perhaps something that doesn't require a huge amount of work, but enables you to get involved and use your skills and/or knowledge, might work best.



Being a school governor doesn't require you to do something every week, or even every month for that matter and you don't need to have worked in education to be a school governor. I know a few schools that need people to step up, so give your local school a call. They might just be pleased to hear from you.

If you live alone or are retired, your local community centre could be an option. Pop in and ask if they need volunteers. You will find they're usually very welcoming and being involved might widen your circle of friends.

Wolverhampton Volunteers have over 200 organisations registered and between them, they offer over 400 unique volunteering opportunities covering every aspect of community life.

Anyone interested in volunteering can visit and register on www.wtonvolunteers.org or alternatively, call on 01902 328980 to arrange an appointment.



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With the cost of food and energy on the rise, Jamie's \pounds_1 Wonders is all about delicious recipes that won't blow the budget, coming in at less than \pounds_1 a portion.

The aim of Jamie's £1 Wonders is to be as useful to people as possible, with all prices correct at the time of filming (September 2022 and January 2023).

Each recipe is priced at \pounds_1 or less per portion, which has been calculated based on an average of four UK

supermarkets (Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's and Morrisons.

They've calculated the cost per portion by the amount used, rather than the whole ingredient cost, as it's assumed you'll already have many of the ingredients in your store cupboard/fridge/ freezer.

They don't include olive oil, salt or pepper in the final costings, as we think you'll have these already.



95p PER SERVING*

1kg chicken thighs, skin on, bone in

2 onions

2 tablespoons tikka masala curry paste

1 x 400g tin of plum tomatoes

1 mug of basmati rice (300g)

500g frozen peas

 1×400 g tin of light coconut milk

ONE-PAN SPICY CHICKEN

SWEET ONIONS, PEAS & FLUFFY RICE

SERVES 6 I TOTAL TIME: 50 MINUTES I GLUTEN-FREE, DAIRY-FREE

1. Place a large casserole pan on a medium-high heat. Season the chicken thighs with a pinch of sea salt and plenty of black pepper, then place in the pan skin-side down for 10 minutes, or until browned, then use tongs to turn them over and carefully remove the chicken skin. Place it in the pan alongside the thighs, removing to a board once crisp, then roughly chop.

2. Meanwhile, peel and finely chop the onions and add to the pan. Cook for 2 minutes, or until golden, then stir in the curry paste and cook for 10 minutes.

 Tip in the tomatoes, breaking them up with a spoon, then cook for 5 minutes, until thickened.

4. Stir in the rice to toast for 1 minute or until translucent, then pour in 2 mugs of water (600ml). Give it a stir, turn over the chicken and cover with a lid. Leave to simmer for 12 minutes, or until the rice is cooked, stirring in the peas and most of the coconut milk for the final 2 minutes. When it's blipping away in the middle starting to catch at the edges, remove from the heat. Ripple through the remaining coconut milk, then divide between plates. Sprinkle over the crispy chicken skin and serve.

CAB Inspirational Ltd



CAB Inspirational Ltd is a community empowerment company offering mental health and wellbeing support to children and adults. In 2020 the CEO, Cheryl Ann, started developing mental health, wellbeing and counselling courses and delivering empowering public speaking and addressing powerful topics. Cheryl Ann has recently performed at the Wolverhampton Literature Festival and Walsall Society of Artists.

What makes CAB Inspirational Ltd unique is, Cheryl Ann has experienced her own healing and recovery journey. Her empathy and understanding means she provides the utmost care and compassion to clients. Cheryl Ann recently published 'After Trauma – A Poetry Collection', aiming to reach out to people and inform them, they are not alone and their voice matters.

Cheryl Ann has 18-years' experience in improving mental health, wellbeing and supports the most vulnerable people through studying PgDip Adult Nursing, MSc Midwifery, BSc (Hons) Biomedical Science (fertility) and management in the healthcare industry. Through acquiring numerous skills, qualifications and experiences, Cheryl Ann offers excellent standards of mental health and wellbeing support.

Cheryl Ann further increased her qualifications in CACHE Level 3 Certificate in understanding mental

health, CACHE Level 2 in Counselling Skills and undertaking TQUK level 5 certificate in Counselling Skills and psychotherapy.

What Services CAB Inspirational Ltd offer

Cheryl Ann supports adults struggling with mental health through individual counselling and psychotherapy sessions: talking therapy, specific topics: PTSD, Anxiety, Depression etc. The aim is to help the client feel in control of their mental health and cope with everyday life.

Weekly group sessions, over five weeks explore specific mental health topics: PTSD, Anxiety and Depression. Helping individuals and their family/friends gain information and coping skills, in a safe environment.

CAB Inspirational Ltd inspires young minds by visiting schools, delivering interactive sessions on specific themes. As a published author, Cheryl Ann uses themes from her children's books. Sessions are informative, fun and promote positive mental health and wellbeing though adopting the mindset they can make a difference through kindness, care and compassion.

CAB Inspirational Ltd present and future

"Life can be difficult, when you're at rock bottom, with every step forward, you're knocked back two. I take the most vulnerable and improve their lives for the better. I reach out when most people stand back and watch because I'm not afraid to lend a hand. If you're falling, I will catch you, if you're in darkness, I will help you see light.

In my heart, I am the nurse who notices subtle changes when you're not ok, I am the midwife who empowers the mother to realise her strength. I am the counsellor in fertility allowing parents to see a future that was once clouded.

CAB Inspirational Ltd is my future, that I share with every person who would like support, who I can help tackle their demons inside and help them see their potential" – Cheryl Ann, 2024

The future for CAB Inspirational Ltd is to reach out to as many people in the community and improve their mental health and well being through the services offered, releasing more published literature to increase the positive impact.

www.cabinspirationalltd.com

Top Tips to Get Your Home Spring Ready This April

It's now nearly April, and we are all looking forward to the warmer months, but how do we get our homes ready for spring? Here are some top tips.

We have weathered the long, dark winter months and now we are looking forward. It is time for all of us to come out of our hibernation and embrace the warmer weather of spring and look forward to summer.

Whilst getting out of doors to enjoy the fresh air will be a priority for many of us, we can also make the indoors feel optimistically springlike too!

Top tips to help you get your home ready for spring

Let there be light!

Now is the time to open your windows and introduce some long-awaited clarity into your home's atmosphere.

Who wants to go outside during winter to wash their windows? It is cold, wet, and your windows become dirt magnets. But now it is getting warmer the time has come to put an end to this! Clean your windows and make them sparkle, allowing natural light to enter your home.

What about changing your curtains during the warmer seasons too? Pack away the heavier, darker curtains and put up lighter coloured ones.

Jo floral!

What could be more springlike that using plants and flowers to inject some life and vibrancy into your home? Why not grow your own flowering plants inside, cut some blooms from your garden or take a trip to your local florist?

And why not go floral around the house too with floral cushion covers and bedding?



Spring clean and clear out!

We all accumulate stuff over winter, in no small part due to Christmas. Why not review everything in your cupboards and wardrobes and clear out any unwanted or unneeded items? Decluttering your home is liberating. Why not recycle or donate anything you don't want?

Have a rearrange.

By simply moving one chair or sofa it can make a massive difference to how your home feels and it might even make it feel brand new. Have a shuffle. And don't be afraid to change it all around again. Rearranging your furniture is about finding the layout that works for you.

Jo colourful!

Springtime is about light colours so why not embark on revamping the colour scheme in your home? Look in your garden for inspiration. See what is in bloom and utilise that colour in your interior colour scheme, then you will be bringing spring colour into your home.

Why not think about what flowers are going to bloom next and utilise those colours so you can even get ahead of the inevitable advance of the season?

Why not try some or all these top tips? Each in their own way offer quick, easy and affordable ways to get your home spring ready this April.

Rob Bullock https://robbullockauthor.blogspot.com



WILLOW



Situated approximately one mile from the centre of the market town of Willenhall, and conveniently located between the major centres of Wolverhampton and Walsall, Willow Rose is a brand new purpose built care home that offers state of the art facilities and the highest level of care, as well as a high level of comfort and wellbeing for its residents.

Being part of the Macc Care family, we want Willow Rose to be a home and community that not only staff and residents are proud of, but that is also respected by people in the local community and the surrounding area.

Whether you are looking for a long-term stay, respite or perhaps just a period of convalescence to help a loved one get back on their feet, Willow Rose is able to help you. We can offer you a number of different care options and assist you with advice as to what would best suit your particular needs.

Willow Rose is a home with one aim in mind – to look after you in a warm, compassionate, safe and friendly environment. Everyone at Willow



Rose is dedicated to making sure that your welfare and personal happiness is at the forefront of everything we do.

ur Manager

Shelly Trotman is the Manager of Willow Rose and is a dedicated nurse with over thirty years' experience in the care sector. She has previously worked with many large healthcare companies in the UK and so she brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role.

Shelly is really excited about the amenities and opportunities that Willow Rose will provide to its residents. She says..

Willow Rose is a purpose designed quality home, offering the very latest facilities for everyone. We will be able to offer a level of choice and comfort that I believe will be unrivalled in the local area. We can offer dignity and independence to everyone in surroundings that will be the benchmark for all other homes. I am determined that the level of care that we provide will, in every respect, match the beauty of the home's environment'.

If you would like to contact Shelly to talk about care for a loved one, or to arrange a visit to see what the home can offer you, then please do so using the details below.

CONTACT

CALL 01922 270920 EMAIL willowrose.manager@macccare.com WEBSITE www.macccare.com/willow-rose LOCATION Stroud Avenue, Short Heath, Willenhall WV12 4ET

Willenhall History

The weather. We all talk about it and global warming and climate change are mentioned practically every day on TV.

However, give or take a thousand years ago Viking "Erik the Red" sailed to Newfoundland where vines were discovered. There were 3000 farmers in Greenland but died out during the Little Ice Age 1645-1715.

Grape growing and wine making were possible in England between 1100 and 1300, this was known as the Medieval Warm Period. Generally, the temperature was 2 to 4 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than now, some places in Scotland had the same temperature as London. Nevertheless after 1645 the Thames froze solidly during some winters, the last time being 1814, resulting in Frost Fayres, occasionally even the waters around our coastline froze.

Last time I wrote about Dr Wilkes 1690-1760, one of his monthly habits was writing an account of the weather, e.g. The winter of 1739-40 was particularly bad and the frost lasted over 40 days in January and February. The doctor travelled to Tamworth and found the Tame and Anker frozen over and on the 15th February he tells us the frost finished after 53 continuous days.



London Sunday October 1st 1843

Many people perished in this severe weather and he added that those who could remember the great frost of 1684 said it was colder and froze harder now than it did then. The thermometer now was much lower than in in the year 1715 when the Thames was frozen over. The summers too were also uncertain, in 1742/43 the weather was exceptionally good and the harvests were abundant, yet in 1745 the summer had a great deal of rain and although the main harvest was sufficient the fruit crops were poor.

Extraordinary Tides

The equinox gales peculiar to the months of September to March have recently served to swell the river to such an extent as to create serious alarm to persons whose premises lie along its banks and should the wind continue long in the northeast point it will be productive of much loss and serious obstruction to water side business. The tide of Monday afternoon at its height at 3 o'clock rose to five feet above the ordinary high water mark and although the wind was not stronger than normal the current was forced upwards with a rapidity and force rarely observed. Low lying wharfs along Bankside were flooded along with yards stretching from Blackfriars to Westminster Bridge doing considerable damage to hay, straw and other dry goods. There has been no tide of equal height since March last which is guite remarkable considering the long continuance of dry weather.

English Vines

Grapes are extremely fine flavoured and large this season. Tree specimen bunches from her Majesty's (Victoria) vinery at Cumberland lodge exhibited at Windsor and Eton Horticultural Show weighed nearly a pound and a half each but Miss Sadler's of Sutton Coldfield had bunches weighing two pounds one ounce.

Society news

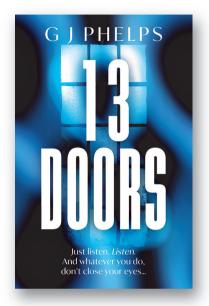
The History Society meets every month at Chart Centre, Gomer Street, Willenhall, WV13 2NS at 7.15pm. We love to see new visitors, to share our memories with them and vice versa.

The next talks are as follows;

April 9th Rogues, Villains and Thieves by Vanessa Morgan May 14th Music in the Movies by Siddique Hussain June 11th Society Trip – Forge Museum and Craft Centre

By Liz Ince Keeping our History Alive

Real-Life Spooky Stories Inspire Author of Chilling New Novel By Black Country Journalist



A chilling new supernatural thriller by an award-winning former Black Country journalist has been inspired by real-life ghost stories from the region.

13 Doors, by G J Phelps, tells the story of a reporter who sets out to spend the night in thirteen genuinely haunted locations, with terrifying consequences.

And the author – real name Gary Phelps – has drawn on actual local ghost stories that he collected over a 30-year career in newspapers to create the book.

Gary, who used to edit the Walsall Advertiser and covered news in the Black Country for many years, said: "All newsrooms have odd, unexplainable stories, where a member of the public has brought in a tale which the journalists just couldn't explain.

"After working in news for years, I've collected them – particularly from around the West Midlands – and when I came to write 13 Doors, I thought it would be interesting to weave them into the story.

"For example, there's a story based on an interview I did with the manager of haunted pub in

Sutton Coldfield, back when I was a reporter, and a fantastic story about a local van driver who ran over a ghost.

"Another chapter in the book was inspired by the mine at the Black Country Living Museum." 13 Doors is also largely set in the region, with locations like the Victorian cemeteries in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter playing a key part in the story.

In the supernatural thriller, news reporter Joe Baxter sets out to stay in 13 genuinely haunted locations, finding them through his contacts at newspapers across the UK.

Author Gary explained: "I have always been a devotee of horror and supernatural fiction and, as an Eighties kid, grew up watching classic movies of the time.

"I wanted to write a book that paid homage to those influences, while adding something new and different to the genre. Most of all, I wanted to write a horror novel that was rooted in my journalistic background.

"So, while 13 Doors is fiction, there are a handful of stories and anecdotes in it that are based on real stories – stories that journalists couldn't explain."

13 Doors by G J Phelps is published by the Book Guild Publishing, priced £9.99 and is available from all good book shops and can be ordered on Amazon.



Eddie Hughes MP

An update from your Member of Parliament

It's been a busy few weeks across Willenhall and as we head towards Easter – my favourite time of year – I hope we will be seeing more progress on the numerous projects across the town in the coming months!



One notable development is the recent demolition of the Brown Jug, marking the end of a prolonged struggle between the local council and the property owners. Since I was elected, I've been working closely with Short Heath councillors and residents to ensure that this site, which has been an eyesore for far too long, is brought back into use. With the premises now secured, we eagerly await the submission of a planning application for its redevelopment. I am looking forward to seeing progress on-site!

Celebrations are in order for Willenhall's very own Robin Hood pub, which has been awarded Walsall CAMRA's prestigious Pub of the Year award. A huge congratulations is in order for Alex, Chris, and the entire team for their remarkable achievement! Moreover, as the Robin Hood and other local pubs, such as the brilliant Duke of Cambridge, take part in this year's Real Ale Trail – it's a good excuse to support your local and win some prizes along the way.

The train station in Willenhall is progressing, and the contractors have been grouting the mine workings to stabilize the ground to allow the station to be constructed. You'll be pleased to know that this has now been completed on both sides of the railway, and testing is underway. I will be visiting the site again over the next few weeks to find out the next steps of the project, and I'll be sure to keep you updated.



I also recently had the pleasure of meeting the Friends of Fibbersley Nature Reserve and the Walsall Healthy Spaces team to discuss their plans to improve the site. The Council has recently been awarded £75,000 to clear vegetation, upgrade paths and ponds, and improve the entrances to the park by making room for two new disability-friendly entrance gates for better accessibility for all. The friends group take a lot of pride in looking after the nature reserve from litter picking, planting wildflowers, and building bat boxes and bird boxes – and they have focused on preserving and expanding our local heritage for generations to come.

Over the next few weeks, I will be ramping up my training for the London Marathon. I'll be running alongside my daughter and raising funds for St. Giles Hospice. We both recently put our training to the test at a half-marathon, and we were able to cut off about 15 minutes from our personal bests, so I am feeling a bit more prepared for the big day!

I look forward to seeing local residents around Willenhall in the coming months and as ever if there is any way I can help you, then please get in touch with me.



Useful Telephone Numbers

Community Centres

Bentley Leisure Pavilion	01922 616165
Old Hall People's Partnership	01922 474684
Pool Hayes Community Assoc	01902 368613
Sneyd Community Association	01922 710133
Willenhall CHART Comm Ctre	01902 368199

Emergency Services

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
Water emergency	0800 7834444

Health Organisations

Arthritis Action	0203 781 7120
Manor Hospital	01922 721172
New Cross Hospital (switchbrd)	01902 307999
NHS non-emergency number	111

Local Councillors

Short Heath

Poonam Gill	number not yet available
Josh Whitehouse	07917 072811
Amandeep Kaur Garcha	07517 561213
Willenhall South	
Natalie Latham	number not yet available
Simran Cheema	07582 335443
Connor Horton	07380 334497
Willenhall North	
Adam Hicken	07949 311432
Stacie Elson	07917 095237
Rob Larden	07927 580732

Chemists/Pharmacy

Acorn Pharmacy	01902 632129
Boots	01902 605255
Croft Medical Centre	01902 602999
8pm Chemists	01902 633310
Harding Pharmacy	01902 602755
J Docter Bentley	01902 605470
Lloyds The Square - N/Inv	. 01922 475098
Lloyds Coppice Farm	01922 712076
Portobello Pharmacy	01902 630081
Tesco Owen Rd	01902 489747
Vantage Pharmacy	01902 607070

Help Lines/Others

Citizens Advice Bureau	03444 111 444
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Childline	
National Careers Service	
National Domestic Violence	
RSPCA	0300 1234 999
RSPB	
Samaritans	116 123

Places of Worship

Christ Apostolic Church	07495 515317
Emmanuel, Bentley	01902 633070
Furzebank Worship Centre	07758 083282
Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara	01902 605286
Holy Trinity, Short Heath	07765 826287
New Testament Church	01902 603885
Portobello Methodist	01902 411758
Salvation Army	01902 637732
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford	
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford	Place 01902 606285
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford	Place 01902 606285
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford	Place 01902 606285 01922 497748
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford	Place 01902 606285 01922 497748 01902 410564
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford Short Heath Methodist St Anne's, Willenhall	Place 01902 606285 01922 497748 01902 410564 01902 607335
Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Somerford Short Heath Methodist St Anne's, Willenhall St Andrews Church, Bentley	Place 01902 606285 01922 497748 01902 410564 01902 607335 01902 473273 01902 452841

Schools

Barcroft Primary 01902 368132
Beacon Primary 01922 710874
Bentley West Primary 01922 720792
County Bridge Primary 01922 720718
Fibbersley Park Primary 01902 366220
Jane Lane School 01922 721161
King Charles Primary 01922 721368
Lodge Farm JMI 01902 368587
Lane Head Nursery 01902 368940
New Invention Infants 01922 710871
New Invention Juniors 01922 710376
Old Hall School 01902 368045
Pool Hayes Primary 01902 368144
Pool Hayes Arts & Community 01902 368147
Rosedale CE Infants 01902 368910
Short Heath Juniors 01902 368499
Shepwell School 01902 632719
Stowheath Primary 01902 558820
St Giles CE Primary 01902 368308
St Thomas More RC School 01902 368798
Willenhall E-ACT Academy 01902 368221
Woodlands Acad. of Learning 01922 710613

Libraries

Willenhall	01922	650771
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Crossword Answers From page 10



The next issue of the Willenhall Life

> is out on 21st May

Booking deadline 3rd May

If you want to get your message out to approx. 30,000 local people, email wile hallife Gyanoo.co.uk or ring Simon

on 07534 603

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