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Don't be a victim of credit crunch crime

Minimising the risk of becoming a victim of crime during the 'Credit Crunch' is the aim of a new awareness-raising campaign launched by Warwickshire County Council's Community Safety Team recently.

'Protect Yourself' has been set up to help tackle 'acquisitive crimes' like robbery, burglary or vehicle crime – where items are stolen or acquired fraudulently.

This can happen anywhere and on a 'spur-of-the-moment' basis, when doors or windows are left open or unlocked for example.

Although the chance of becoming a victim in Warwickshire is low, here's a few simple tips which won't cost you lots of money, but could save you a lot of hassle:



- Lock doors and windows even if you're only going out for a few minutes.
- If you've got a burglar alarm, arm it every time you are out.
- Make sure your valuables can't be seen from the window.
- Carry your zipped bag close to you and

don't have wallets or purses on show.
 • Separate your possessions – for example, have your mobile phone in a separate pocket to your purse or wallet.
 To find out more visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communitysafety



Have your say at a Community Forum near you - see p23

Fire chief steps down

After 34 years in the Fire and Rescue Service, County Fire Officer William Brown (right) has announced his retirement.



He began his career in 1975 with Essex Fire and Rescue Service. In September 2004 he was appointed County Fire Officer and in 2006 he became a Strategic Director for Community Protection. Paul Fuller (left), Chief Fire Officer from Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service, has joined on secondment whilst arrangements are made for a permanent replacement.



Libraries change with the times

Despite the recession and the need to make savings, Warwickshire libraries are determined to offer wider appeal and more relevance to modern lifestyles.

"The recession may be accelerating change but it was inevitable anyway," said Ayub Khan Head of Libraries (Strategy).

"The way people use libraries is different nowadays. Whilst use of online library services has doubled and continues to rise, less than 20% of the local population borrow from libraries on a regular basis". According to ratings from the Department for Culture, Media & Sport Warwickshire boasts the most used county library service in England. The library service must continue, despite the recession, to move towards services that are more relevant to more local people in the modern age. Warwickshire libraries are also working on specific initiatives to help local people through hard times. These include setting up Job Seekers' Corners and Money Matters sections in all 34 libraries.



www.warwickshire.gov.uk/libraries

Somewhere to turn for help

The severity of the current financial situation means that many of us will face mounting anxiety about our finances.

But there is help at hand.

The county council website offers links to advice and support. You'll find tips on managing your money as well as saving on your bills. In addition to this there's specific information if you feel your job is at risk, along with support to help you get back to work if you're looking for employment.

You'll find details of organisations that can offer you help with any housing issues you may have, as well as other support for you and your family, ranging from your own emotional health to support for children and older people. There's also help for local businesses who might be feeling the pinch to help you through the recession. Simply visit: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/recession



Other money advice contacts

www.direct.gov.uk
www.adviceguide.org.uk
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk
www.cccs.co.uk
www.supportwm.co.uk
www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk
National Debtline 0808 808 4000

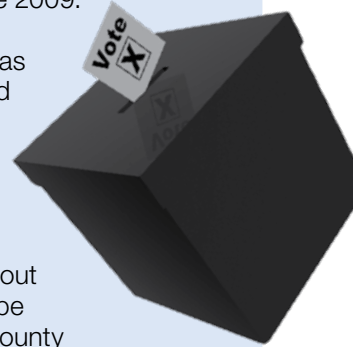
In brief...

Don't forget to vote

The next county council elections will be held on 4 June 2009.

Warwickshire County Council has 62 councillors and elections for all electoral divisions are held every four years.

More details about the elections will be available on the county council webpages at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/elections



Registering the changes

Families can now register a birth or death that has taken place in Warwickshire at any of the county's registration offices.

Birth and death registration is now available in Warwick for the first time. In addition, the legal preliminaries to a civil marriage no longer need to be registered in the area where the person getting married lives, but can be done at any of the main Register Offices in the county. For more information visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/registration or call 01926 418187.

Protection against cervical cancer for young women

GP surgeries across Warwickshire are reminding girls aged 17-18 to take advantage of the free, potentially

life-saving, HPV vaccine. The HPV vaccine protects against the two strains of the human papillomavirus which cause cervical cancer in more than 70 per cent of women who suffer the illness. More than 1,000 UK women die every

year from cervical cancer.

The vaccine is being offered as part of a national Government programme to girls born between 1 September 1990 and 1 September 1991 at their GP's surgery. The programme started in 2008.

More information is available at: www.warwickshirepct.nhs.uk



New community shop for Bedworth



Bargains galore will be on offer at a new community charity shop in Bedworth, launched recently by celebrated local author Rosie Goodwin (left).

The new shop has become a reality thanks to funding from Coalfields Regeneration Trust – Bridging The Gap, and Warwickshire County Council – Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods.

The shop at Bedworth Heath Leisure and Activity Centre, Smorrall Lane, Bedworth - incorporates a supporting volunteering scheme allowing adults with learning difficulties to be among the volunteers that work in the shop.

The shop hopes to generate income towards the running of the community centre, which receives no statutory funding towards staff or running costs. It is owned, run and managed by a team of volunteers from the Bedworth Heath area.

New homeowners given a green welcome



Hundreds of new homeowners in Warwickshire have received a Green Welcome Pack after moving into their new property.

Warwickshire County Council is thought to be the only local authority in the country offering people the packs, which were created with funding from housing developers and the support of Friends of the Earth. The packs have been created to give people information to allow them to become more sustainable in their daily lives.

Nicola Baird, co-author of Friends of the Earth book "Save Cash and Save the Planet" said: "We are so pleased that Warwickshire County Council is encouraging new home movers to become more sustainable. Most people understand that their actions are having a negative effect on the world but they are unsure of exactly what to do.

The packs have been created to give people information to allow them to become more sustainable in their daily lives.

"This pack gives them all the information they need on how to recycle, save energy and travel sustainably and lets them take the first steps by installing their energy saving lightbulb, following the bus timetable or cycle route and claiming a free compost bin".

Packs have been distributed at a number of new housing developments in Exhall, Kenilworth, Warwick, Stratford and Dunchurch.

Warning - don't let your tumble drier kill you!

Fire crews are issuing a stark safety warning after attending almost 50 incidents in Stratford over the past year caused by washing machines and tumble driers being left on unattended. Last year there were 46 such fires in Stratford alone, and a grand total of 277 in Warwickshire. On one occasion a whole garage was burnt to the ground, damaging the rest of the house.



Change of hours for County Record Office

From April 2009, the County Record Office will close to the public for the first full week of every calendar month. Staff will be working instead on opening up collections of records that have been difficult or impossible to use until now, and developing web pages to make it possible for on-line users to access new services and new sources of information.

A theme will be chosen for each year to provide a focus for the work undertaken. From April 2009 – March 2010, it will be records and collections relating to Land and Property.

We will be putting information about the tasks we complete during our collections weeks on our web pages, so do keep checking to discover more about the collections we open. www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countyrecordoffice

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...the number of A and B roads in the Stratford area where speed limits have been amended recently. The changes follow guidance set by the Department for Transport and an extensive consultation process resulting in more than 1,000 comments to Warwickshire County Council's Road Safety Team.

New guidelines for vans at recycling centres

Van, pickup and owners of larger vehicles are being reminded that Warwickshire County Council has just carried out a review of its policy when it comes to taking the vehicles into Household Waste Recycling Centres.

The county council has recognised that many people own pickups and other van-type vehicles as their only means of transport or as 'lifestyle' choices, and this is one of the reasons for a review in the policy. There are nine centres in the county where some of the



rules have now changed on who may be let into the sites, and who will be turned away.

Changes include the issuing of four permits a year to some households to allow them to take their larger vehicle to the sites.

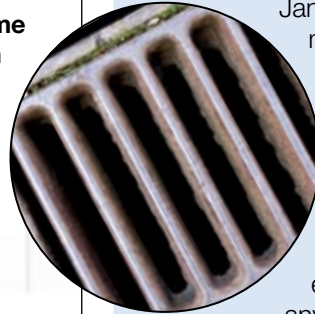
For more information visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/hwrc



Homecare staff defy the weather

Warwickshire County Council staff with 4 x 4 vehicles came to the rescue of Home Carers struggling to reach elderly and vulnerable clients in February's poor weather conditions.

Staff with 4 x 4 vehicles from across the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate were asked if they could help transport Home Care staff to and from their visits in areas where the ice and snow was making travel difficult and dangerous for normal vehicles. The snow caused difficulties for Home Carers across the county. In North Warwickshire, many walked long distances through the snow to reach their clients homes. Two homecare workers walked for an hour each way to enable a bedridden customer to receive her essential care and another walked over a mile down a remote snowbound and pot-holed lane to get to her call.



A drain on county resources

Thieves are at work in Warwickshire stealing the metal drain covers from the gullies of roads, putting lives at risk. In just one week in January more than 50 metal covers were stolen from around the Rugby area.

Andrew Savage, the county council's County Highways Operation Manger, said: "Motorists are encouraged to report any strange behaviour where people might be posing as Highway Repair Teams. Warwickshire Highway Crews are marked up 'Warwickshire County Council' and with 'Carillion' logos.

"Unless the gangs are responding to road accidents it is very unlikely that the highway crews will be working outside normal 7.30-18.00 hours. The thefts appear to be undertaken at night so please report any suspicious actions to the Police on 01926 415000 or to County Highways on 01926 412515."

Are you being WOWed?

Warwickshire County Council is committed to providing excellent services for all of our customers.

We want to encourage our customers to tell us when our employees do something outstanding.

If you feel that your expectations have been surpassed

with the service you have received why not nominate that person for a WOW! Award?

It's easy to do, you can fill in one of the forms available at libraries or other council premises, or fill in your nomination on line at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/wowawards

Each nomination will be considered for the annual National Customer Service Award.



See pages 14-15 for more about Homecare in Warwickshire.

Barbara goes past page 100

When Barbara Heynes, (right) celebrated her 100th birthday recently, amongst the well-wishers were Mary Saunders and Alison Staveley of Warwickshire Libraries Home Delivery Service. It was a card and flowers, instead of the books they usually deliver to Barbara, at her home in Kenilworth, as part of their monthly service to housebound readers in the area. Not keen on murder mysteries, Barbara likes autobiographies and fiction. "I like a good story," she said. Special though she is, Barbara is not the only reader over 100 on Mary's home delivery round. She has two clients in Leamington, plus a gentleman in Warwick who is over 100, too.



The internet is a fabulous source of learning and entertainment for our children. But all parents want their children to have access to a safe learning environment and work is underway to make the web a safer place for children.

child safety net

Parents in Warwickshire are the first in the country to be able to access groundbreaking software to make surfing the internet safer for children.

Warwickshire County Council is offering all parents of 80,000 school age children a free e-safety product for in-home use.

CyberSentinel, made by Forensic Software and already used in over 1,500 UK schools, will now be available to download free for parents by the county council to help protect and enable children to thrive online, at school and in the home.

The new software is backed by Professor Tanya Byron, (pictured far right) who is well known as a child therapist from TV's Little Angels and The House of Tiny Tearaways.

Byron has presented the Government with an independent review of the risks to children from exposure to potentially harmful or inappropriate material on the internet and in video games. She has since worked to develop a cross-

Government action plan setting out how the recommendations of the Byron Review will be implemented.

Byron said that many schools are already helping children to remain safe online, and it will be "immensely reassuring" to parents that they can now benefit at home from software packages such as CyberSentinel.

She added: "Parents may be tempted to prohibit their children from using the internet, but this is not the answer and may be counter-productive by causing family arguments and underhand behaviour. Using an effective internet safety package like this, combined with open discussions on e-safety will help maximise children's online freedom within safe boundaries."

CyberSentinel recognises and monitors keywords that signal danger, providing extra protection for instant messaging, chat rooms, social networks and much

more. It is the first time a product has offered protection spanning subjects such as cyberbullying, gambling, suicide, self-harm and grooming

John Parmiter, head of the county council's ICT Development Service, said Warwickshire has two key targets for 2009 - one is to raise standards in encouraging internet usage, and the second is to safeguard children online.

The company's e-Safety product Policy Central Enterprise (PCE) is already used in 250 county schools.



Warwickshire County Council is offering parents of 80,000 school age children a free e-safety product for in-home use.

Parents Guide

Simple to download, and managed by CyberSentinel's technical team (which includes a help desk), the key product features include:

- Time management and access control
- Filtering of web sites (white and black lists)
- Logging of web sites (recording all visited)
- Monitoring chat usage (all sides)
- Word and phrase analysis (from the black list)

A weekly summary is produced for the parent to see all internet activity that has been visited by each child.

Reporting can also be accessed remotely by parents 24/7.

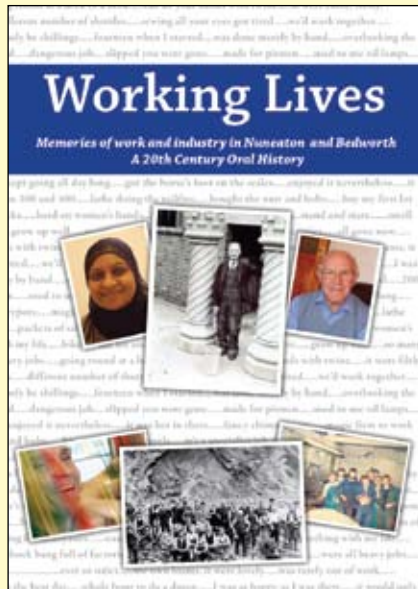
This means they can log to their control panel remotely from any PC with internet access and see what their children are doing online at home at any moment – with the ability to change the settings immediately.

For more information on CyberSentinel, visit:
www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ictds



“Parents may be tempted to prohibit their children from using the internet, but this is not the answer.”

'Working Lives' project keeps history alive



Bowler hats and fezzes, the nose of concord, sheepskin coats, banners, ribbons for police hats, chimney pots, drainage pipes, shoes, bricks, parts for cars, needles, knickers... all were made in Nuneaton and Bedworth throughout the 20th century.

Memories of people documenting the industrial heritage of Nuneaton and Bedworth have been recorded in a superb new book.

The book is the culmination of the 'Working Lives' project, which recorded over sixty hours of interviews with a cross section of people who lived or worked in Nuneaton and Bedworth between the 1930's and the start of the 21st century.

The memories of working in the brick and tile making, quarrying, textile production and engineering industries during the last century are illustrated with a variety of pictures. Many pictures show the industrial past and then the current view of the same spot capturing the changes that have happened for all to see.

There is also a CD soundscape of some of the recordings included in the book so that there is a taste of the voices themselves .

The book was written by Alison Clague, who also did the interviews, and edited by Louise Essex and

Lesley Kirkwood, Local Studies Librarian for the County Council.

Lesley said: "This book is a must for anyone who wants to find out more

about the industrial heritage

of the Nuneaton and Bedworth area. The memories recorded in the interviews combined with the photographs form a valuable resource."

The book is for sale in Nuneaton and Bedworth Libraries at a cost of £7.99.

Roy Jennings, (right) who worked at the Haunchwood Brick & Tile Co Ltd in the 1960s.

Contact Libby Luscombe on 024 7638 4027 or 024 7634 7006.

You can find out more about the project and listen to the full recordings on the website at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/workinglives

“ You kept a book... when you were actually on the machine you made your own notes - what lace went on what ribbon and that sort of thing.

Margaret Dewis, who worked at Toye, Kenning & Spencer in the 1970s and 80s.

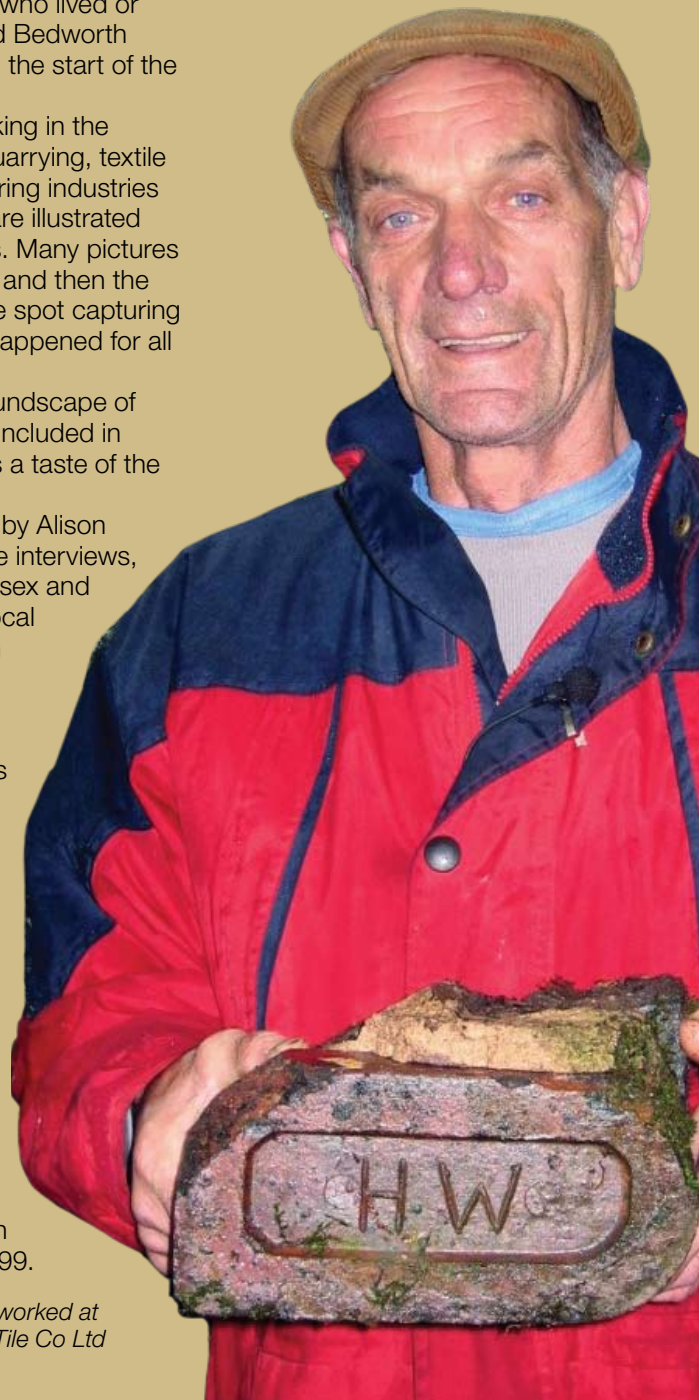
Textiles has always been a low wage. But one thing about textile work, you was very rarely out of work. I never lost a day's work...all my life and that's about 50 years in the weaving trade.

Joe Craner, pictured right.



As soon as the windows went up they used to come and queue up and bring this slip...and you used to tip this money out into their hands. Because you do realise that it would only be shillings, there wouldn't be a pound in it.

Angela Woodcock, who worked at the Reliable Clothing Company in the 1930s.



Road safety help for new parents

A new handbook – The Baby Book of Road Safety - has been launched giving practical road safety advice for parents of children from birth to three years of age.

The handbook, which has been produced by Warwickshire County Council's Road Safety Team, provides information and raises awareness of issues around in-car safety, pushchair/buggy safety and driveway safety.

Cllr Martin Heatley, the county council's Environment Portfolio Holder, said: "From the moment you know you are pregnant, the time is right to start thinking about road safety. This handbook is one of the first building blocks of road safety."

The free handbook is now available from libraries, surgeries, clinics, nurseries and many more outlets. Alternatively call 01926 412253 to receive a copy.



Project Rafiki - Youth exchange

Ten young people aged 15-18 from youth groups in Shipston and Warwick travelled to Mombasa, Kenya in January to support a community youth project.

The three-week trip was part of Project Rafiki, an exchange programme between Warwickshire County Council and Mombasa Youth Centre.

Representatives from Mombasa are planning a reciprocal visit in Autumn 2009. The group is looking for sponsorship and help with costs. For further information please contact Angela Wright on 01926 413637 or email angelawright@warwickshire.gov.uk



Cycle lanes in Alcester

Work is underway on new cycle lanes in Alcester to improve access to the town. The proposed cycle lanes will be 'advisory' only, marked on the road with a broken white line, which means that vehicles can encroach into them when necessary if no cyclists are present. The cycle lanes will extend (in the outbound direction) from Brookside Road to Proctor Way. Three right turn lanes on Alcester Road will be removed to allow enough space for the cycle lanes:

For more information contact Transport Planning Unit on 01926 410410.

Don't own a car? Join the club

A pilot scheme has been launched in Warwickshire for the residents of Warwick and Leamington Spa, offering them the chance for cheaper motoring.

Households and businesses are to receive a questionnaire in order to gauge interest in a car club. National charity Carplus promotes car clubs and sustainable transport across the UK. They have played a part in helping the idea of car clubs grow to the extent that over 70,000 people in the UK have joined car clubs.

A car club is a means of having access to a car without the need to own one. Cars are parked in several locations in a town and can be booked for as little as half an hour, depending on

your needs. Cars are reserved online or over the telephone and accessed using smartcard technology.

Carplus is working closely with Warwickshire County Council to see if the concept of car clubs will work in the county. Further information about car clubs and Carplus can be found at: www.carplus.org.uk or for more information on travel in Warwickshire see www.warwickshire.gov.uk/travel



Warwickshire Walks - Easenhall • Rugby

Wonderful views on this walk, with some fairly steep downhill and gentle uphill terrain.

Starting at the Golden Lion in Easenhall turn left and after 25 metres cross the road to a wooden gate and follow the path into a small field. Go straight ahead to the next gate into a much larger field where you head for the footbridge over the railway. Cross the next field and the canal bridge then go over the stile and straight on, keeping the old hedge on your left. Climb a second stile and at the end of the field go through a gate and turn right.



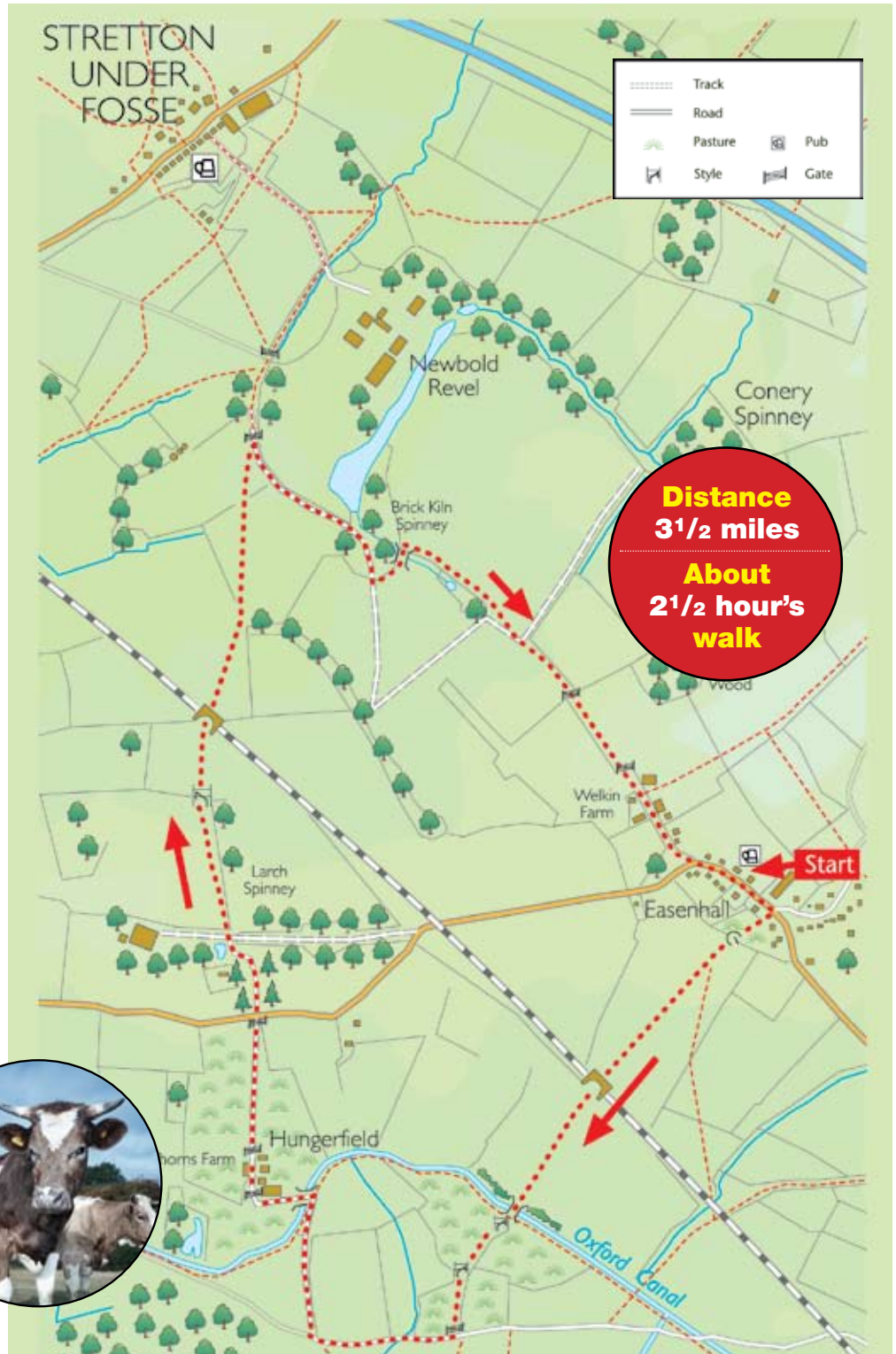
Follow the road (take care) for 400 metres before turning right onto a rough track. At the houses turn left over the canal bridge and on towards the farm. Immediately after the red brick barn turn right through a gate into the farm yard.

Continue along the track before crossing the road (take care) into the tree lined drive opposite. Where this drive bears left, go straight on through an iron gate.

Now cross a narrow strip of pasture through a second iron gate and then after 20 metres through the third gate into the next field. After 75 metres go through the gap in the hedge on your left. Turn right and walk down the field boundary to the stile.

Head for the footbridge over the railway and continue diagonally across the next two fields to an iron farm gate and onto a rough track, then turn right.

After 300 metres you pass through a wood, then turn immediately left. 75 metres on, cross two small wooden bridges, turn right and follow the field



boundary up the hill.

Go through the gate into Welkin Farm, walk between the farm buildings and turn left onto the road back towards the pub.

Moo!

He may follow you, particularly if you have a dog with you. Move carefully and quietly and if possible walk around him. If you feel threatened, let go of your dog and move quickly to the field boundary.



Parents urged to talk to children about alcohol

A campaign is being launched by Warwickshire County Council encouraging parents to talk to their children about alcohol, to agree clear boundaries on the use of alcohol, and to set a responsible example in their own use.

Statistics show that more young people are choosing not to drink alcohol. However, those who do drink are consuming more, with 48% reporting that the main source of alcohol is from their parents.

This forms the second part of a wider campaign urging young people to 'stay in control' and follows a recent review of young people and alcohol misuse by Warwickshire County Council.

Marion Davis, Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families, explains "Parents and carers play the most important role in shaping young people's attitudes

towards alcohol. By asking parents to talk to their children about the risks of alcohol, we hope to reduce the harm that alcohol can cause young people and their families."

The Chief Medical officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, recently published his recommendations on how much it is sensible for young people to drink without damaging their health and development.

Some of the immediate risks of alcohol misuse by young people are ending up in hospital, having unsafe sex, being injured or getting involved in violent crime or anti-social behaviour. There are also a number of long term health risks associated with drinking alcohol such as problems with brain development, depression and liver damage.

For more information go to: www.stayincontrol.org.uk

Stay in control

New look for Nuneaton road

Shopkeepers in the Queens Road area of Nuneaton are enjoying a makeover for their businesses thanks to a new project.

The local businessmen and women are benefitting from a joint initiative developed by Warwickshire County Council, working in partnership with Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council and Business Link West Midlands. Thanks to the scheme retailers in Queens Road, Arbury Road and the surrounding area have been offered both grant funding towards physical improvements to their shops and free business support.

A number of shops have taken advantage of this scheme and have now completed the improvements to their premises.



Young politicians elected to Youth Parliament

L to r: Rabbia Khan, Maria Fielder and Abigail Jackson with Cllr Izzi Seccombe.



Warwickshire's election day for young people saw four budding politicians win seats at the UK Youth Parliament.

Victoria Fowler, aged 18 from North Warwickshire, 14-year-old Abigail Jackson and 15-year-old Rabbia Khan from Nuneaton, and Bedworth's Maria Fielder, 15, were elected as the county's new Members of UK Youth Parliament (MYPs).

Their four elected deputies are Thato Malebye aged 17 and 16-year-old Ben Wesson from Warwick District, Aston

Jones, 14 from Exhall and 17-year-old Holly Bonnet from Stratford.

The youngsters will represent the views and interests of young people in their constituency, both locally and nationally, by meeting councillors, MPs and other decision makers to take forward issues of local importance.

Last year's MYPs brought three national issues to the fore including votes at 16, cheaper transport for young people and better relationship and sex education.



Most of us want to stay in our own homes as we get older, living independently, making our own choices and doing our own thing. Natural enough. But nature being what it is, many older people need help to maintain their independence.

home

Home or 'domiciliary' care, as it is sometimes known, is provided to people in their own homes, often supporting both individuals with care needs and their carers. Frequently this means helping people to get up and get going in the mornings, with similar assistance at the end of the day.

Home care can be a long-term arrangement or offer short term assistance to those with temporary needs - whilst a carer takes a break, for example, or when someone gets home from hospital. Home care arrangements are tailored to individual needs and charges are made according to means.

Around 4,600 people receive home care services through Warwickshire County Council in a typical year.

↳ Many more of us are living longer, well into our eighties and beyond. With older age we can expect more of the problems associated with 'things wearing out', both physically and mentally. ↵

“...despite the economic downturn, we’re working hard to make sure our services can meet rising demand, as the local population ages.”

sweet home

Nothing new?

As people’s care needs increase their desire to live independently is very often undiminished. This can put a lot of pressure on partners and other family members who find themselves doing more and more to help, with increasing difficulty.

The challenges and responsibilities of caring for older relatives are as old as civilisation itself. But society today faces them on an unprecedented scale. Many more of us are living longer, well into our eighties and beyond. With older age we can expect more of the problems associated with ‘things wearing out’, both physically and mentally. At the same time, we rightly have higher expectations in terms of wellbeing and quality of life, for as long as it lasts.

Priority

Warwickshire County Council, along with other local authorities, is looking at ways to modernise and improve the range of care and support services available to increasing numbers of older people. Improving the lot of older citizens is a national as well as local priority, with the Government pushing local authorities to make progress fast. Despite the economic recession and tightening budgets, we must move forward.

Improvements

Regular customer satisfaction surveys generate really useful feedback that helps shape service improvements. So:

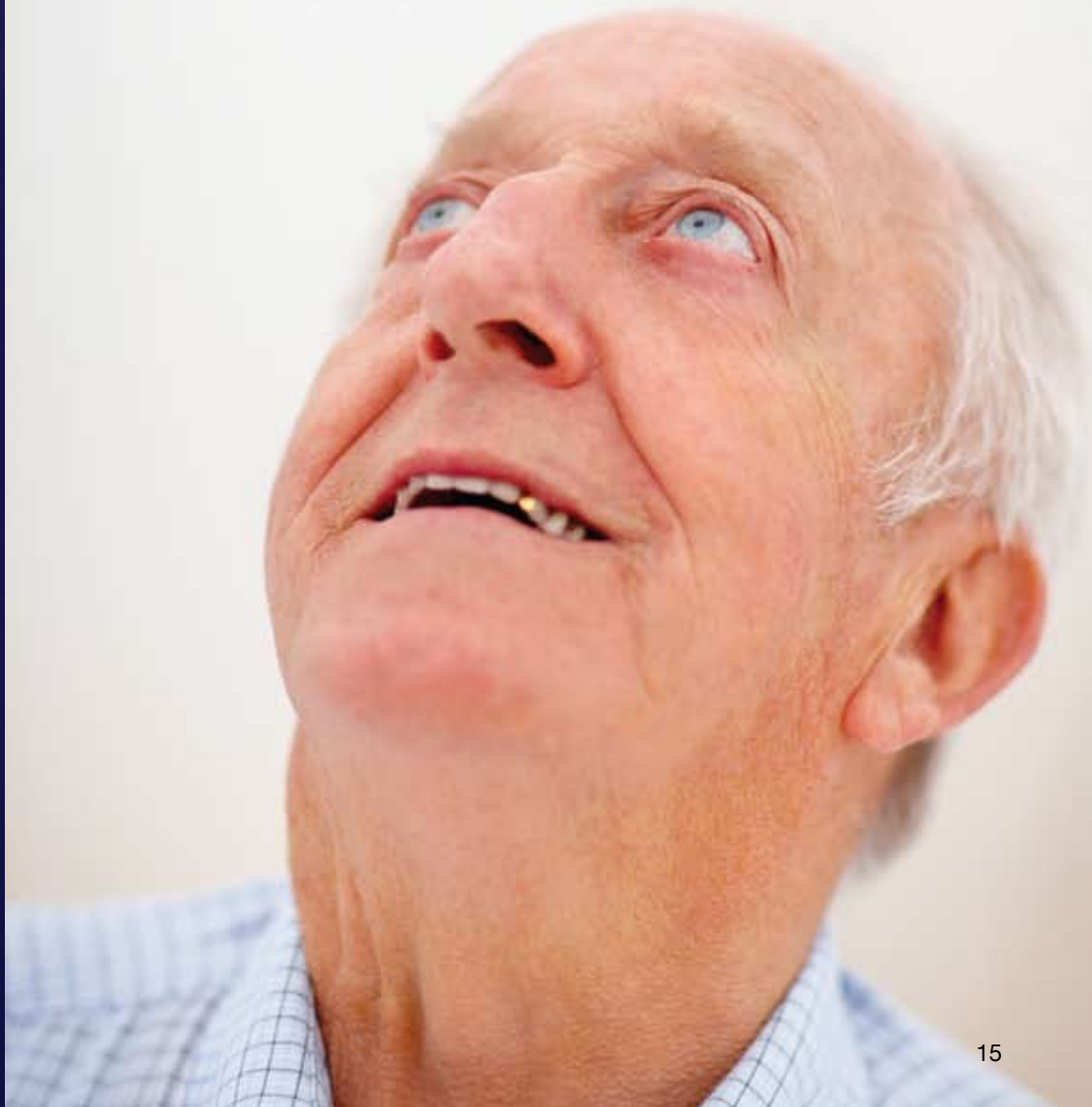
- We are looking at ways to make home care provision more responsive to individual needs and more user-friendly.
- We are exploring the further potential benefits of ‘assistive technology’ or

‘telecare’ - the latest techno-gadgetry for monitoring people at home and alerting help. Occupational therapists are working with some clients, over a six week programme, to help them reduce their reliance on home care and regain more independence.

- We are introducing a scheme called ‘self directed support’. This will enable individuals to find out exactly how much social care money they are entitled to, and to decide how best to spend it.

In essence then, despite the economic downturn, Warwickshire County Council is working hard to make sure its services can meet rising demand, as the local population ages, and to offer older people countywide more choice, more control over their own lives, and a better deal all round.

**For more information call
01926 410410 or visit: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/homecare**



North Leamington Community School and Arts College Headteacher, David Hazeldene surveys the work in progress.



New school nears completion

Work on the flagship North Leamington Community School and Arts College is gathering pace as building work enters its final phases.

The new £30 million 'school for the 21st century' will be completed in time for pupils to sit at their desks at the start of the academic year in September.

Warwickshire County Council has worked closely in partnership with the school to create the building, which will have three faculty blocks, a sports centre and a main building 'hub'.

The new school has been designed as a spacious campus incorporating environmentally-friendly features such as the recently completed 'green roofs', which are covered with alpine plants to aid drainage and encourage wildlife biodiversity.

Features include a 400-seat theatre, large sports hall, full-size all-weather surface, an adult learning/sixth-form centre and the four separate specialist faculty buildings for Maths and Science, Languages and Humanities and Art, and Design and Technology and Engineering.

Check progress on the webcam at www.northleamingtonschool.warwickshire.sch.uk/webcam.html



Exam success

Warwickshire's GCSE success rates have improved by more than three per cent on last year.

In the 2008 results published recently, 51.4 per cent of Warwickshire's 16-year-olds gained five or more GCSE grades A* to C or equivalent including English and Mathematics.

It is also the first time that more than half of the county's pupils have attained this level at GCSE, which is considered the most important qualification for employment and further study.

The rise in the previous national measure of five or more GCSE grades A* to C or equivalent rose even more dramatically, from 58.1 per cent to 64.4 per cent. This means that nearly two thirds of Warwickshire pupils gained these higher grade qualifications, many of them in vocational subjects.



County Boys Choir sings up at Symphony Hall



Warwickshire County Boys' Choir dazzled a packed audience at Symphony Hall, Birmingham when they sang as guest soloists at the West Midlands Sing Up Celebration concert.

The County Music Service choir was founded less than a year ago and have been steadily building up membership and gaining popularity within the county and beyond. They have forged prestigious links with New College

Oxford, and also St Mary's Warwick, as part of the new Choir Schools Initiative.

The choir is currently preparing for appearances at the National Choral Festival and at Christ Church, Oxford in the next couple of months.

Sing Up is a national project which aims to put singing at the heart of every primary school child's life and the boys were honoured to have the opportunity to take part in the celebration event.



'Stratford Swan' (above) by Nick Cockman, 24 from Warwick won the Landscapes & Countryside category. 'Dawn Conference' (above right) by Raphaella Philcox aged 10, from Leamington Spa won the Junior category and 'Mists at Warwick Castle' (below right) by John Newman, 60 (below), from Northend, won the Landmarks & Tourism category.



This latest enjoywarwickshire.com photography competition attracted a huge number of entries and delivered plenty of stunning images of the county.



Raphaella Philcox, 10, from Leamington Spa

enjoy warwickshire photo competition

The latest enjoywarwickshire.com photography competition attracted entries from snappers young and old from all over the county.



The judges at Coventry Telegraph and here at Warwickshire View were impressed by the outstanding quality and originality of the photography and were spoilt for

choice in selecting the category winners. We've used the 'People & Events' category winner in our library feature on pages 24-25. If you'd like to see more of the entries to the competition go to: www.enjoywarwickshire.com and click on the 2008 photo competition link.

Thanks go the sponsors of the competition; the Old Post Office Gallery in Leamington, Camerama Ltd in Kenilworth, Cheryl Doshi Photography of Leamington and WhoArtNow canvas prints of Leicester.



The winner of the fourth category 'People & Events' is featured on our library pages - see pages 24-25.



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CALDECOTT MANOR, off Boughton Road, Rugby

2 and 3 bedroom houses. Prices from just £30,000 for a 25% share.

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THE GALLERY, Abbey End, Kenilworth

2 bedroom apartments. Contact us for details

MARSTON ROAD, Lighthorne Heath

2 and 3 bedroom houses. Contact us for details.

CHURCH VIEW, Wattons Lane, Southam

2 bedroom apartments and 3 bedroom houses. Contact us for details.

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Service shows true grit under pressure



The age old question 'just how do the drivers of snow ploughs get to work?' has never been more relevant as the crews in Warwickshire faced one of their busiest ever years keeping motorists on the move.

Demonstrating their 'true grit' the drivers worked all hours to complete almost double the number of runs normally undertaken in an average winter.

An typical winter would see 40-45 grits, this year the crews have been out on 68 grits at the time of going to press (and that's with six weeks to go).

Each time the 33 gritting lorries head out on their routes gritting 1,740km of roads in Warwickshire, this equates to 47 per cent of all the county's road and includes all the primary routes.

So far this year 11,800 tonnes of salt has been used on the county's road network, distributed from the seven depots in Warwickshire.

Quite often this year the crews have worked long shifts to make sure motorists both get home safely, and

“ Such was the pressure this year that many of the national salt suppliers were struggling with demand and Warwickshire had to carefully manage its stocks.



can get into work the next day, quite often gritting before the evening rush hour, then again at 7pm, 3am and 6am.

And such was the pressure this year that many of the national salt suppliers were struggling with demand and Warwickshire had to carefully manage its stocks, which at one point dropped to just a couple of thousand tonnes, before the deliveries started up again.

All gritting routes and other travel information can be viewed at: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/travel

Let there be 'hi-tech' light

Ageing streetlights have been replaced with cutting edge technology in Henry Street, Kenilworth.

Warwickshire County Council has just completed a scheme to replace the lighting columns in Henry Street using the latest lighting technology.

The scheme, costing £10,000, secured funds from the county council's Warwick Area Committee.

The old poorly spaced street lights were around 40 years old and in need of replacement and rendered Henry Street as quite a dim place at night.

The new streetlights have lanterns fitted with a new light source called Cosmopolis, which is popular elsewhere in Europe, but is only just starting to be used in this country.

The benefits of using Cosmopolis as a light source are that it emits a high quality white light that renders colours better than traditional orange/yellow sodium light sources giving better night-time lighting as well as considerable energy savings.

The eight new street lights will save around £200 in electricity charges a year and reduce CO2 emissions by around 800kg a year compared to the electricity costs and emissions had sodium lighting been installed.



Bus station eases congestion



Coaches will soon be using Warwick's new bus station - relieving congestion on busy roads whilst bringing more tourists into the town centre.

At the moment coaches often drop off visitors in Jury Street or on Castle Hill to access hotels and visit Warwick Castle, but following a call from traders the county council has negotiated with many coach operators to drop people off at the bus station instead.

Thumbs up for youth workers

Youth workers in Warwickshire take time to listen to young people, take them seriously and are very caring - just some of the compliments young people made about Warwickshire County Council's Youth and Community Service in the service's annual 'You Tell Us' survey.

Almost 700 young people aged 13 to 19 completed the questionnaire, sharing their views on how the service meets their needs and what else they want to see on offer to them.

Meet the latest 'green' family

A Kenilworth family has taken up this year's Sustainability Challenge to demonstrate that it is possible to change to a greener way of living with very little effort. Environmental experts from the council are on hand to guide the Slade family as they discover just how easy it is to go 'green', by trying out everything from home composting to making sure they are not wasting energy by leaving things on stand-by.

The family has been given a host of green goodies to help make their transition to a greener life easier, including an energy monitor, compost bin and pedometers for them to wear.



Festive treat from Relief Road workers



Truck loads of Christmas spirit was served up by the workers on Rugby Western Relief Road who dipped into their own pockets to ensure a group of local children with special needs had a festive season to remember.

The group of 24 pupils from Brooke School in Rugby visited the site before Christmas to hear more about the development and have a

tour of the project.

But the workers had a surprise in store and had been carrying out a collection to raise money to throw them a party complete with Christmas presents. The workers managed to raise a fantastic £480.

For more information on the latest developments on Rugby Western Relief Road visit: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/rwrr

Visitors travel from far and wide to visit country parks



Country parks in Warwickshire are proving a great value draw, not only to local people, but also to families and visitors from around the Midlands.

The low cost parking, easy access, regular events and variety of sites in Warwickshire attracted three quarters of a million people to the county's parks in the last year.

A recent survey undertaken at Kingsbury Water Park found that 73 per cent of respondents travelled from outside Warwickshire to the park, particularly from Birmingham, Tamworth and Solihull. To find out more visit:

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countryparks

You can now access council services at a number of one stop shops at convenient locations around the county.

“ A one stop shop is a place where you can speak face to face with someone and access lots of different council services. ”

the direct approach

If you would like to speak face-to-face with someone concerning a service, you can visit one of the many one-stop shops around Warwickshire.

So what exactly is a one stop shop? Basically it's a building, situated within a community, where the Warwickshire public can speak to customer services advisors in person. Here you can:

- Request a council service
- Access other partner services (where available)
- Access information and advice
- Carry out any other council business



All one stop shop Customer Service Advisors are specially trained in the wide range of services on offer and will wherever possible, try to resolve your query on the spot. This means that all your council business can be dealt with in one place.

So, regardless of where you find yourself in the county, you can access services through Warwickshire Direct from the nearest one stop shop.

For most enquiries you can simply walk in - although you may need to make an appointment for some services like Registration.

For more information visit: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/warwickshiredirect or call 01926 410410.



Locations

Atherstone

Council House, South Street
Atherstone, Warwickshire
CV9 1BD



Bedworth

King's House, King Street
Bedworth, Warwickshire
CV12 8LL

Nuneaton

Nuneaton Library & Information Centre
Town Hall, Coton Road
Nuneaton, Warwickshire
CV11 5AA



Kenilworth

Kenilworth Library & Information Centre
Smalley Place, Kenilworth
Warwickshire CV8 1QG

Southam

Southam Library & Information Centre
High Street, Southam
Leamington Spa CV47 0HB

Lillington

Lillington Library & Information Centre
Valley Road, Lillington, Leamington
CV32 7SJ

Warwick

Shire Hall, Market Square
Warwick, Warwickshire CV34 4SA

Whitnash

Whitnash Library & Information Centre
Franklin Road, Whitnash
Leamington Spa CV31 2JH

Details of opening times and more call:

01926 410410

Coming Soon

One stop shops are on the way in
Stratford and Alcester

Lillington Library turns over a new leaf

Lillington Library has reopened following its recent transformation into the latest Warwickshire Direct 'one stop shop'.

Warwickshire Direct - Lillington is one of eight advice and information centres now open around the county which offers easy access to a wide range of services from both Warwickshire County Council and local district and borough councils and partner agencies.

Residents are now not only able to borrow books and DVDs from the Valley Road centre, but also apply for bus passes and disabled parking badges, report problems on the highways, apply for housing and Council Tax benefits, and much more.

For more information about Warwickshire Direct, including details of your nearest 'one stop shop' visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/warwickshiredirect or see p21.

Warwickshire Direct
Lillington
working together for you

Ever ask yourself the question, what if?

What if you had a fire in your home or flood water was coming through your front door. Would you know what to do?

BBC Coventry and Warwickshire recently worked with Warwickshire County Council's Emergency Planning Unit, Fire and Rescue Service and other partners, to ask the question "What If?"

Tim Bowtell, Head of Emergency Planning for Warwickshire County Council said: "It is more important than ever that residents know what to do in the event of an emergency and the 'What If' programme helped people to understand what they can do to reduce the risks of having a fire in their home and plan for what they may need, should they have to leave their homes in an emergency. Simple things such as a grab bag with essential medication and family contact details can really make a difference in an emergency situation.

In certain emergencies the advice



may be to **GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN.**

GO IN, as the safest place may be indoors, closing all doors and windows.

STAY IN until you are advised otherwise by the emergency services or local radio.

TUNE IN to your local radio station or television for advice and guidance.

For information on emergency planning go to www.warwickshire.gov.uk/epu or visit www.bbc.co.uk/coventryandwarwickshire

More people are getting 'on the buses'

Bus use is booming in the Stratford area with more and more people hopping on board and getting out of the car. And because of the growth in bus use in the town the number 19 service in Stratford has become the latest Quality Bus Initiative. The scheme is proving a huge hit elsewhere; for example the numbers of people using another new QBI route, the X20 in Stratford, has gone up by almost 200 per cent since the new buses were provided (from 60,400 in 2004 to 183,033 by the end of 2008). For further information on bus routes and travel see www.warwickshire.gov.uk/travel



Meeting the people who help us

Registered Childminders from Nuneaton and North Warwickshire and the children they look after attended a special activity morning at Camp Hill Children's Centre in February.

They spoke to firefighters, paramedics, police officers and police community support officers about their roles protecting the community.

Childminder Joy Boxall from Nuneaton conceived the idea for the session about people who help us.

Children enjoyed taking part in hospital and reception role-play, playing with toy ambulances and fire engines and other themed activities.

The children gained a better understanding of the work these men and women do and had fun looking at the uniforms and special equipment.

For more about the family information service visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis



Here's your chance tell us what you think about what you've read in the magazine or any other issues you'd like to raise about our services. You can write or email to the addresses below.

contact us



Community Forums further information

For more information about Community Forums and details of forthcoming meetings visit:

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/
communityforums](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/communityforums)

Alternatively you can call:

North Warwickshire Area Office
01827 719 317

Nuneaton & Bedworth
Area Office

024 7637 5700

Rugby Area Office

01788 533656

Warwick District Area Office

01926 456102

Stratford Area Office

01789 290784

email:

vieweditor@warwickshire.gov.uk

write:

View Editor, Warwickshire County Council, Communications Division, P.O. Box 9, Shire Hall, Warwick CV34 4RR

Community Forums - your chance to speak up

So what exactly is a Community Forum?

Community Forums are regular public meetings where local residents have the opportunity to tell public service representatives what their priorities and needs are, and work with them to help resolve them.

These might range from community safety issues, through to recycling, and activities for young people – and although these may be common issues across the county, they will be addressed and tackled at a local level according to the needs of residents in that particular area.

At each meeting there will be a report back on any actions raised at the last meeting and progress to date.

North Warwickshire and Rugby have been successfully operating meetings like this for some time now, and Community Forums are now active in Stratford, Nuneaton & Bedworth and parts of Warwick District.

See the panel above right, for how to find out more.



Warwickshire County Council is developing ways to work more closely with local residents, listening to their issues and concerns and finding out what's really important to them in their local area.



are you ready to take up the
quest?



This summer's Reading Challenge encourages young people to embark on a fantastical adventure and become a Questseeker over the summer holidays. Nearly all UK libraries are taking part and we urge children to come and register for the challenge in their local Warwickshire library. There will also be activities linked to the theme of fantastical journeys. Here's what Warwickshire's Heritage Education team will be offering in libraries in every district of the county: **Discover the amazing journeys people from the past took. What fantastical things did they see? Make an adventure kit to take on your own fantastical journey; telescope, compass and a map. Everything you need for an adventure!**

It's fun and FREE! • Here's how to get involved

- Sign up at your local library as soon as you can in the summer holidays
- Read six books (borrow two at a time!)
- Each time you have read two books you can collect a small gift
- When you finish you will be awarded a medal and certificate

...and after it's over

In the autumn term - take your certificate and medal in to show your new class teacher or school librarian. They should be very pleased to see that you have kept up reading over the holidays.

**For ages
4 to 12**

Questseekers for all!

- The Summer Reading Challenge is all about enjoying reading.
- You don't have to be the best reader to take part.
- Read the kinds of books you enjoy.
- Change books if you don't like one you've started.
- Read books on any subject (not just fantasy).
- If you prefer to listen to books or share them with an adult, that's OK.
- Just ask if you would like Challenge materials in large print format.



Some Fantasy theme book suggestions

Whatever next? by Jill Murphy

For all ages

When Mrs Bear says it's bathtime, Baby Bear has other ideas. He wants to go to the moon. How he achieves this makes a lovely story both for little ones undertaking Bookcrawl, or for those just starting to read to have a go. Baby Bear's imaginative journey will delight children and adults alike.



Stella Thebridge

Children's Librarian, Nuneaton

Here Lies Arthur by Philip Reeve *Ages 10+*

In this brilliant version of the Camelot story, Philip Reeve scrubs off all that late-medieval gloss about gallant knights and a round table, and returns Arthur to the place where he probably belongs: a sixth-century mud-and-blood bath of brute force and low cunning.



Kim Fetherston

Children's Librarian, Warwick

Cosmic by Frank Cottrell Boyce

What a terrific read! Genuine laugh-out-loud stuff, warm and uplifting but also poignant and moving.

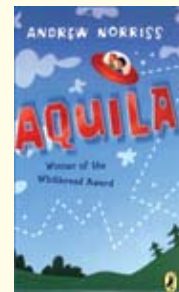


Liam is an eleven year old, so tall that he is always being taken for an adult. Engineering a trip in a rocket he becomes lost in space with four children and three 'fellow' adults who all end up seeing the world from each others' perspectives. Enormous appeal for every age group.

**Celia Merriman
Manager, Services to
Schools
Warwickshire Schools
Library Service**

Aquila by Andrew Norris *Ages 8+*

On a geography field trip with their school, Geoff and Tom stumble across a strange craft. Climbing aboard, they push one of the buttons...and find themselves hovering about half a mile up in the air. As the two friends embark on a journey of discovery to find out what the craft is and where it has come from, they also discover some surprising things about themselves. A hilarious and absorbing adventure.



Sheridan Hunt

Children's Librarian, Stratford

Other authors to look out for:

- **Eoin Colfer** (*Artemis Fowl*)
- **Steve Jackson & Ian Livingstone**
- **Diana Wynne Jones**
- **CS Lewis** (*Narnia*)
- **Terry Pratchett**
(*Truckers, Diggers and Wings*)
- **Chris Riddell**
- **JK Rowling** (*Harry Potter*)
- **Lemony Snicket**
(*Series of unfortunate events*)
- **Jonathan Stroud**
- **JRR Tolkien** (*Lord of the Rings*)

Calling all Dr Who fans

**There will be a
'Dr Who Fun Day'
at Warwick and
Bedworth libraries
on Wed 8th April.
It's 10.30am-12.30pm
at Warwick and
2.00pm - 4.00pm at
Bedworth.**



“ A parent's comment from last year's challenge:

Excellent – it really helped to motivate the five year old to keep reading over the summer. Well paced, coming back every two weeks, with sticker rewards very motivating for both. We'll be back next summer, thanks.



Further information on events in libraries and elsewhere in Warwickshire will be available on our events listing on www.warwickshire.gov.uk/events

Further general information from The Reading Agency website www.readingagency.org.uk/children/summer-reading-challenge/

what's on

march

- 29 Kite making & flying**
Make your own kite and fly it at Kingsbury Water Park! 1–3pm. £3 per kite. For more information and to book call 01827 872660.

april

- 4-19 Easter Eggstravaganza**
A choc-o-bloc programme of events at Hatton Country World. Don't miss the Bunny Hunt and Easter Egg competitions with free chocolates. 10am – 4pm. www.hattonworld.com

- 10-13 Craft Fair**
Exhibition & demonstrations of paintings, pots, woodwork, paper craft, felt work, glass/lead painting, jewellery and more. National Herb Centre, Warmington, (on the B4100) 10am–4pm, free entry.

- 23-27 Shakespeare's Birthday Celebrations**
Celebrate Shakespeare's birthday in his home town of Stratford-upon-Avon. For further information call 01789 204016 or visit www.shakespeare.org.uk

- 28 April - 04 May Stratford Literary Festival**
Including author events, book signings, lively panel discussions and writers' workshops. Tickets available from the Civic Hall on 01789 207100 or online at www.stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk

may

- 03 Annual 10km & Fun Run**
Runners of all abilities are welcome to run as far as they are able. The Pingles Athletic Track, Nuneaton. 10.30am – 1pm. £7 entry. Call 02476 316533 to pre-book.

- 07 Kaleidoscope Concert**
The County Music Service's termly concert for solo or duet performers, Avon Valley School & Performing Arts College, Rugby. 7.00 pm. For further information call 01926 742630.

- 11-17 Kenilworth Festival**
This week long event returns to Kenilworth with a variety of activities and entertainments taking place. For more info visit www.kenilworthweb.co.uk/kenilworth-festival

may contd

- 23-31 Wonderful Whitsun**
Hatton Country World's Spring Fête includes frisbee golf, coconut shy and traditional swing boats. Plus for Whitsun week only - goat racing! 10am – 4pm. www.hattonworld.com

- 24 Late SpringWatch walk**
Look for spring flora and fauna in the woodland at Hartshill Hayes Country Park. 10am – 12noon, Adults £2, Concessions £1. Call 01827 872660 or visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countryside

june

- 10-14 BBC Gardener's World Live**
BBC Gardener's World Live returns to the NEC in Birmingham with favourites such as the RHS Floral Marquee and Gardeners' World presenters live on stage. Visit www.bbcgardenersworldlive.com for more details and advance tickets.

- 13-14 Leamington Peace Festival**
Free festival in Victoria Park, Leamington featuring two entertainment areas, and over 120 stalls including charities, activists, spiritual groups, healers, crafts and fairtraders. For more info visit www.peacefestival.org.uk

- 14 Maxstoke Castle Open Day**
The 14th century moated castle is only open one day a year. Nr Coleshill, B46 2RD. 11am – 5pm.

- 14 Ryton Pools Country Park Open Day**
Guided walks, clue trails, drop-in crafts events, volunteering plus much more! For more information visit www.warwickshire.gov.uk/countryside or call 01827 872660.

- 18 Family Fun Ride**
Celebrate National Bike Week and join a marshalled cycle ride of 5 or 10 miles around the Fenn Lanes on the Sustans NCN52 route in Nuneaton. Includes giveaways, police bike tagging, Dr Bike, bike maintenance and much more! Rides start at 6pm from Ambleside Sports Club, Nuneaton. Call 024 7674 1276 for further details.