

Major investment boosts flood resilience

A wide-ranging £2m programme is helping residents, businesses and communities across Leicestershire to tackle flooding.

From stepping up our drain cleaning schedule and launching a new grant scheme, to using natural resources to mitigate the impact of flooding, we're taking action.

The three-year project is funded by money originally earmarked for carbon reduction initiatives.

Councillor Adam Tilbury, cabinet member for flooding, said: "This is a significant step forward. Flooding is a big priority and we've worked hard to identify the areas we need to focus on and what communities want from us.

"Being more proactive on maintenance,

having the right equipment we can give to high-risk areas and giving parishes the chance to undertake their own work through grants is the best use of this money.

"I've been all around the county talking to people about flooding. I know it's devastating, so we need to do everything we can to minimise the risk and build community resilience where possible."

The investment comes after over 700 homes and businesses were hit by unprecedented, widespread flooding last January, the worst to hit Leicestershire for decades.

Where the investment is going:

• Clean drains more often

More than half of the cash will bolster drain maintenance - including a new schedule to maintain culverts, emptying lower priority drains more regularly and mapping underground drains to aid maintenance and investigations.

• Flood-ready communities

With flooding on the rise, nearly half-a-million pounds will help communities to adapt. Smart, absorbent, expandable sandbags will be given to high-risk areas through town and parish councils, flood wardens and during site visits by our flood team. Money will also be made available for communities to apply for grants to undertake small-scale but effective projects that reduce the risk of flooding.

• Innovative solutions

Whether it's planting trees to absorb water or putting old logs in rivers to slow down the water and reduce risk of overspill, we're embracing nature-friendly approaches.

Read more about what we're doing and how you can play your part – See pages 6 to 9





Leicestershire Matters is sent to all residents in the county of Leicestershire.

It costs around 12p to print and deliver each copy. To help save money on the distribution, we work closely with Royal Mail. We're sorry if you receive Leicestershire Matters just over the border in a neighbouring county - but by using standard postal routes we actually save £750 per issue.

Contact us:

leicestershire.gov.uk

Our website focuses on the most popular things that people want to do online. So next time you need to find or do something with the council, go online at leicestershire.gov.uk

Email

leics-matters@leics.gov.uk

X@LeicsCountyHall

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General enquiries

Mon - Thur: 8.30am - 5pm

Fri: 8.30am - 4.30pm

Telephone: 0116 232 3232

Post

Communications Team,
Room 400, County Hall,
Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8RA

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Welcome

Dan Harrison, leader of Leicestershire County Council, introduces our winter edition



Your questions answered

Changes to local government and driving down costs are our big priorities.

Q: How are you saving money?

DAN: "Our major cost reduction drive is expected to identify multi-million-pound savings which will go a long way towards helping to close the £90m revenue budget gap. Holding vacancies means we're releasing nearly £1m in children and families services, sensible, permanent changes to street light brightness are on track to save over half-a-million-pounds a year and the new homecare procurement process has potential to save around £1m per year."

Q: Will your LGR proposal improve services?

DAN: "It's designed to join up services - avoiding council 'ping pong' - and free up money to reinvest into vital services. Our bid aims to avoid breaking up the care and support vulnerable adults and children depend on. Unnecessarily splitting up these services could jeopardise this life changing support and is a risk we can't afford to take. You can read more in our submission."

Q: What are you doing to oppose a potential city expansion and preserve Leicestershire's heritage?

DAN: "As the council's leader, I oppose any extension of Leicester's boundary and this is backed by a strong cross-party council majority. Our analysis shows that expanding the city could mean breaking up communities, transferring assets and increasing risk, without any real service or financial benefit - issues being considered as part of the wider reorganisation discussions. In fact, the bigger the city, the worse off the county becomes. Our plan retains our historic civic and cultural identities as well as eliminating duplication and putting public money where it belongs - on the front line."

Driving down costs and tackling the issues that matter to you are our priorities.

Flooding devastates lives and we're investing an extra £2m to help residents and businesses adapt and be more resilient to severe weather.

With winter upon us, this special edition spotlights how we're getting stuck in. From clearing almost 80,000 drains to embracing innovative approaches and nature-friendly tactics, we're doing our bit.

Whether you're a business, homeowner or landowner, it also sets out practical steps you can take to be flood-ready.

Like flooding, we're putting our residents first with local government reorganisation. This is the single most important issue we face and will shape councils for future generations.

We want to build a brand new council, bringing together the best of both county and district, into a council fit for the 21st century and beyond.

Our bid simplifies services, saves money, empowers our communities and preserves our history. Critically, it also unlocks devolution, bringing more local control and funding.

We're rightly proud of Leicestershire and are making progress. Efficiency is our focus and six months in, our pioneering top-to-bottom review of our £1.3bn yearly spend is up and running.

We have to roll our sleeves up and figure out how to close a sizable £90m budget gap and we're leading the way for other councils. This isn't about eking out a few hundred thousand pounds here and there - it's about pinpointing and testing big opportunities to do things differently.

I hope you enjoy this winter edition and wish you a happy new year.

A bold new council for future generations

This isn't just structural change - it's a once-in-a-generation opportunity to put residents first, empower communities and reinvest millions into frontline services that matter most.

We're proposing to build a brand new council, fit for the 21st century - a simpler, stronger and more financially sustainable council.

Our proposal unites Leicestershire and Rutland under a single council, preserving local identity while delivering smarter, more responsive governance. Independently verified analysis tells us that the plan will save around £40 million every year by cutting duplication and streamlining leadership - money that goes straight back into vital services for you.

Transition costs are significant but they're paid back within just a couple of years. The long-term benefits? A council

that's leaner, more efficient and better equipped to meet future challenges.

Our plan features local area and planning committees, along the lines of the North Yorkshire Council model, liked by Government and recognised as a success.

We're clear - this is about strengthening local democracy, not erasing history. The council opposes any expansion of Leicester's boundaries and have called for a Government-funded referendum if such plans emerge.

Council leader, Dan Harrison, said: "We've worked with Scrutiny, local business and stakeholders to shape our final proposals, backed by a strong,

cross-party majority.

"This is the right choice for our communities, our finances and our future.

"This is a critical moment for local government in our area and a chance to build a more effective, efficient and responsive council that is fit for the challenges of the next generation.

"Re-drawing the map would mean destroying Leicestershire's history and identity. Our plan is about empowering our communities and giving more power to people to take decisions locally."

The Government will now consider proposals and consult on their preferred options in 2026.



Scrutiny shapes the future

Councillors have played a vital role in shaping this ambitious bid, investing time and expertise to make sure it delivers for our communities.

Through special Scrutiny Commission meetings, they've challenged, refined and strengthened the proposal - ensuring it's clear, practical and focused on what matters most.

Councillors took a fine-tooth comb to the plan and called for these points to be made clearer in our plan:

- Boundaries shouldn't be changed where there is no service benefit
- Rutland's culture and heritage will be protected
- Reorganisation will result in the creation of a new authority - with a new culture and ethos
- Service points will be kept in localities
- Whilst Rutland Council may choose to look elsewhere, we believe that Leicestershire is the best fit for it

Councillors also called for more detail, like area committee boundaries, population growth forecast and a clear comparison of existing councils, plus a design that's visually appealing and easy to understand.

Your questions answered

From responding to your questions, accepting petitions and monitoring public bodies' performance, the role of 'scrutiny' is varied.

Q: Why is 'scrutiny' important to me?

A: As scrutiny leads, our role is to make sure decisions are taken for the benefit of our residents and that our services are delivering for you.

Q: How can I get involved?

A: You can ask a question or submit a petition, attend a meeting in person or watch online.

Four of our councillors are 'commissioners' and decide on priority issues for scrutiny:



Deborah Taylor CC
Chair of the Scrutiny Commission



Michael Mullaney CC
Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission



Dr John Bloxham CC
Scrutiny Commissioner



Andrew Innes CC
Scrutiny Commissioner

Find out more at:
leicestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny



Building Leicestershire's future

From major construction projects to big initiatives driving down our costs, change is happening. We're proud of Leicestershire and working hard to deliver quality services and maximise efficiency.

Delivering savings

A £90m revenue budget gap and rocketing demand for special educational needs and disability support makes balancing the books challenging.

But we're making changes and pressing Government for a better deal.

Council leader, Dan Harrison, said: "Our focus is delivering quality services, maximising efficiency and building

a county equipped for the challenges of 21st century life.

"And from pushing on with big construction projects and keeping the county moving this winter, to designing future transport plans which support Leicestershire's economy, we're doing just that.

"Our extensive, top-to-bottom efficiency review is leading the way for councils. Residents are expecting us to reduce costs - and that's what we're doing."



Dan Harrison

Have your say

We want to hear your views on our budget proposals

leicestershire.gov.uk/budget

Pioneering efficiency review

A major efficiency review designed to help close our £90m budget gap is underway.

Consultants are taking a fine-tooth comb to all of our £1.3 billion yearly spend to pinpoint opportunities to unlock more savings. The top-to-bottom analysis focuses on:

- **Targeted prevention in communities** - supporting residents before they reach a crisis point and need formal support from the council
- **Managing growing demand for services** - focusing on improving outcomes for residents and maximising independence
- **Improving how the council awards contracts** - ensuring high quality services as close to people's homes and communities as possible
- **Efficient services** - reviewing delivery to ensure high quality and efficiency

- **Reviewing budget saving plans** - including cross-organisational opportunities, and maximising income

Councillor Harrison Fowler, cabinet member for resources,



Harrison Fowler

said: "We were elected to cut costs and the scale of the challenge means we need

to dig deep and act decisively.

"These are leading professionals who give us the fresh eyes and best practice required.

"Make no mistake, this is a big task but I'm confident it will generate practical ways of driving down our costs."

Initial opportunities are expected this winter and more detailed recommendations in early 2026.



The new bridge at Zouch



Milestone for major projects

Melton new road

All six roundabouts along Melton Mowbray's brand new distributor road are now open to motorists.

Built by contractors Galliford Try on our behalf, the £134m congestion-busting road is our biggest ever highways scheme.

The 4.5 mile stretch will take traffic out of the town centre, provide access to new homes, Twinlakes Park, John Ferneley College and rural villages and is due to fully open in early 2026.

Zouch bridge

Work on the £19.5m Zouch Bridge replacement has

reached a key milestone with the successful 'launch' of steel beams across the River Soar.

In November, engineers won the 36-metre beams into place using a specialist jacking system, avoiding the need for cranes due to nearby high-voltage cables.

We're replacing the deteriorating existing bridge on the A6006, a key trade and transport route linking Hathern and Zouch on the Leicestershire / Nottinghamshire border.

The new bridge is being built by specialist contractors Eric Wright Civil Engineering.

Gritters ready to roll

Stockpiles of rock salt are in place at Leicestershire's five grit barns.

When the temperature plummets, we grit more than 1,300 miles of roads each night - that's the same distance as from County Hall in Glenfield to Rome.

Around 16,500 tonnes of salt, our 23-strong gritter fleet and trusted volunteer snow wardens are in place and ready to help keep the county moving.

Last winter, our hardworking drivers took to the roads a

total of 53 times, successfully spreading almost 7,000 tonnes of salt - and we're ready to do the same this year.

We're responsible for gritting major roads, including A-routes and heavily used B-routes, roads linking towns and larger villages and outside bus, train, fire and ambulance stations and hospitals.

Vehicles are fitted with specialist temperature tracking technology, which easily determines when gritting is required.

**B19**
travel survey

Help shape future travel options for Leicestershire.

leicestershire.gov.uk/big-travel-survey





Dialling up flood support across Leicestershire

Two million pounds has been invested to help residents and businesses adapt and be more resilient to severe weather.

Drain drive as winter looms

Around £1.3m of the money has been invested to help us to fix and clean nearly 28,000 more gullies (often known as drains) at the side of the road.

Across the county, we maintain nearly 135,000 gullies with teams working day and night. Each gully is prioritised and those in more flood-prone areas are cleaned more often than those identified in less areas at much lower flood risk.

This year alone will see more than half of the gullies we manage cleaned - nearly 76,000 - and the 2026 schedule will be boosted by this investment.

There will also be money to further map our underground drainage assets to help to investigate issues and plan maintenance activities.



Councillor Adam Tilbury, cabinet member for flooding, said: "The £2m we've invested is a sensible step to help us boost our comprehensive draining schedule, help communities

at risk of flooding and give parishes a chance to do their own work to help tackle flooding."

Gullies – how we prioritise

Some gullies need cleaning more often than others. Lots of factors are taken into account, including:

- **History of flooding** - Gullies in flood-prone areas are cleaned more frequently.
- **Popular roads** - High-traffic roads and how important they are to the highway network
- **Silt levels** - Using data from previous cleans helps us identify gullies that fill up faster
- **Local reports** - Your reports and those from councillors help identify areas.

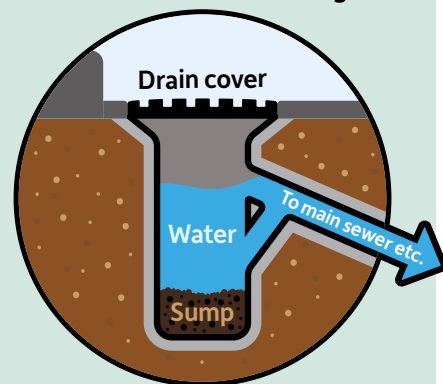


Did you know?

Flood water brings silt, litter, leaves and mud. After the floods last January, our maintenance teams carried out extra work to clear out nearly 5,000 flood-hit gullies and 50 culverts.

How does a gully work?

- The pipe in the gully takes the water to a main drain, public sewer, watercourse, river or roadside ditch
- The bottom of a gully, the 'sump' will collect debris, silt and leaves
- A working gully will always have some water in it. This is to stop bad smells getting into the air
- If water is flowing back out of the gully during heavy rainfall, this usually means the main sewer or drainage system is full and the water has nowhere else to go



Helping communities to be flood ready

A total of £400,000 will go towards helping local communities tackle flooding in their own areas.

Smart sandbags and a brand new grant scheme make up the rest of the money, with absorbent, expandable sandbags being made available to over 70 parish councils and flood wardens in at risk areas.

Flood officers who visit during site visits and public events will also give out samples of the bags to be used as a last resort defence against any flooding.

Communities will also be able to bid for money to reduce flood risk, with expressions of interest set to open next year. These grants will enable town and parish councils to fund their own flood schemes, such as flood storage areas, natural flood management or equipment to help flood resilience.

Councillor Adam Tilbury said: "We'll work with communities and help them to shape their planned work but towns and parish councils have such important local knowledge, and now they'll be able to use that knowledge to help with flood risk."

Information on how to apply for grants will be available soon.

Check your flood risk

Check the flood risk from rivers and surface water in your area at gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk



Flood defences at Breedon on the Hill



Innovative project to protect homes



Work on a scheme to protect homes from severe flooding is progressing in Breedon on the Hill.

After intense rainfall overwhelmed watercourses and gullies in the area, work took place to come up with a plan to help prevent major incidents in future.

The centrepiece of the project involved modifying an access road and pond to provide significant flood water storage on a local farm upstream of the village.

Natural solutions have also been used, with 200 trees and thousands of hedges planted, wood barriers installed along the main brook and nearby ponds and fields adapted to hold excess water.

Not only will the project help protect homes from severe floods, but also the highway, preventing disruption to transport and education.

Councillor Adam Tilbury said: "This is a partnership project and it shows what can be achieved. It's already making a difference before it's even finished and helps to protect a village that, like others in the county, has been devastated by flooding in the past."

We are leading the project and have contributed money towards the work, with the majority of funding coming from a Government flooding grant and the Environment Agency's Local Levy fund.



Flood Mary's mobile exhibition van in Loughborough



Hear from Flood Mary

After being a victim of flooding herself, Mary Long-Dhonau OBE became a property flood resilience champion, and has been supporting at our flooding drop-in events across the county this year.

Q: What makes you so passionate about raising awareness about flood preparation?

MARY: "I know, and so do thousands of others, that the recovery from the flood is far worse than the flood itself. Anything that we can do at a property level to reduce the horrible impact is time and money well spent.

"It is not just about flood protection products, it's knowing your flood risk, signing up to free Environment Agency flood warnings and Met Office weather alerts and having a 'flooding checklist'. Having one written down keeps you calm and focused if you're about to flood. There's one on the council's website, and mine too."

Q: What products are available to protect homes and businesses?

MARY: "I have a directory, called 'making your home flood ready' on my website at floodmary.com which has a list of what's available but there are some key things that are easy to fit and can really help in a crisis.

"Flood doors, which look like normal front doors, can keep water out up to 60 centimetres.

"Lots of water can enter properties through airbricks. Self-closing airbricks are available, which automatically close when the flood water hits them. If you flood from underneath your floor, a sump pump can help keep the level down and a puddle pump can sit on the floor to get water height down to 2ml.

"A non-return valve can help to stop flood water coming into your home through gullies and similar devices can be used for your dishwasher, washing machine and under the sink. A toilet bung can also be put into the toilet to prevent water entering there."

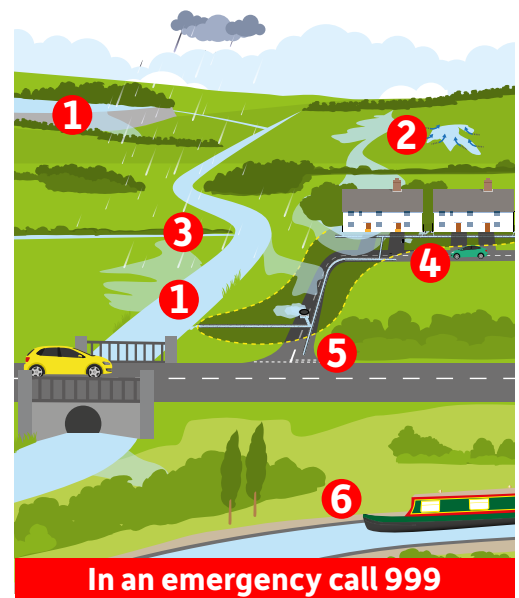
Q: What's the one thing you would say is vital to helping residents and businesses protect themselves this winter?

MARY: "Planning in advance as to what you'll do if you were about to flood should be at the front and centre of everything!"



Who to contact during a flood:

- 1 Reservoirs and main rivers**
 - Environment Agency 0800 80 70 60 (24 hr)
 - Floodline 0345 988 1188
- 2 Surface water and groundwater**
 - leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-flood or 0116 305 0001 (Office hours)
- 3 Small streams and ditches**
 - leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-flood or 0116 305 0001 (Office hours)
- 4 Mains sewer and waste water sewer**
 - Severn Trent 0800 783 4444 (24 hr)
 - Anglian Water 03457 145 145 (24 hr)
- 5 Public highway**
 - leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-road-problem
- 6 Canal**
 - Canal and River Trust:
 - 0303 040 40 40 (Office hours)
 - 0800 479 9947 (24 hr)



In an emergency call 999

leicestershire.gov.uk/flooding

Helping residents who own land next to a river, stream or ditch

No single authority manages flooding, so it's important to know your responsibilities.

If you own land next to a river, stream, ditch or similar watercourse, you are usually responsible for maintaining the section that runs through or alongside your property - known as a 'riparian landowner'.

If you live on, lease or own land next to an ordinary watercourse, you as the resident, landlord or landowner have the responsibility to maintain that section of it - known as 'riparian' ownership.

All watercourses, big or small, are the responsibility of riparian landowners. Smaller watercourses, termed as 'ordinary watercourses' are streams or ditches that drain away water through natural or artificial channels.

If you own land next to a watercourse you will be responsible.

Councillor Adam Tilbury, cabinet member for flooding, said: "Flooding is a complex issue, as well as who is responsible for what, especially when you own land next to a watercourse.

"If you do, you have additional responsibilities and you also play a vital part in helping to prevent flooding."

If you think you have land next to a river, watercourse or ditch as part of your boundary:

- Check the 'Guide for watercourse riparian landowners' leicestershire.gov.uk/watercourse-responsibilities. We have worked with the Environment Agency to explain and show what might be your responsibility if you live next to a river, stream or ditch.

What do I have to do?

- Keep the water flowing naturally
- Not block the watercourse
- Remove fallen branches, silt, and other blockages
- Maintain the banks and bed
- Avoid overflowing
- Keep any culverts or pipes clear
- Not change the flow that may cause flooding elsewhere

Find out more by visiting leicestershire.gov.uk/watercourse-responsibilities



"Our Story"



Bob Bayman, chair of Bottesford Parish Council, speaks about how the community has rallied since being flooded last January.

Q: How did you react to the flooding?

BOB: "The first thing was to help people protect their houses and the second priority was to record what was happening in our village so we could try to understand where it was flowing and then flooding."

Q: Is it important for people to document flooding?

BOB: "Yes, we asked people to take photos and videos all over the parish so that we could work out the root causes."

Q: How did the community rally together?

BOB: "We decided to host a public meeting. More than 200 people attended and there was a community sense of determination to get to the causes and get the issues fixed. At the same time we knew we had to make our homes and Bottesford more resilient with better preparation."

Q: How did you work with the county council?

BOB: "We reached out and teams came to clean the gullies and discovered that there were some issues with parts of the pipework."

Q: How are you resilient to flooding now?

BOB: "Sandbags can be so useful if used in the right way and in the right place. We're determined to be self-reliant where we can, so we got some bags and sand separately and hosted village events to help bring the community together and get prepared."

Q: What advice would you give to people and communities?

BOB: "Get a plan at every level. Have it in your business continuity plans, for your house and even at a street level. As a village have an emergency plan. We worked with the Local Resilience Forum to pull ours together."

Supporting Leicestershire's Farmers

Farming is one of Leicestershire's greatest strengths. It shapes our countryside and supports our economy and our food chain.

From early mornings to late nights, farmers work hard to provide for others. They often work quietly in the background. As winter sets in, farming doesn't pause for the colder and shorter days. Harsher weather and constant demands can take a real toll.

This season, we're encouraging everyone to look out for one another and stay connected. These simple steps help people maintain balance and strengthen a sense of community. Even a shared job, a warm brew or a quick check-in can make someone's day better.



Michael Squires

Councillor Michael Squires, cabinet member for health, said: "This winter, we're continuing

to listen, learn and stand alongside our farming communities. We want farmers to know support is available and no one should feel like they're carrying everything alone.

"We will continue to visit and spend time with farmers because we want to hear directly from them. Farming matters to Leicestershire. Supporting those who keep it going matters just as much.

"Reaching out, sharing information and staying connected are practical ways we can all support each other."

If you're part of the farming community, support is available, from Farming Community Network daily 7am to 11pm: 03000 111 999

For further information visit leicestershire.gov.uk/farmers-support



Vital support for carers

You may not see yourself as a carer because it's part of your daily routine.

If you support someone aged 18 or over who wouldn't be able to manage everyday life without you, and you're not paid to do it, you are an unpaid carer.

You may be entitled to grants as well as a carers passport, helping you to get recognition and access support.



Carl Abbott

Councillor Carl Abbott, cabinet member for adult social care, said: "Unpaid carers are local heroes.

It can sometimes be hard to realise but if you think you qualify, talk to us, and let us help where we can."

Find out more at leicestershire.gov.uk/looking-after-someone, scan the QR code or call Voluntary Action South Leicestershire on 01858 468543.

Help shape services

Our new adult carers strategy will set out how we support your needs - and we want to hear your views.

Help us shape support for carers by completing a survey at leicestershire.gov.uk/looking-after-someone, or email carers@leics.gov.uk before 11 January, 2026.



JOIN OUR TEAM

How fostering leaves a lasting impact



Heather and Ashley

Being a foster carer can change lives. Ashley, formerly in care, highlights how foster carer Heather impacted his life, and helps him to this day.

Heather has fostered for over 20 years and brought up Ashley between the ages of 11 and 14. Over the years, love and trust grew, but the connection wasn't instant.

Q: How long did it take to build a connection?

ASHLEY: "At that time, I didn't allow myself to be loved by anyone for the plain fact that I didn't want to get rejected or lose anyone after the parental loss I experienced as a child."

HEATHER: "It was only after fully getting to know each other, understanding the vibe and starting to accept each other that trust was built."

Q: What qualities did Heather have as a foster carer?

ASHLEY: "Heather was always realistic. She never sugar-coated anything and together, we always found a positive when there was a negative. She always let me make my own mistakes and questionable decisions without punishing me. If it wasn't for that, I think I'd have lived my whole life in a negative mindset."

Q: What was it like to come out of her care?

ASHLEY: "As soon as you come out of care, it isn't just going to be bad or absolutely great. It's going to be a rollercoaster. I've got a career and a family of my own now, and do consider myself successful, but it's been an absolute journey to get here."

Q: What's it like to still be in touch with Ashley?

HEATHER: "I know Ashley is alright when I don't hear from him for a few weeks but sometimes he phones me to run something past me and we get together. My family has always been a big part of my fostering journey and Ashley was very much welcomed into the fold - even to this day."

To find out more, visit leicestershire.gov.uk/fostering. You can also email fostering@leics.gov.uk, or call 0116 305 0505.



HART in the home



Homecare Assessment and Reablement Teams (HART) play an important role helping people regain independence after an illness or injury through short, intensive home-based reablement care. Fiona tells us about her journey with the team.

Q: What inspired you to join HART?



FIONA: "After my mum's hospital stay, she was cared for by HART in her own home. Mum was extremely independent, so I worried a bit, but she couldn't praise the fantastic team enough. With my background in care, I was inspired to join the team myself - as suggested by mum."

Q: How does the HART service work?

FIONA: "We give a helping hand at home whilst people get back on their feet, as well as important rehabilitation of lost skills and confidence - everything from meals and personal care to a good chat is one step closer to greater independence."

Q: What do you enjoy most about your job?

FIONA: "People do get tired of hearing about how much I love my job - but it's true! Setting goals like showering independently or making a cup of tea and seeing people achieve them over time with my support is so rewarding."

Q: Who would be a good fit for the HART team?

FIONA: "Friendly, approachable and loves being hands on at work! The county council is also extremely supportive, offering great training and career progression, as well as a local government pension and permanent full-time roles with guaranteed hours."

Could you be the difference?

Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/home-care-assistant or scan the QR code to find out more.



Find out more about jobs at leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs

WHAT'S ON

With books to find, objects to uncover and exhibitions to see this winter there's so much on offer at our arts and culture sites.

FREE Winter Mini Challenge

**Leicestershire Libraries
Until 20 February 2026**

The Reading Agency is inviting children to take on the Winter Mini Challenge. Read and review three books to complete the challenge. Sign up at your local library or leicestershire.gov.uk/winter-mini-challenge



Bosworth Guided Walks

**Bosworth Battlefield
Heritage Centre and
Country Park,
Sutton Cheney, CV13 0AD
Date, 11.30am, from £3.
Family tickets available.**



Bosworth's knowledgeable guides are ready to welcome you to a guided walk with a historical twist. Learn about the War of the Roses and discover the fate of Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth, over

500 years ago. Approx 1.4 miles and takes 90 minutes. Scan the QR code to book.
bosworthbattlefield.org.uk
Tel: 01455 290429



Country Parks

From Beacon Hill to Snibston Colliery Park, there's plenty of scenic areas to uncover at our 17 country parks. Although winter gives us shorter days, our parks continue to thrive with wildlife. There are proven health benefits to spending time in green spaces, so wrap up for some fresh country air.
leicescountryparks.org.uk

FREE 25 Years On! Revisiting the Millennium Collections



**Melton Carnegie Museum
Thorpe End, LE13 1RB
Until 21 February 2026,
Tues to Sat, 10am-4.30pm.**
Twenty-five years ago, we asked people to donate

objects they thought would tell a story about life at the turn of the Millennium. From sports memorabilia to everyday items, it's now time to revisit the collection.

meltonmuseum.org Tel: 0116 305 3860

FREE Georgie Meadows Stitched Drawings

**Charnwood Museum, Granby Street,
Loughborough, LE11 3DU
Late January to April 2026,
Weds to Sat, 10am-3pm.**

A compassionate exhibition from artist Georgie Meadows, who encourages us to rethink the way we regard our older population. A Wellcome Collection touring exhibition.

charnwoodmuseum.co.uk Tel: 01509 233754



FREE Straitlaced and Stitched Up



**Harborough Museum,
Adam and Eve Street,
Market Harborough, LE16 7LT
7 February to 30 May 2026,
Tues to Fri, 10am-6pm,
Sat 10am-4pm.**

The Second Turning Textiles Group have created contemporary textiles and mixed media interpretations inspired by the Symington Archive. The works will be shown alongside the items that inspired them.

Book online at
centurytheatre.co.uk
or call the box office
01530 278444
centurytheatre.co.uk
f/CenturyTheatre
@century_theatre



ABBA Sensation

Sat 31 January, 7.30pm, £22



ABBA Sensation combines costume changes, lighting effects and a faithful reproduction of the ABBA sound.

Three Legends Collide

Sat 17 January, 7.30pm, from £17.50



Featuring the music of Barry Manilow, Neil Diamond and Joe Longthorne, this tribute show promises to transport you to a world of romance and rhythm.

A Ticket to Ride



**Fri 6 February 2026,
7.30pm, £18 - £22**

A journey into one of music's most exciting eras with iconic tracks from The Beatles, The Searchers, The Hollies, The Kinks, The Who, and The Move from band The Fourmost.

Billy Goats Gruff



**Sun 15 February,
11.30am & 2pm,
£12 - £14.**

Hold on to your horns and join the three billy goats on their wild and wacky adventure. With catchy songs and funky dances, this children's musical is a half-term hoot!

Beaumanor Hall

Woodhouse, Leicestershire, LE12 8TX
beaumanorhall.co.uk Tel: 01509 890119
X @ @beaumanorhall

Wedding Fayre Sunday 22 March 11am-3pm, Free

Hosted in our elegant and historic venue, this fayre is a great opportunity to meet our dedicated wedding planners, speak to wedding suppliers and view our charming ceremony rooms. Search 'Beaumanor Hall' on Eventbrite to book and secure your spot. If you're interested in having a stall, email beaumanorweddings@leics.gov.uk

Twilight Wedding Packages 2026

- Venue hire
- Drinks and canapes
- Evening buffet



LATE AVAILABILITY
January - March 2026



KIDS' EVENTS

HOLIDAY Outdoor Activities at Beaumanor



Beaumanor's got a great line up of outdoor activities for the February half-term. Whether it's flying high on the zip wire or building confidence with climbing, there's something for every adventurer. Suitable for ages 7-14. From £45 per child, per day. Childcare vouchers also accepted. Search 'Beaumanor' on Eventbrite for the full schedule and to book, or call 01509 890119. beaumanorhall.co.uk/outdoor-activities

SAVE THE DATE

- **History Tour and Afternoon Tea**
8 February & 15 March 2026
- **Spring Fair** 9 & 10 May 2026

News in brief

County ready to play host in 2026

The next 12 months are shaping up to be another bumper one for events. From music to food to re-enactments, what's hosted across Leicestershire pulls in hundreds of thousands of people a year and boosts tourism, local businesses and our economy.

Community theatres, such as the Concordia in Hinckley and Melton Theatre, are also driving people to spend money in their town centres and support local business.

Councillor Kevin Crook, cabinet member for tourism, said: "These are



Kevin Crook

just a small selection of the brilliant events put on across Leicestershire and they bring communities together and boost the county's economy."

Key events include:

- **Glastonbudget, Wymeswold** (21-24 May)
- **Download Festival, Castle Donington** (10-14 June)
- **Glastonblaby, Blaby** (1 August)
- **Bosworth Medieval Festival** (August)



- **East Midlands Food Festival** (October)
- **Cosby Victory Show** (4-6 September)

Find events across the county to visit and enjoy at visitleicester.info/event or scan the QR code.



Award-winning heritage sites

Two of our finest attractions have secured a national accolade from VisitEngland. Both 1620s House and Garden and Melton Carnegie Museum picked up the Hidden Gem Awards in November.

Community project completes mosaic masterpiece

A mosaic masterpiece has been unveiled at Coalville Library, thanks to funding from Arts Council England. More than 100 children and 10 community groups took part in events to create the art which celebrates the town's rich heritage.

Leicestershire Hospitality and Tourism Awards 2025

Council-run attractions and employees have been honoured at this year's Hospitality Tourism Awards, including Melton Carnegie Museum, which was highly commended in the "best team" category.

GoLearn courses open for enrolment

Hundreds of adult learning courses starting in January 2026 are now open for enrolment. With functional skills, website development, CV writing, art for wellbeing, ballet and more, there's something for everyone. Find out more at golearnleicestershire.ac.uk



Beaumanor approved residential host for Girlguiding

Beaumanor Hall in Woodhouse has become an approved venue for Girlguiding residentials. As one of Leicestershire's most historic and versatile learning venues with instrumental links to World War II, groups can expect high-octane activities and fascinating history.



Supporting people this winter

We understand that as winter bites, so does the cost of living.

And through our £6.38m Household Support Fund, around 20,000 Leicestershire school children and families in most need are receiving vital help with food and energy costs.

The Government-funded initiative enables households to apply for an average of £200 to help pay for essentials.

Children eligible for free school meals also receive through their school £30 food vouchers for the Christmas holidays and can take up free holiday club places.

The popular Holiday Activity Fund is also paid for by the Government has seen over 4,000 children take part so far this year.

Councillor Harrison Fowler, cabinet member for resources, said: "Children's health and development is vital and I'm pleased we're supporting those who are struggling to make ends meet.



"Making sure our children and young people are healthy is key. Although we're disappointed that the Government has cut this year's grant without explanation, it helps us to make sure families who need a helping hand with essential food and fuel costs get the support they need.

"Cost of living remains high and I'd encourage anyone who's struggling to afford the basics to find out more on our website."

Find out more about both initiatives by visiting leicestershire.gov.uk/household-support-fund or leicestershire.gov.uk/HAF. You can also find out about other help with cost of living at leicestershire.gov.uk/cost-of-living



Inspiring exhibition about domestic abuse

Artwork created by survivors and young people affected by domestic abuse has been on display at a special event.

The 'Expression of Freedom' exhibition at the Highcross shopping centre saw survivors and young people work with artists to create powerful artwork.

The event this winter featured pieces including 'Behind Closed Doors', 'Can You Hear Me?' and 'Inside the Phone of a Teenage Girl'.

Councillor Charles Pugsley, cabinet member for children and families,

said: "This is such a difficult subject, but events like this give survivors and people impacted by domestic abuse a chance to tell their story through art, and show there is hope."

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, visit leicestershire.gov.uk/domestic-abuse or call 0808 80 200 28 if it's safe to do so.



Toy appeal supports Hinckley children

Spreading Christmas magic for 16 years, a popular toy appeal has once again supported hundreds of children in Hinckley and Bosworth.

The appeal is a joint effort with our family help team, the Salvation Army, Hinckley Area Food Bank, Work Link and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and gives a helping hand to struggling families during the festive season.



Councillor Charles Pugsley, cabinet member for children and families, said: "I'd like to thank the partners and supporters involved, as well as generous members of the public."

Donations included toys, toiletry sets and gift vouchers. Food vouchers are also available to help with festive meals.

Need help fast and it isn't life-threatening?



The NHS in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland has issued new advice to help you get the right NHS care when you need it quickly and recommends just two simple steps for situations when it isn't life threatening.

- **Step 1:** If it's a minor problem and you haven't been able to treat it yourself at home, get help from a local pharmacy, NHS 111 online, or the NHS App.
- **Step 2:** If that doesn't work or the problem is more serious, contact

your GP practice or NHS 111 (when your practice is closed). They will help arrange the right appointment at your GP practice or other nearby services, including appointments for the same day if you need it.

Following this advice will help you get care from the right place, with the right health professional, and avoid long waits or trips to walk-in services that might not be suitable. Find out more at leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/need-help-fast

Know your recycling

Here are our top tips on recycling popular waste items, including those items you might still have left over from Christmas



Put in your recycling bin:

- Cardboard packaging (including boxes and moulded cardboard)
- Glass bottles and jars (lids on please)
- Bubble wrap
- Biscuit and chocolate tins, both metal and plastic
- Aluminium foil - clean foil trays (don't forget to scrunch your foil together into a ball)
- Christmas cards and gift tags - no glitter or embellishments
- Wrapping paper (plain only, no glitter, fabric or extra bits)
- Wrapping paper that stays in a ball when scrunched up (if it opens up, put it in your general waste as it probably isn't paper)
- Metal drinks cans
- Food tins
- Aerosols

Please make sure your recycling is clean and dry



Can't be recycled. Put in your general waste bin:

- Food waste
- Packaging with food residue, such as pizza boxes or ready meals (clean and dry packaging can be recycled)
- Tinsel and Christmas decorations
- Polystyrene of any kind
- Ribbons and bows
- Tissue paper



Find more details about what can and can't be recycled at lesswaste.org.uk/recycle or scan the QR code or visit recycleyourelectricals.org.uk



Recycling in North West Leicestershire is sorted at an alternative facility so may differ. For more information, please visit nwleics.gov.uk

TRADING STANDARDS



Don't get toyed with

They might seem like a bargain - particularly in New Year sales - but some online sellers can sell cheap, potentially dangerous toys.

Places like eBay, Temu, Facebook and Amazon all have third-party sellers. Many items are made to look attractive and cheaper than the high street but can be badly made and not safe to UK standards.

Find out more about toy safety on the Child Accident Prevention Trust website capt.org.uk/toy-safety.

Our top tips for avoiding a potentially dangerous toy:

- Does the packaging look genuine with print and warnings in the correct language?
- Buying from abroad? Overseas sellers may not conform to UK safety standards.
- Read reviews carefully. If lots of reviews sound very similar they could be fake.
- Be very aware of toys with small or loose parts and no age warning.



AWARE • PREPARED • ENGAGED

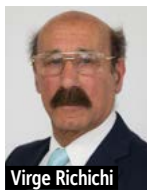
leicestershire.gov.uk/flooding

TRADING STANDARDS

Don't get flooded with scammers

In the days after a flood, you might get a knock on the door from someone offering repairs to your home or other services you might need.

They may seem sympathetic, friendly, convincing and ready to help, but



Virge Richichi

their work is often poor, unfinished and overpriced.

Councillor Virge Richichi, cabinet member for regulatory services, said:

"It's important to spot the signs so scammers don't take advantage

after a flood has taken place. This is a difficult time so stay vigilant and talk to friends, family and neighbours if something doesn't seem right."

For more advice or to report any suspicious activity contact Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133 or visit citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer.

You can report a rogue trader to us directly, by visiting leicestershire.gov.uk/trading-standards or scan the QR code.



Top tips to keeping safe from rogue traders:

- **Never** agree to work on the doorstep
- Get at least three written quotes before agreeing to any work
- **Never** pay by cash - use a secure method such as bank transfer or credit card
- Don't be pressured into making a quick decision
- Reputable traders will need booking in advance - they won't be able to start straight away
- Check reviews online to see what other people think



Sign up at gov.uk/get-flood-warnings

A free service from the Environment Agency to find out more about flooding from rivers and groundwater.*

Call 0345 988 1188 to check current flood alerts and warnings for your area.

*This service does not give flood warnings for surface water flooding

