

matters

Spring 2026

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Tree-planting goal upped to one million

We're stepping up our mission to make Leicestershire greener than ever.

With more than 500,000 trees already planted, we're now pushing ahead with a bold new target: one million trees by 2032, a major expansion of our original 700,000-tree goal.

Every tree planted boosts biodiversity, improves air quality, reduces flood risk and gives communities greener spaces to enjoy.

Councillor Adam Tilbury, cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "By upping our goal to plant one million trees by 2032, we're showing our commitment to making Leicestershire greener.

"We're excited to work with local communities to see this take root to help to create a more resilient future for Leicestershire."

From giving away free trees and bidding for funding, to creating new woodland, we're taking a wide-ranging

approach to delivering our ambition.

In 2025 alone, more than 30,000 free trees and hedge plants were given away to farmers, landowners, community groups, parish councils and schools, helping to encourage wider planting across Leicestershire.

These free tree packs, supplied in partnership with the Woodland Trust, help restore woodland, refresh local hedgerows and replace trees lost to diseases such as ash dieback.

We're working hard to support nature recovery and connect people with green spaces, including creating and expanding woodland in parks and public spaces, introducing more "tiny forests" in towns and villages and planting new hedgerows and roadside trees.

Our fresh tree target also supports our local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland, launched last July. It sets out a clear plan to identify priority areas for

habitat restoration, create connected green corridors and bring wider benefits such as reducing flood risk. Developed through extensive consultation, it marks a significant step forward for biodiversity and nature recovery across our county.



Trees planted at County Hall by Councillor Adam Tilbury and cabinet members

Record the trees you plant

To help you see the impact of this work, our interactive tree map will be updated to track our journey to one million. We're calling on residents, schools, community groups and landowners to add their own planting to the map and watch the countywide total grow. Record the trees you've planted at leicestershire.gov.uk/trees



Adam Tilbury



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

Facebook LeicsCountyHall

Instagram LeicsCountyHall

TikTok @LeicsCountyCouncil

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

If you would like the information contained in this newsletter in an alternative version such as large print, Braille or tape, or help with understanding it in your language, please call 0116 305 6274 or email leics-matters@leics.gov.uk

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Welcome

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



I'm determined that our new budget delivers for you – protecting vital services while reducing the financial burden of Council Tax.

I'm proud of delivering a people's budget for Leicestershire. With Council Tax at 2.99 per cent, there hasn't been a lower increase in the last 10 years. And we are delivering bold, targeted investments where they matter most – £127m for social care and £250m to improve Leicestershire's roads.

Local government is at a pivotal moment. Our reorganisation proposal offers a simple, sensible and strategic way forward and we've consulted widely with businesses and town and parish councils. I'm confident it's the right choice for Leicestershire and Rutland and we await a Government decision.

We're also setting out a clear long-term plan to close the budget gap and directing funding into the priorities that matter to residents.

That includes tackling potholes. Our teams carried out around 8,000 repairs last year, and with reports rising, we're boosting staff and resources to get repairs done faster. You can help too – page three explains how to report issues quickly.

Our FoxConnect on demand buses continue to grow, opening up flexible routes for more people, while wider work to improve bus services means simpler fares and more reliable journeys.

We're also making adult social care easier to navigate, helping more residents stay independent at home for longer. Look out for our handy cutout guide with key services and contacts.

And there's more in this edition – from support for our remarkable carers to our call for more school crossing patrols.

Keeping services on track

We're one of the biggest organisations in Leicestershire – with a gross budget of £1.3bn.

It's crucial that how taxpayers' money is spent is put under the microscope.

And that's where our scrutiny leads come in. They dig into the detail of key decisions, take new policies to task and monitor public bodies' performance. The aim is to make sure every choice is made in the best interests of residents and that our services are delivering for you.

Earlier this year, councillors on our seven scrutiny committees helped to shape our four-year budget plan.

Committees highlighted rising demand, cost pressures and limited scope for further savings. Members welcomed some

funding certainty but raised concerns about reliance on future efficiencies, national policy risks, workforce challenges and the growing gap between resources and essential service pressures.

Key points raised by our Scrutiny Commission included:

- How the budget would be impacted by the Efficiency Review and the level of confidence in finding further savings
- Discussion on the link between Council Tax and Government grants following the Government's review of council funding
- Questions about the size of contingencies held versus other assumptions in the MTFs and the level of uncertainty being faced.

- Concern about the sustainability of using reserves to plug financial gaps
- Questions about our approach to managing a SEND deficit and potential support from the Government
- The risks and benefits of making property investments

The feedback was submitted to Cabinet to take into account as the final proposals were agreed.

Every year, our councillors scrutinise over 100 reports, on issues ranging from care pressures, mental health support and school places to road drain cleaning.



ROADS

Pothole repairs get a boost

The wet weather and flooding has seen a large increase in potholes across the county – and you're helping to get them fixed.

Since last May, we've fixed around 8,000 potholes, 1,000 more than were fixed this time last year.

We're seeing unprecedented numbers and it's reporting that's helped us ensure they are fixed as quickly as possible.

We're putting in extra cash to speed up pothole inspections and with our annual surface dressing programme also set to begin, work is ramping up to help fix and prevent potholes across the county.

What's causing the increase?

The very wet winter, flooding on the highway and years of national underfunding have left road surfaces and underlying layers more vulnerable to damage. Increased traffic levels and heavier vehicles are also factors.

What's being done about it?

We've recruited additional inspectors so we can assess reports quicker and prioritise, based on safety, so that repair teams are sent to the most urgent issues.

Every day, our teams are working across towns, villages and rural routes to keep the 2,700 miles of road network safe.

How does the weather affect the road?

Prolonged wet weather impacts both the road surface and base layers. Water also penetrates deep below the surface, weakening foundations and making new defects more likely.

When water enters small cracks it weakens layers below the surface and expands when frozen to speed up damage.

The wetter the weather, the longer the delays, as some treatments require dry conditions for best results.

Councillor Adam Tilbury, cabinet member for environment and transport, said: "The weather has made our job harder - but we're stepping up to try and speed up how quickly we can fix potholes.

"With the spring hopefully bringing drier weather, more inspectors to help prioritise our repair work and our surface dressing programme starting up, we're doing everything we can."

Report a pothole at leicestershire.gov.uk/report-a-road-problem or scan the QR code.



New road opening imminent

After three years of construction, the 4.4 mile Melton Mowbray Northeast Distributor Road route is set to take through traffic – including HGVs – away from the busy town centre.

The major £134m project has involved building six roundabouts and a 50-metre railway bridge and diverting the River Eye.

Engineers diverted part of the River Eye by about 450 metres to allow construction of a new bridge. The diversion was needed with the planned bridge location being too close to high-voltage power cables.

Councillor Adam Tilbury said: "This is a once in a generation project for Melton Mowbray. It will cut congestion, improve day-to-day journeys and respect the special landscape we're proud of. We're excited to open the road and see the benefits it brings."

We have put in most of the money for the road, which is opening this spring, with other funders including the Department for Transport and developer contributions.

The new road in numbers:

4.4 miles

about the length of 66 football pitches

12,000

years of heritage uncovered through archaeological finds

450m

River Eye diversion

COMING SOON

New road, new name!

Find out more about the new name for the Melton Mowbray Northeast Distributor Road at leicestershire.gov.uk/mmdr, or scan the QR code.





New funding fuels future bus plans

Thousands of people are taking advantage of the county council-funded buses in Leicestershire.

Securing Government money means we've been working with bus operators and other councils to step up services.

Whether it's improving routes, simplifying fares or modernising services, we're working hard for our residents.

One of the biggest changes is the on-demand bus service, FoxConnect. It has seen nearly 70,000 journeys since the launch back in January 2025.

FoxConnect is available across the county and now serves 201 communities across 11 zones, including more than 60 villages that previously had no public transport at all.

Improvements have been made in each district, with work now taking place on routes in Blaby, Oadby and Wigston to improve schooltime links and boost connections to Fosse Park.

Councillor Adam Tilbury said: "We've made great progress in unlocking public transport for isolated parts of the county and the new Government funding will help us to keep this up for the next few years."

"We know that different parts of Leicestershire have different bus needs. That's why we're doing this district by district to make sure we're getting it right."

Our Bus Service Improvement Plan has helped to bring in these changes using money from the Government's Local Bus Grant Funding.

What's next?

Our plans include:

- Auditing all 3,500 bus stops in the county and giving those that need it an upgrade
- Installing live update boards at select locations
- Increasing access to printed timetables and maps
- Refreshing our dedicated website to make it easier to find bus information

Your guide to FoxConnect

FoxConnect helps residents to travel between villages in Leicestershire. It's an on-demand and a flexible service. You can choose where to be picked up and dropped off within the area covered.

Getting started

- FoxConnect is available to book Monday to Saturday, 6am-7.30pm.
- Book a journey by calling 0116 216 7756. Lines are open Monday to Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm, or use our app.
- Download the Leicestershire FoxConnect app from the Google Play Store or Apple App Store. A step-by-step guide is available at choosehowyoumove.co.uk/app



You can find out more information about services in your area and the latest updates in our newsletter. Visit choosehowyoumove.co.uk for more and to register, or scan the QR code.



Leicestershire's kids need you



Your chance to be a highway hero at the start and end of the school day

School Crossing Patrols have been a trusted part of life in Leicestershire for over 70 years.

They're the friendly face helping children and families cross the road safely - you may even remember yours from when you were at primary school - and a vital part of school communities.



Graham with his granddaughter.

There are plenty of vacancies for school crossing patrols across Leicestershire.

Army veteran Graham, known as Nobby, is a familiar face in the local

Mountsorrel community and has been helping families cross safely outside Christ Church & St Peter's Cof E Primary School for two-and-a-half-years.

Q: How did you get into the job?

A: "My granddaughter goes to the school and when the previous lollipop man stepped down, my stepdaughter mentioned the vacancy. I thought I'd give it a go.

"Two-and-a-half years later, I'm still part of the team and I love every single minute of it."

Q: What's the best part of your job?

A: "You're a key part of the children's day. They come to school smiling, they go home smiling, and you're a part of that experience.

"You're helping to keep them safe and sometimes the children even remind the adults to cross with me!"

Q: How much time does it take?

A: "It's only around 45 minutes of my time in the morning and 45 minutes in the afternoon, but it makes a real difference to my life and children's lives."

Q: What does the job mean to you?

A: "I wanted to stay active after retiring and this role has given me a new purpose. I know most of the children by name, from the pre-schoolers right up to Year Six.

"I'm ex-military, so I like to keep active plus the uniform is brilliant, it keeps me warm, dry and visible.

"When I had a minor stroke, I was given a huge three-foot get-well card signed by every child in the school. That showed me how much they all care about me."

Hayley Ryder-Smith, Executive head at the school, said: "Nobby is so important to our school and we don't know what we'd do without him!

"The children love seeing him each morning and it gives them a calm, positive start to their day.

"We're very grateful for all he does and I'd encourage anyone with time to spare to consider getting involved across Leicestershire."

Could you spare the time?



We have about 40 vacancies for school crossing patrols across the county. Find out more at leicestershire.gov.uk/jobs or scan the QR code.

Budget limits tax rise amid soaring demand

Our new budget balances financial pressure on residents with addressing fast-growing demand for vital services.

This year, we've agreed a 2.99% Council Tax rise – below the 4.99% cap – adding 97p per week for a Band D household and generating £13m towards closing the budget gap. It's the first time in a decade the maximum increase hasn't been taken.

Council leader, Dan Harrison, said: "The budget reflects both financial responsibility and a determination to protect essential local services. "This is a budget for everyone in Leicestershire. It protects services for vulnerable people, limits the financial burden of Council Tax on residents and is beginning to drive down costs.

"Clearly there are huge pressures, mainly in social care. And I'm proud that we're investing in vital services whilst also delivering one of the lowest upper-tier authority Council Tax levels in the country, as well as starting to roll out our new £2.5m service investment fund."

Demand is continuing to surge. Children's residential placements and education, health and care plans have each risen by 25 per cent, while support for vulnerable adults is forecast to grow by a fifth.

Despite this, we've planned in savings of £4.8m and our ground-breaking

efficiency review, designed to close the budget gap in the longer term, is making headway.

It has already saved £4.5m by expanding specialist teams that help people regain their independence. It is on track to pinpoint a range of big opportunities, and is focusing on:

- Earlier support to stop residents reaching crisis point
- Changing the way we procure and manage suppliers to secure better value
- Increasing family-based placements for children in care
- Strengthening support to help people leave hospital more quickly

Our approach is focused on long-term stability, added Councillor Harrison: "People will ask how and the answer is simple: we're gripping the challenge, rolling up our sleeves and mapping out a long-term plan to close the budget gap.

"Our efficiency review is breaking new ground and has already identified a £4.5m saving. I'm confident it's on track to meet the bigger goal, as well as enhancing services for our residents and communities, leaving a lasting legacy for Leicestershire."

Communities are at the heart of our new budget

A £501m four-year capital programme is in place to fund improvements to roads, social care accommodation and new school places needed to support new homes.

Important day-to-day environmental services, such as local bus routes, grit bins, grass cutting, footpath maintenance and weed control are also getting a boost, thanks to an extra investment of £850,000, funded through a new £2.5m service improvement fund.

Councillor Harrison Fowler, cabinet member for resources,



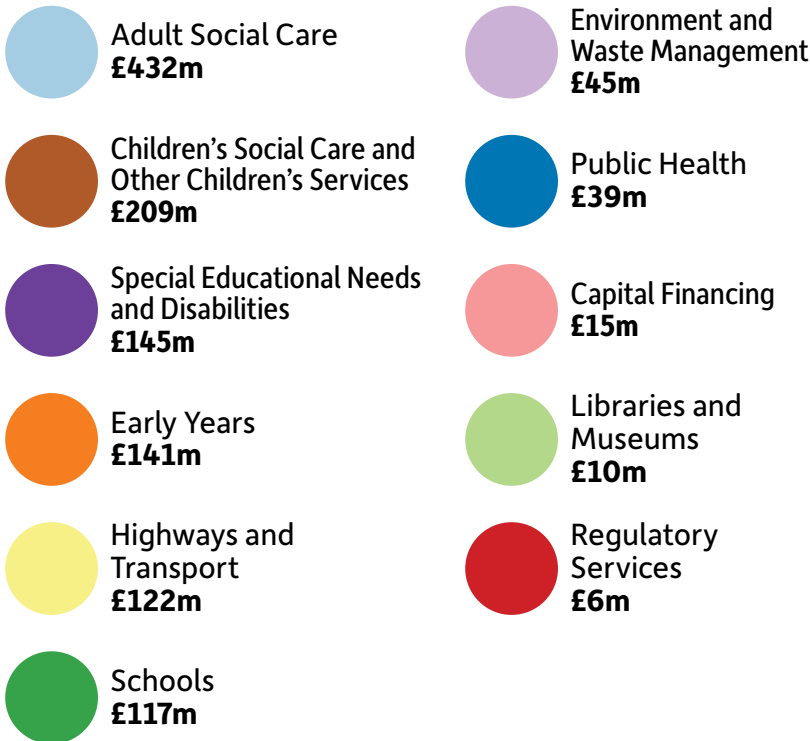
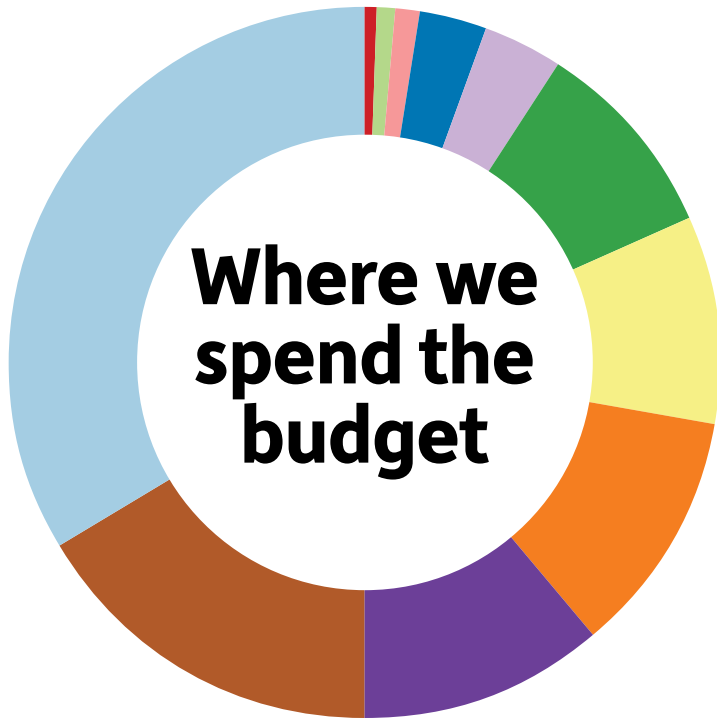
Harrison Fowler

said: "Leicestershire is growing and our new budget supports communities, ensures the support people depend on is delivered

and provides value for money.

"With a Council Tax level in line with current levels of inflation, and progress being made on delivering bigger savings in the longer term, this is a budget for all."

More about our budget



Council Tax:
2.99%

There hasn't been a lower increase in over a decade

We are investing:
£127m

in services, mainly social care Including:
£58m for children
£30m for adults
£13m for SEND transport

£250m
to improve Leicestershire's roads

£87m
to enhance schools and create places,
including £27m for SEND facilities

£1.3bn gross budget
and spend £20m
every week



Supporting you at home

We want to help every person in Leicestershire to live in the place they call home with the people and things they love. There may come a time when you, or someone you care for, needs help with:

Support to live independently in your own home

We can support you with advice and support to help you look after yourself and stay mobile and safe in your home.



Scan to find out more

Making decisions about your future care and support



Scan to find out more

We want to help you stay in the place you call home. Planning ahead can make things easier for you and your family.

Organising and paying for care

If the support you can get from family, friends and your local community is not enough to keep you independent at home, you might need assistance from us. We will talk to you about what you already have and what extra might be available to you. If you qualify for support from us, and there is a cost to that support, we will need to look at how much you can afford to pay and whether we will need to top this up. We call this a financial assessment. This is because, unlike health services, social care is not free. This assessment is designed to see how much you may be asked to contribute to the costs of your care and support.



Scan to find out more

Being a carer and looking after someone

If you look after, help or support someone who wouldn't be able to manage everyday life without your help, we have information on everything from assessments and benefits to working carers rights.



Scan to find out more



Carl Abbott

Councillor Carl Abbott, cabinet member for adult social care: "Our adult social care team is here to support people in many different ways.

Please read the information on these pages to see how we can help you, or your loved ones. Whether it's helping you to live independently, being a carer or organising care, we can offer support. We are here and ready to help."

For more information call 0116 305 0004 or visit leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health



Have
your
say

We need your views on a new strategy to support carers for the next four years

With nearly 10 per cent of our residents saying in the 2021 census that they provide unpaid care, there are lots of carers of all ages in Leicestershire.

The new plan has been created after speaking to more than 300 unpaid carers who have helped to shape this strategy.

Our 2030 vision

We will make sure carers:

- Are recognised
- Know where to go to ask for support
- Receive help to remain physically and mentally well
- Can carry on in the caring role
- Can access timely, good quality information and advice
- Can get training in the condition for the person they care for, if they want it
- Can take a break from caring when they need it

Your views are important. Tell us what you think of the strategy.

Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/carers-strategy or scan the QR code. The consultation closes on 14 June 2026.



Cut Out
and Keep



Where to get Adult Social Care support in Leicestershire:

Adult Social Care Customer Service Centre

☎ 0116 305 0004

🌐 leicestershire.gov.uk/adult-social-care-and-health

Carers' support service

Whether you are caring full time or for just a few hours a week, there is an information and advice service for carers across Leicestershire.

☎ 01858 468543

✉ maureen@supportforcarers.org

🌐 supportforcarers.org

Dementia support

Age UK Leicestershire and Rutland offers free information, support and guidance for people with memory issues and/or a diagnosis of dementia, and their carer.

☎ 0116 223 7363

✉ dementia.support@ageukleics.org.uk

🌐 ageuk.org.uk/leics/our-services/living-with-dementia

Mental health support

☎ For urgent mental health help, call NHS 111 and select option 2

☎ The Samaritans are also available 24/7 call 116 123

Local Area Coordinators

For support to help improve health, wellbeing and resilience of people in communities across Leicestershire.

☎ 0116 305 0705

🌐 leicestershire.gov.uk/local-area-co-ordinators

First Contact Plus

For easy access to information, advice, or onward referrals that can help you to stay fit, healthy, happy and independent.

☎ 0116 305 4286

🌐 firstcontactplus.org.uk

WHAT'S ON

There's lots to see and do this spring in our country parks, heritage sites, museums and libraries.



FREE Cut and Create
Melton Carnegie Museum,
Thorpe End, LE13 1RB,
Until 3 October 2026,
Tue to Sat, 10am-4.30pm.

Featuring items of clothing, sewing equipment and dress patterns, this exhibition uses objects to tell the story of the home dressmaker and the equipment used to create the latest fashions that were more convenient and affordable for all during the late 1950s and early 1960s when home sewing reached its height of popularity.



FREE 'Keeping the Lights On!'
150 years of BRUSH

Charnwood Museum, Granby Street,
Loughborough, LE11 3DU
Sat 9 May to Sun 27 September
Wed to Sat, 10am-4pm and Sun 1-4pm.

In this fascinating interactive exhibition, visitors can explore how global business BRUSH have inspired growth in the solutions-engineering world. Uncover the history of BRUSH, dating back to its namesake, Charles Francis Brush, right up to the present day. Learn about BRUSH Transformers, the Loughborough site and how the work they do supports our daily lives.

FREE Straitlaced and Stitched Up
Harborough Museum, Adam and Eve Street,
Market Harborough, LE16 7LT
Until Sat 30 May 2026,

Tue 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.



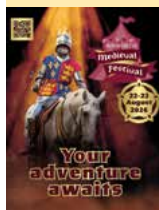
BOSWORTH
BATTLEFIELD HERITAGE CENTRE
AND COUNTRY PARK

Sutton Cheney, Leicestershire, CV13 0AD
bosworthbattlefield.org.uk
Tel: 01455 290429

Open daily April to October 10am-5pm
and November to March 10am-4pm.

One of the UK's leading historical visitor attractions that explores the stories behind the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 which resulted in the death of Richard III and the birth of the all-powerful Tudor dynasty, led by Henry VII.

**Bosworth
Medieval
Festival 2026**



The two-day festival invites you to relive the experience live. Featuring battle re-enactments by War of the Roses Federation, living history camps, falconry, a medieval market, author talks, have-a-go activities, tasty refreshments and much more, it's a great day out for all. Entry to the exhibition is also included in the ticket price. Tickets for the festival are valid for the whole weekend, so visitors can come on either or both days for no extra cost.

Buy tickets at
bosworthbattlefield.org.uk
or call 01455 290429

Ashby Road, Coalville, LE67 3LN

Book online at
centurytheatre.co.uk
or call the box office
0333 666 3366
centurytheatre.co.uk
@CenturyTheatre
@century_theatre



The Shawshank Redemption



Thu 30 April – Sat 2
May, 7.30pm, from
£16

Based on the 1982 novella Rita Hayworth and The Shawshank Redemption, this thrilling stage production examines desperation, injustice, friendship and hope behind the claustrophobic bars of a maximum-security facility.

The Hound of the Baskervilles



Fri 8 May, 7.30pm,
from £10

In this original one-man stage adaptation, award-winning actor Jonathan Goodwin plays Sherlock Holmes and a host of other characters bringing this Victorian gothic thriller to life.

The Ultimate Bubble Show



Tue 26 May,
12pm and 2pm, from £8

Ray Bubbles, International Bubbleologist and World Record Holder, is on a mission to master the art of bubble-making. With stunning sculptures, effects and displays, you'll be left feeling as light as air.

Scan for the
latest shows





Beaumanor Hall

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

X @beaumanorhall



Spring Fair

Sat 9 & Sun 10 May

10am – 4pm

£3.50 pre-booked, £4 on the day

Free parking

A range of stalls from local makers, artisans and crafters. Enjoy a relaxing day out with great shopping and delicious food in beautiful historic surroundings.

Search 'Beaumanor' on Eventbrite for the tickets, or visit beaumanorhall.co.uk for more details.



Scan to get tickets

KIDS' EVENTS

HOLIDAY Outdoor Activities

A great line up of outdoor activities for the May half-term including two new activity days – Woodland Outdoor Fun and Operation Rescue. Whether it's adrenaline adventures on the high ropes course or trying something new immersed in the worlds of secret agents or nature, there's something for every explorer. 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

Join our mailing list

Beaumanor Hall



Photo courtesy of Ian Bursill

Other news

Reinvigorate your love for reading



Free events and activities across Leicestershire Libraries will be held throughout the year to support the National Year of Reading. The inspiring campaign encourages people to 'Go All In' by reconnecting reading with the things that already inspire them. Whether it's Wriggly Readers, author workshops, exhibition events or community coffee mornings, explore what your local library has to offer and 'go all in'.

Councillor Kevin Crook, cabinet member for libraries, said: "We know how important reading is for all of us, and the National Year of Reading is a great opportunity to showcase what our libraries have to offer to help people of all ages enjoy books." Visit facebook.com/yourlibrary for the latest updates or explore events at leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries

History comes to life as manor house reopens

The 1620s House and Gardens reopened its doors at the beginning of April following its annual winter closure. The award-winning 'Hidden Gem' of Donington-le-Heath near Coalville has been home to many families over its 700-year history, but most famously the Digby family which, included Gunpowder Plotter, Sir Everard Digby. This season the house will host several special events, with the first being a Plant Hunters' Fair on 3 May.



Step into spring: Explore your parks

Springtime in our country parks is not to be missed with wildlife and blooms waking up as the new season begins. With 18 country parks to choose from, there's lots to explore and discover. Head to Beacon Hill in Woodhouse, Charnwood to see the bluebell carpets and friendly livestock or across to Snibston Colliery Park in North West Leicestershire where you can try out the blue grade mountain bike trail or practice on the pump track. Our wildlife at Watermead in Syston, Charnwood gives visitors the chance to spot seasonal birds like waterfowl and reed warblers while Market Bosworth offers stunning visuals of trees in the spring.



Watermead Country Park in Syston

CONNECT TO WORK

Funded by UK Government

Helping people connect to work

A brand-new countywide service is launching to help people into employment over the next five years. Using Government money, Connect to Work supports disabled people, people with health conditions and those who have found it difficult to move into or stay in work.

Carers, ex-carers, homeless people and former Armed Forces personnel are also being targeted for support.

The Connect to Work team gives one-to-one support to help spot job opportunities with local employers, as well as help with applications and interviews.

Councillor Kevin Crook, deputy council leader, said: "This is a brilliant programme and we have a dedicated team ready to support people. Please get in touch with us if you qualify and want help getting into work. We want to match eager people with eager businesses looking for employees to help our local economy and local people."



Kevin Crook

Who is eligible?

- Unemployed
- Aged 18 or over
- Living in Leicester, Leicestershire or Rutland
- Ready and motivated to look for work
- Be in one of the 'target group' categories (full list available on our website)

Businesses – we want you

If you're a local employer looking for staff, we're here to help you recruit and retain committed, motivated staff. Our teams will give FREE one-to-one support, on the job help and we stay involved when someone starts work to help them in their job.

Are you interested?

Visit leicestershire.gov.uk/connect-to-work or scan the QR code to find out more.

Connect to Work is a partnership with Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council. If you know someone in these areas who might benefit, visit leicesteremploymenthub.co.uk/connect-to-work



Young people inspired by anti-vape sessions

Over the last 18 months, our anti-vaping education programme, funded by Government, has visited 31 schools across the county.

With honest conversations, practical advice and a supportive space, it has been delivered to nearly 3,000 students aged between 12-17.

With a mix of one-to-one support, assemblies and class workshops, sessions are delivered depending on what works best for both the school and students.

Young people can ask questions and understand the risks, with sessions inspiring all ages.



Michael Squires

The work has even inspired Councillor Michael Squires, cabinet member for health, to quit vaping himself. He said: "This programme is making

a real difference. The team deliver brilliant, honest sessions. Hearing from young people even made me reflect on my own habits and I have also now quit vaping. We want young people to think about the impact of vaping on their health, and our message to young people is straightforward: if you don't smoke, don't vape."

Find out more about the support the service offers to young people, parents/carers and schools by calling 0345 646 6666 or email QuitReadyYP@leics.gov.uk.

Start your stop smoking journey by visiting QuitReady.co.uk or scan the QR code.



What's in the bin?

You might be surprised to hear that most of the waste thrown into the average general waste bin in Leicestershire could actually be avoided or recycled.

A recent look at what goes into waste bins shows that food waste is the most common thing thrown away.



Reducing food waste

The average UK family could save up to £1,000 a year by reducing their food waste.

For tips and advice on making the most of the food you buy, visit lovefoodhatewaste.com.

Food waste collections, where available, are the best way to dispose of any unavoidable food waste and put it to good use.

Please check your local district council website for further details.



Recyclables

Don't forget that paper, card, glass, metal and plastics (including bottles, pots, tubs, trays and tubes) can all be recycled in your kerbside collection*. Just give them a rinse first.

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



Find recycling tips at lesswaste.org.uk



JOIN OUR TEAM

Make a difference with **fostering**

We care for around 800 children and young people - meaning there is more need than ever to consider fostering.

Tweens and teens make up the largest proportion of young people in our care, with 60 per cent aged between 10 and 17.

Hinckley-based John and Michelle have been fostering with us for over six years and have been caring for teenagers for most of that time.

They have been caring for 'S' (17) for four years and 'K' (16) for two-and-a-half years.



Read John and Michelle's inspiring fostering story:

Q: What's important to know about the teenagers you foster?

John: "It's important for S that she is not identified as a 'looked-after child'. She just wants to be a normal kid, and that's how we've always approached it. Both S and K are just 'normal' teenagers - they get into mischief the same as every teenager you know."

Q: What would you say to anyone considering fostering a teenager?

Michelle: "Sometimes people can be worried about teenagers, but in our experience, that fear has been unfounded and we get some of the greatest satisfaction from building relationships with teens. Teenagers have often come to us in an emergency and have experienced some really difficult situations, but they just need a safe space and somebody they can trust and talk to when they want to."

Q: What has fostering meant to you both?

John: "The impact of fostering has been totally positive. It keeps us young, keeps me cheerful and has given me something to do now that I've closed my business down."

Michelle: "I don't know what we'd be doing with ourselves if we didn't have these two. I couldn't imagine life without them. They are absolutely key members of our family."

Councillor Charles Pugsley, cabinet member for children and families, said: "We have an incredible group of foster carers who give so much to the children they take care of. I hope people can be inspired by John and Michelle's story to consider fostering and contact our team."

Want to know more?

Visit the Fostering Leicestershire website at leicestershire.gov.uk/fostering or scan the QR code. You can also email fostering@leics.gov.uk, or call 0116 305 0505.



Could you offer a room to a young person aged 16 years plus?

Our Supported Lodgings Hosts help and guide with things like learning to cook and doing laundry, managing money and planning for their future. You will receive generous payments, training and ongoing support as well as making a huge difference to people's lives.

Find out more

Pop in to one of our information events:

The Kings Centre,
56 Bull Head Street,
Wigston, LE18 1PA
Wed 20 May, 3pm - 6:30pm

You can also visit leicestershire.gov.uk/supported-lodgings for more information.

Help shape our future plans

Your voice matters – and we want to hear it.

This spring, we're planning to ask for your views on upcoming changes that will shape school life and support families across Leicestershire.

Every five years, we review school term dates and it's time to help decide what the next pattern should look like.

There's more coming too. Over the next few months, we'll be seeking your feedback on:

- A three-year plan to reduce domestic abuse
- Our new 'Belonging in Education' strategy, designed to help every young person feel safe, valued and included in school

Share your thoughts and explore all the proposals at:

leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say



Have your say

Help shape services by sharing your thoughts on future plans: leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say

Keeping you safe

Trading Standards are busy working across the county to help residents and local businesses – and they're here to help you when you might need it.

Last year we received over 4,000 complaints to investigate from residents across Leicestershire.

Councillor Virge Richichi, cabinet member for regulatory services, said: "Trading Standards carry out a vital role in supporting our businesses and keeping our residents safe. If you think you need help, or want to report something, get in touch."



Virge Richichi

What Trading Standards look after:

- Animal health and welfare
- Counterfeit goods
- Doorstep crime and scams
- Fake alcohol, cigarettes and vapes
- Food and product safety
- Underage sales
- Weights and measures
- Estates and letting agent regulation
- Second-hand car dealers
- Rogue builders



Our Trading Standards Officers check animal health and welfare at local markets



Check it out before you check in



Package holidays are well protected if a company goes out of businesses.

The package travel operator is responsible for all parts of the holiday, regardless of whether each part is carried out by them.

Unfortunately, some people have fallen victim to holiday fraud through rogue comparison, airline and package holiday websites.

Top tips to avoid falling victim:

- Research the company if you haven't used them before. Research, read reviews and beware if it seems too good to be true.
- Make sure your package holiday company is a member of a trade association such as ABTA or ATOL - you can verify their membership details on the official websites.

Remember to consider travel insurance – the package travel regulations do not cover personal injury or some cancellations.

Find out more about holidays scams and your rights on holiday bookings at moneysavingexpert.com and takefive-stopfraud.org.uk



Spring car boot sales are back

Car boot season has started and it's one of the places to grab second-hand items.

Be aware that buying second hand can increase the risk of unsafe electrical items, toys and unsafe counterfeit goods.

Top tips for being switched-on to buying electricals:

- ⚠ Check the packaging to make sure the item is real - thin or flimsy packaging and bad spelling are signs it might be a fake
- ⚠ Check for a UKCA or CE-mark on the product, this means it meets UK standards
- ⚠ Walk away if wires are loose or frayed, or there is too much wear

Don't forget that fake electricals can also be a fire risk if the rechargeable battery isn't up to standard. Get more advice on the safe purchase of electricals from Electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk



Report any issues you find on leicestershire.gov.uk/trading-standards



You can also make reports to Citizens Advice Consumer Service at citizensadvice.org.uk or call 0808 223 1133.



Help us plant 1,000,000 trees

Record the trees you've planted using our interactive map: leicestershire.gov.uk/trees



Tree planted as school expands

A young oak sapling, grown from an acorn collected at Bradgate Park is part of improvements at a growing primary school.

Hallam Fields Primary School in Birstall, part of the Lionheart Trust, is doubling in size from 210 to 420 pupils as part of a county council-funded £6m expansion.

The acorn is from one of Leicestershire's oldest oak trees, and with Bradgate Park visible from the school, it gives the children a link to our wider landscape.

Named the "Magic Faraway Tree" by pupils, its name is inspired by Enid Blyton's Magic Faraway Tree books.

The school expansion is due to complete in September and includes a new hall and seven additional classrooms to help it double in size.



Charles Pugsley

Councillor Charles Pugsley said: "This is just one of our school expansions to help meet the demand for pupil places. I hope the tree planted will



Schoolchildren at Hallam Fields Primary School in Birstall

Photo courtesy of DSA Environment & Design

be enjoyed by pupils, teachers and parents for generations to come."

Construction is being carried out by Willmott Dixon, with landscape design by DSA.

Have your say on Leicestershire Matters

Fill in our survey and send back to us using the Freepost address.

Or fill in our online form at leicestershire.gov.uk/leicestershire-matters

Questions:

1. Do you receive Leicestershire Matters at your house? Yes No
2. How useful do you find Leicestershire Matters?
 Very useful Fairly useful Not very useful Not useful at all Don't know
3. What, if anything, do you like most about Leicestershire Matters?

4. What, if anything, would you like to see more of in Leicestershire Matters?

5. What is your full postcode?

This will allow us to understand the areas people are responding from. It will not identify your house.



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