

Coventry

News...features...plus more about your city...your neighbourhood...your services

citivision

INSIDE

● **New sporting strategy unveiled**

● **Council pledge to vulnerable over government cuts**

● **Ring road work set to herald new city gateway**

issue 46 | march | 2014

Including: news, comments and updates from organisations across the city working together to improve life in Coventry



Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry



By: Corby Allen (drawing, 2009) © The artist, on display Courtesy: Folgers and Dorothea Bory, Toronto
Photo: © Birmingham Museums Trust

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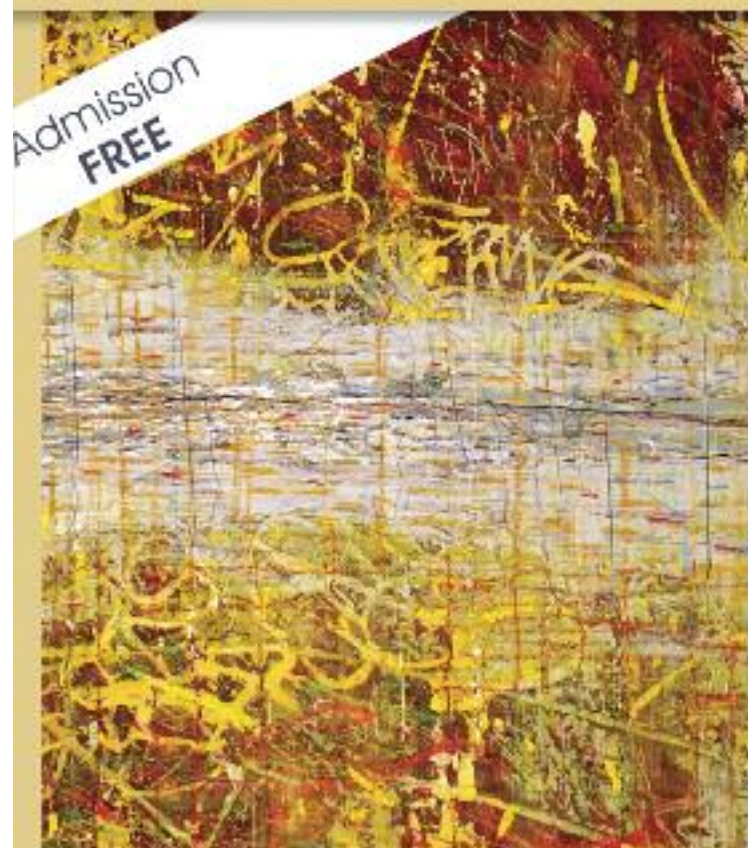
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Walls With Wounds

By
Dale vN Marshall

15 February –
18 May 2014

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● A personal message from Cllr Ann Lucas, Leader, Coventry City Council.

Paving the way for a brighter future

Over the past year we've begun an exciting journey of regeneration and transformation across our city centre and beyond.

Our plans for a new Council office at Friargate will see us kickstarting the creation of a new business district in the heart of Coventry. Our proposals to build a state-of-the-art water park and leisure centre to replace our tired and ageing sports centre will regenerate another part of the city centre that really needs a lift.

And watch this space; there's more to follow as we get on with a much-needed radical reshaping of the heart of the city and continue to invest in ambitious projects that will put the city at the forefront of change.

These are exciting times for Coventry, but they're challenging, too. We're developing ambitious schemes at a time when we face massive cuts in government grants. We must continue to ensure our most vulnerable residents get the support and protection they need.

But in the long term the best way of supporting every resident in Coventry is by creating a prosperous city where people have jobs and can make the best use of high-quality facilities and a pleasant environment. It will take a while to get there, but we're definitely on our way to a brighter future.

*You can write to Ann at The Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR, or e-mail her at ann.lucas@coventry.gov.uk

If you need this information in another format or language please contact us:

Tel: 024 7683 1081
 Fax: 024 7683 1132
 e-mail: communications@coventry.gov.uk

Cover story: The new route from Coventry railway station to the city centre is set to offer visitors a much improved vista of the approach to the shopping hub. Work has already begun on bridging junction 6 of the ring road, the initial phase of this major project.

Full story – Page 12-13

A personal message from Charley Gibbons, chair of the Coventry Partnership...

Welcome to the packed spring issue of Coventry Citivision.

For Coventry Partnership, supporting the most vulnerable in our community really matters, and this is demonstrated in the winter night shelter campaign highlighted in this issue (see page 6).

There are many agencies working hard to counter the effects of government cuts and

organisations like Voluntary Action Coventry (see page 9) are helping to support community organisations across the city.

With the Council's policy of paying council tax support to those who can least afford it, and other examples of projects setting out to offer a safety net to people, it is excellent to see the city rallying together in such a positive way.



* Charley Gibbons is chief executive of the Citizens' Advice Bureau in Coventry and has agreed to be the chair of the Coventry Partnership for the coming year.



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Call the Citivision newsdesk on 024 7683 1075 or write to Newsdesk, Room 27, The Council House, Earl Street, Coventry, CV1 5RR, or e-mail communications@coventry.gov.uk

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Citizens facing a new round of 'significant budget challenges'

With more cuts from central government looming, Coventry councillors were set to debate their own budget proposals for 2014/15 as *Citivision* went to print.

Major Council savings have already overcome a budget gap of £12.4m for 2014/15, but councillors gathering for the crucial budget debate on February 25 warned of a potential rise in the gap during 2016/17 of £44.2million.

A council tax increase of 1.9 per cent, equivalent to a rise of just over 30p per week for a typical household

'Government cuts are eroding services but we are doing our best to safeguard services used by the city's most vulnerable...'

in Coventry, is being proposed. Those that receive Council Tax support – approximately 20 per cent of Coventry's households – will not pay any more under this proposal.

The increase will protect some of the services that are currently provided to the people of Coventry.

The Council has already made savings of nearly £70m over the past few years, with 90p of every pound of

these being made through efficiency measures. Children's social care and domestic violence support services budgets are being protected.

Cllr Damian Gannon, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance and Resources, said: "Coventry, like many other local authorities across the country, is facing significant budget challenges.

"Government cuts are eroding our services but we are doing our best to safeguard services used by the city's most vulnerable and to protect those that are most important to the people of Coventry."

Direct Debit's the business for ratepayers

Hundreds of people who pay business rates are being encouraged to switch their payments to Direct Debit.

Around 8,000 organisations pay business rates in the city, and around 50 per cent pay by Direct Debit.

Non-domestic rates are paid by businesses of all sizes from Tesco and IKEA to local newsagents. Properties are assessed by the Valuation Office Agency and are given a rateable value, which for some properties will be related to rental value.

In other parts of the country there are larger proportions of businesses that pay their rates by Direct Debit. Revenues and benefits officers in Coventry say that with more and more people doing business online it makes sense to make the switch.

Cllr Damian Gannon, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance said: "We want to improve our services and we are increasingly doing business online. It's cheap and efficient, and an automated process means that there is one less bill for businesses to budget for or have to remember to pay.

"As a Council we are really keen to increase Direct Debit payments."

At the same time the Council is hoping that electronic billing becomes more common place.

He added: "The Council is using a lot less paper. There are people who would prefer their bill as part of their printed mail but we also want to remind businesses that we can set people up quickly and effectively for e-billing at www.coventry.gov.uk/businessrates



■ Bob Steel of the Landscape Group (left), Cllr Abdul Khan and John Kiely of McDonald's get down among the shrubs to spread used ground coffee as a fertilizer at Lady Herbert's Gardens.

Beans means a bumper crop of blooms

McDonald's franchisee John Kiely has set up an initiative with Coventry Business Improvement District (BID), to recycle used ground coffee from his Cross Cheaping restaurant to fertilise flower beds across the city.

The coffee is particularly good for acid-loving plants. And as a substantial amount of the acid is "cooked out" of the coffee and drunk, the residue is also suitable for the majority of plants. So far the ground coffee has been used in Lady

Herbert's Gardens and Greyfriars Green. The Council will be monitoring the success of the experiment. Mr Kiely, who is also vice chair of the BID, said: "Recycling our used coffee was the next logical step and another stride towards our ultimate goal of sending zero waste to landfill."

Councillor Abdul Khan Cabinet Member for Energy and Environment said: "I'm sure the plants and flowers in our parks will be all the better for it."

City crossing image echoes the Beatles' Abbey habit

Councillors recreated the Beatles' *Abbey Road* album cover on the new zebra crossing in Little Park Street as they highlighted work underway on the newly-paved and landscaped area in front of the Council House.

Councillor Rachel Lancaster, cabinet member for public services, said: "The new crossing is part of the reworking of the area outside the council house. It's less than half the width of the zebra that was there before and although work is still underway it's already clear what a difference it's going to



■ Cllr Lynnette Kelly, Council apprentice Connor Arrol, Cllr Rachel Lancaster and Cllr Steve Thomas could be in for a wiggling after this Beatles'-themed stunt.

make. The pavements are talking shape and it's already clear to see how wide they will be. Our city centre is changing for the better. We are making it a civilised place to be – where vehicles can still get to all the places they need to get

to without taking over and where high quality pedestrian routes join up. I'm delighted we couldn't recreate the album cover because it means the area will be more about the pedestrian than it is the car and that's quite right."

Get on your marks for new sports and leisure complex

A new strategy to develop sporting opportunities for all, support talented local sports people and invest in sports facilities across Coventry has been unveiled.

The Coventry Sports Strategy, which has been launched for public consultation, proposes the building of a new leisure centre in the city to

'We're determined to make sure we continue to invest in sporting facilities and opportunities across the city...'

include a 25-metre pool, water park with slides, fitness suite, climbing wall, squash courts and spa. The new facility will eventually replace the sports centre in Fairfax Street.

Other key recommendations include a Coventry Institute of Sport to provide early specialist support services for talented local athletes. The strategy also includes proposals to support sports clubs, venues and schools to secure a total of £4m of investment into community sports facilities, and the launch of a Coventry Sports Network to deliver £10m of investment in sport. A strategic events and tourism partnership will also be set up to bid for 15 major sporting events in the city.



■ A flavour of how the new leisure centre may look.

Cllr Ed Ruane, Cabinet Member for Housing and Heritage, said: "At a time when other councils are cutting funding to sports, we're absolutely determined to make sure we continue to invest in sporting facilities and opportunities across the city.

"No other cities will have a facility like this in the heart of the city – it will be a brilliant boost for our city centre and a great asset for us."

The strategy has been developed between a number of key sports

partners including Coventry Sports Foundation, which is responsible for managing a number of successful leisure facilities in Coventry including Centre AT7, the Xcel Leisure Centre and the Alan Higgs Centre.

Foundation chief Executive Paul Breed said: "This strategy is a real commitment from sporting partners to invest in sport in the right places in Coventry."

To take part in the consultation process, visit www.covsport.org.uk

Swift connection

A new automated telephone service is being introduced to provide more efficient responses to enquiries directed towards Council Tax, benefits services and waste collections. The new phone service is supported by contact centre staff at the Council, who are on hand to direct calls so that customers are served quickly and effectively. The new system is part of a drive to bolster online and digital services. Face-to-face services will remain.

Business partners



Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Hazel Noon is joined by head teacher Selwyn Calvin (left) and Les Ratcliffe, of Jaguar Land Rover as she presents certificates at Barr's Hill Secondary School. The event marked the launch of a new business partnership between the school and Jaguar Land Rover. The Business in the Community education programme, Business Class, is helping improve the way businesses work with secondary schools, focusing on issues such as governorship, head teacher mentoring, attendance support and curriculum enrichment.

New books in store

Coventry Libraries and Information Service has a new and improved eBook and eAudiobook service, with a wider range of stock available to download for free. There are now three different catalogues you can access – Askews and Holt, BorrowBox and OneClickDigital. You can access this service with your library card and PIN. Visit www.coventry.gov.uk/ebooks for the full details.

Token's a novel idea

Babies and toddlers who visited their local library during the first week of March received a £1 book token as part of World Book Day celebrations. The event on March 6 helps children and young people explore the pleasure of books and reading by providing them with the opportunity to have a book of their own. For more information, go to www.worldbookday.com, visit your local library or contact the Children and Young People's Co-ordinator on 024 7683 2552.

City responds as the benefit cuts bite

Agencies in the city are redoubling their response to the challenge of changes to welfare benefits.

The Coventry Partnership, made up of the Council, Whitefriars Housing Group, Midland Heart, Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice Bureau, Coventry Law Centre and Coventry Churches, meets regularly to ensure that people are aware

of the changes, and to work towards resolving problems. The group is also working on the Government's planned introduction of Universal Credit, which means that Job Seekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Employment Support Allowance and Tax Credits will be replaced by one benefit for working-age customers. The new system is to be phased in from 2016. The focus is on getting

a benefits check, looking at your monthly budget, getting help into work, making sure you have a bank account, paying off any priority debts (rent/mortgage arrears, gas, electric, water, council tax) and getting online at www.coventry.gov.uk/benefits. Alternatively, clients can pick up a leaflet from one of the partners.

Home swap website for housing tenants

Tenants of Whitefriars and Midland Heart who want to exchange properties can now sign up to a new free home swap website called 'Let's Swap', which helps them swap homes with other tenants across the West Midlands. More than 4,000 people have already registered on the website since its launch last July.

Gaynor Reynolds, Head of Tenancy Management at Whitefriars Housing Group said: "The new service can help tenants to move home by finding another tenant to swap properties with. If a tenant's home is too big for their needs, or if they need a bigger property, this site could help."

For details visit www.lets-swap.org to register. Housing association tenants can also register with www.homeswapper.co.uk

Get help with under occupation charges

Dozens of people affected by under occupation charges have attended a Pop Up shop where customers were given help to complete an application for a discretionary housing payment.

The Council has also written to every under occupying customer in the city with more information about the scheme and an invitation to apply.

For details contact the DHP team on 024 7683 2727 or e-mail DHPTeam@coventry.gov.uk

Older people care

Students from the University of Warwick have embarked on a project to raise awareness of the rights of the elderly.

They have produced a leaflet, *Home Care for Older People In Coventry*, outlining standards older people should expect from their home care. It is available from all Council libraries.

To request a copy or if you have any questions about the leaflet, e-mail humanrightspractice@warwick.ac.uk

If you have a concern about an older relation in care, call 024 7683 3800. For general enquiries, contact Coventry Direct on 0500 834 333.

Supporting winter night shelterers



■ A volunteer serves tea to sleepers at one of the night shelters.

A partnership between the Council and the churches of the city is helping provide shelter to 20 rough sleepers each night. The pilot Coventry Winter Night Shelter is co-ordinated across seven venues. The Coventry Winter Night Shelter will be running until the end of March and is still looking for volunteer support for nightshifts and donations to cover costs. Project co-ordinator Nobby Clarke said: "Following an appeal to the public, we found ourselves overwhelmed by the numbers who wanted to volunteer." He said that they still needed to bolster the numbers volunteering on the nightshift (10pm to 7am).

"Forty five volunteers are registered with the project, which offers shelter to anyone irrespective of who they are, what they are or where they come from," said Mr Clarke.

"A referral system is operated via the Jesus Centre,

Cyrenians or Salvation Army, who each have the staff and skills to 'risk assess' adequately for our purposes. Food is often provided by the Sikh community of Coventry."

Cllr Ed Ruane, Cabinet Member for Housing and Heritage who helped set up the scheme, said: "I am really impressed by the efforts of the volunteers. They are providing support to desperate and vulnerable people I hope it can continue to grow."

Donations can be made to Hope Coventry, Lloyds Bank, High Street, Coventry: Sort code 30-92-33 Account number 63453568. Or cheques can be made payable to Hope Coventry and sent c/o 107 Hinckley Road, Coventry, CV2 2ES. In each case please reference your donation Coventry Winter Night Shelter (CWNS).

For details on volunteering, call 07472896477.

Caring for the city's most vulnerable

New research from the Institute of Fiscal Studies has found that four in five local authorities reduced entitlements to council tax support this financial year.

Coventry is one of the minority of councils to buck the trend by continuing to pay Council Tax Support in full and helping to protect vulnerable people.

Cllr Damian Gannon Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance explained Coventry's commitment to help low-income families.

He said: "I'm not surprised by the findings of the Institute of Fiscal Studies. We've been taking steps to mitigate the effects of welfare reform and although we are again facing major government cuts we are firmly committed to helping low-income households with council tax costs.

"That's why we have not passed on the cuts and will continue the policy next year."

Charley Gibbons from the Citizens' Advice Bureau said: "The Council's policy has been well received. We have been working hard with partners and anything that offers some help to our poorest residents has to be a good thing."

Keeping power on

Many people are struggling with fuel prices and debt as welfare reform changes bite and living costs rise.

As a consequence, Citizens' Advice Coventry and Western Power distribution are offering fuel debt tips, and adding vulnerable people to a priority register so they know who to come out to when there is a power cut. Western Power Distribution (WPD) is upgrading equipment in major substations which will help to safeguard supply reliability to around 33,000 customers in the south of Coventry. Work happening between now and Autumn 2014 may cause disruption or power cuts. You can join the priority register at www.westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Priority-Services.aspx. Alternatively, call 0845 724 0240 or e-mail wpdpriority.servmids@westernpower.co.uk

Top Ofsted marks for adult learners



■ Staff and learners celebrate the Council's Adult Education Service good rating by Ofsted.

■ A student gets to grips with some of the high-tech gadgets at the recent WMG Academy open day.

Learners and staff at the Council's Adult Education Service are celebrating after Ofsted rated the service as 'good'.

The report, which focuses on the quality of teaching and learning within the service, underwent a week-long inspection at the city-wide service. It graded the service as good in all aspects and found that "learners achieve extremely well".

Councillor Dave Chater, Cabinet Member for Education and Libraries, said: "We are delighted

with the outcome of this Ofsted inspection. This is down to the hard work, dedication and professionalism of teaching staff and managers across the service."

He added: "In a city where a third of the population live in 20 per cent of England's most deprived areas, we are particularly pleased that Ofsted recognised the highly effective strategies we have to improve the life chances of people."

For more information about the Adult Education Service, call 024 7678 6806 or 024 7678 7978 or visit www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted.

Academy wows young engineers

Offer letters are being sent out to the first intake of Y10 and Y12 students for the new University Technical College, WMG Academy for when it opens in September. After overwhelming interest from students across Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull, principal Kate Tague said: "We've even had parents from as far afield as Spain asking if their child was eligible. I can't wait to open those doors in September

and welcome everyone." The Academy is sponsored by the University of Warwick and boasts a range of high-profile local and national business partners, including Jaguar Land Rover, National Grid, Squires Gears and Automotive Insulations. Anyone interested in studying at or working for the WMG Academy for Young Engineers can find out more at www.wmgacademy.org.uk



■ Another prospective student finds out what's on offer at the new academy.

Calling All Engineering & Manufacturing Companies

Come along to Midlands Professional Development breakfast event with a difference on **Friday 4th April 7.30am - 9.30am** (kindly sponsored by Pera Training) Elliot Park Innovation Centre Nuneaton CV10 7RH

Guest Speaker:
Peter Hucker MD Daly Engineering Ltd (Coventry)

The aim of this event is provide you with short taster training sessions on real issues faced in the workplace including:

Keeping & Developing your Best Staff
Improving your Processes
How to effectively handle Disputes, Grievances, Performance & the Law
Managing Projects Well

Enjoy a free breakfast roll whilst mixing with likeminded business associates

To book your place please register now:
<http://trainingwithmpd.eventbrite.co.uk>

Or call one of the team on 02476 796422





The Magnificent seven!

A Coventry Award of Merit, which was first established in the 1960s, has been revived to highlight the efforts of local people in raising the profile and reputation of the city. The Coventry Award of Merit ceremony was held recently, where seven recipients joined the ranks of previous winners Sir Frank Whittle KBE (1966), inventor of the jet engine, and Sir Basil Spence OBE, the architect of Coventry Cathedral. The recipients are determined under the guidance of an advisory panel

chaired by Cllr Phil Townshend, deputy leader of the Council. He said: "There are so many people in Coventry who have put our city on the map. Outstanding service or personal effort should be acknowledged to promote our city." Receiving the Coventry Award of Merit at St Mary's Guildhall were Bob Ainsworth MP, a former deputy leader of the Council and a former Secretary of State for Defence, Professor Madeleine Atkins, vice chancellor of Coventry University, Professor Lord

Kumar Bhattacharyya, the founder of Warwick Manufacturing Group, the Coventry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre; Mr Courtenay Griffiths QC, a former Advocate in the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, Cllr Tim Sawdon, Lord Mayor of Coventry in 2012 when the Olympics came to the city, and Dr Abdullah Shehu, who is involved in medical research, neurological illness and injury care, and who represents the Muslim community of the city.

Sikh volunteers in the running for Queen's Award



Coventry's Sikh Union has been shortlisted for the Queen's Award for voluntary service. It's the highest award given to a volunteer group across the UK and the union has been put forward by the Council's Deputy Leader, Cllr Phil Townshend. To qualify for the award the service is expected to meet a need for people living in the local community and has a strong track record. The awards are announced on June 2.

Band aid assists typhoon victims

A fundraising Hindu band played through the night to help raise money for victims of Typhoon Haiyan that devastated the Philippines.

Samaj Karam, which was founded in Coventry 12 years ago, regularly raises money for charities and urgent appeals for help following natural disasters, by performing across the country. Their latest performance raised a total of £2,000 to be sent to the Philippines to help aid agencies in the aftermath of the typhoon that killed over 4,000 people and displaced more than four million.

The name Samaj Karam means 'helping society'.

Band member, Gus Dutt said: "When we started the Samaj Karam group, we wanted to help people in need, whoever and wherever they were. Our main mission is to raise money for local charities and help the needy – whether in our own city or abroad."

Action course for volunteers

Voluntary Action Coventry (VAC) has helped 164 groups with support and advice since April 2013, at a time when the voluntary and community sector faces increasing demand for services, but ever diminishing resources.

Based at 29 Warwick Road, the city-centre base supports groups of residents seeking advice on how to set up an association, wanting to register as a charity, or clubs or larger groups looking for help identifying new funding.

Last year VAC's group support officers provided advice and information leading to over 1,000 hours of support delivered over 600 support sessions. Areas covered included how to develop a constitution, recruiting and retaining volunteers, trustee roles and responsibilities as well as writing effective funding applications.

Of 96 funding applications, 80 were successful – generating over £3.3 million for the delivery of projects and services in the city.

In the last quarter (Oct-Dec 2013), approximately one in four organisations supported by VAC worked with people with disabilities or specific long-term medical conditions including autism, learning disabilities and mental health issues. Children and young people were the focus of support for one in three organisations.

Membership of VAC is completely free to voluntary and community groups and provides access to a number of services as well as discounted rates on training and room hire. For further information, visit www.vacoventry.org.uk/membership or call 024 7622 0381.



■ Voluntary Action Coventry's Simon Batten and (right) Ruth Popejoy offer advice to Surinder Dhillon.

Why not find out how as a foster parent, you can really...

Make a difference

Spreading the message to encourage more people to come forward and adopt or foster for Coventry has taken another step forward with adverts promoting the message appearing on buses across the city.

Based on making a difference to a child's journey in life, the adverts have caught a lot of people's attention as it brings home the importance of how lives can be changed.

In Coventry, there are around 600 children waiting to find a loving, caring home that can make a massive difference to not only the child's life but the people who come forward and make the life choice to become an adopter or foster carer.

Councillor Jayne Innes, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Adoption and Fostering, said: "Getting the adopt and foster message in people's minds is one of our top priorities and will be going forward throughout 2014 as well. We use a range of promotions to promote the service and keep it at the forefront of people's minds, as we appreciate becoming an adopter or foster carer is not a quick decision.

"Hopefully people will see the message out and about, and even better if it encourages people to come forward and find out more about how it can transform someone's life."

If you want to discover more about fostering and adopting with the Council, call 024 7683 2828 or visit coventry.gov.uk/adoptionandfostering



■ Just the ticket: Cllr Jayne Innes and Andy Pepper, assistant director of Children's Social Care, launch the latest phase of the fostering advertising campaign.

Henley's RESTAURANT

BOOKINGS ARE NOW BEING TAKEN FOR OUR THEMED EVENINGS

Save 15% off a three course lunch

Henley's Restaurant and Bistro offers unbelievable value and provides students with valuable training.

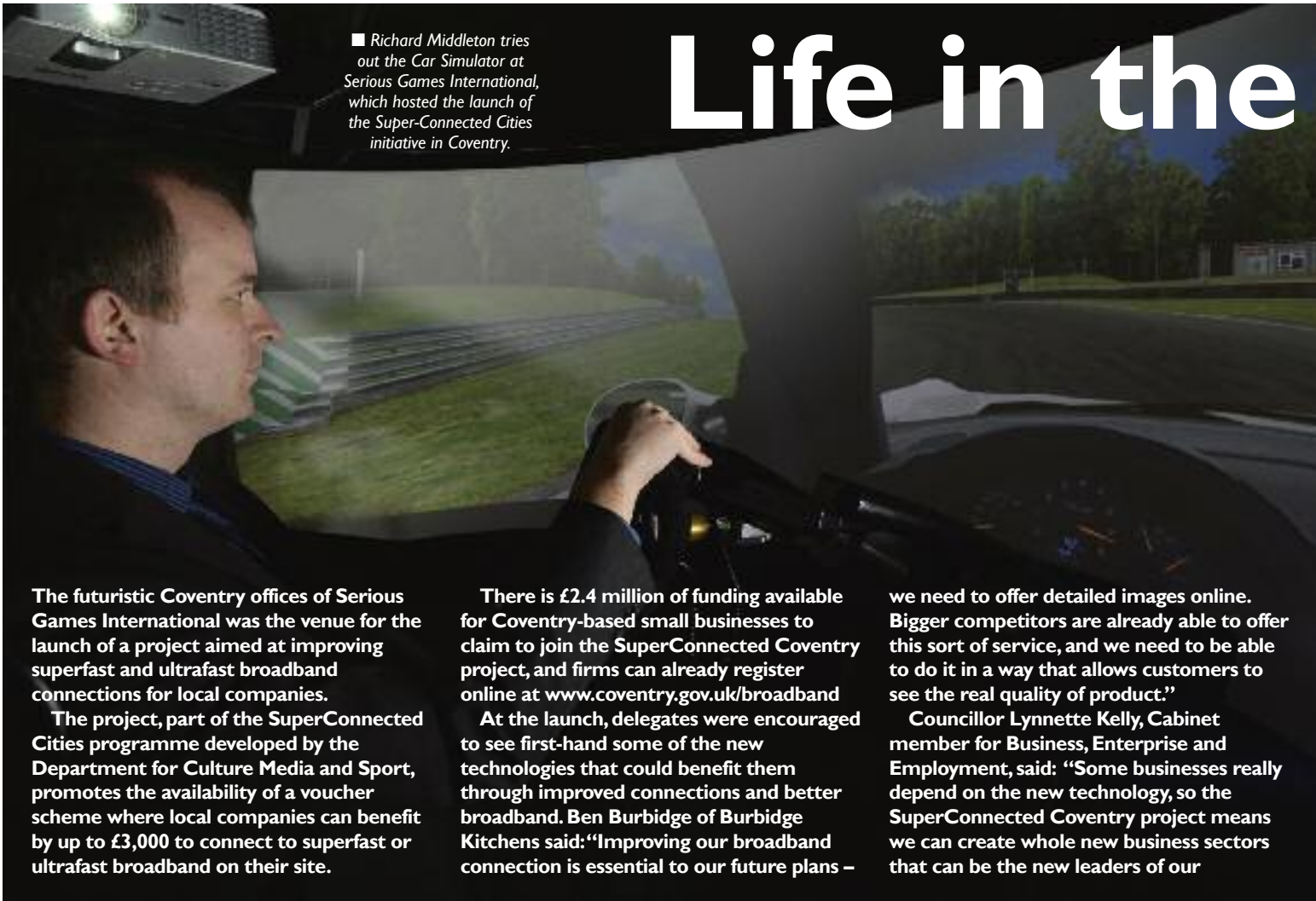
Visit: www.henley-cov.ac.uk/restaurant or phone: 024 7662 6335 or email: henleyrestaurant@henley-cov.ac.uk to reserve your table.

Offer ends 23rd May 2014.

Henley's Restaurant, Henley Road, Bell Green, Coventry CV2 1ED | www.henley-cov.ac.uk

Life in the

■ Richard Middleton tries out the Car Simulator at Serious Games International, which hosted the launch of the Super-Connected Cities initiative in Coventry.



The futuristic Coventry offices of Serious Games International was the venue for the launch of a project aimed at improving superfast and ultrafast broadband connections for local companies.

The project, part of the SuperConnected Cities programme developed by the Department for Culture Media and Sport, promotes the availability of a voucher scheme where local companies can benefit by up to £3,000 to connect to superfast or ultrafast broadband on their site.

There is £2.4 million of funding available for Coventry-based small businesses to claim to join the SuperConnected Coventry project, and firms can already register online at www.coventry.gov.uk/broadband

At the launch, delegates were encouraged to see first-hand some of the new technologies that could benefit them through improved connections and better broadband. Ben Burbidge of Burbidge Kitchens said: "Improving our broadband connection is essential to our future plans –

we need to offer detailed images online. Bigger competitors are already able to offer this sort of service, and we need to be able to do it in a way that allows customers to see the real quality of product."

Councillor Lynnette Kelly, Cabinet member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, said: "Some businesses really depend on the new technology, so the SuperConnected Coventry project means we can create whole new business sectors that can be the new leaders of our

Make your case for business cash

A major investment boost to businesses has been launched in the form of a £50 million Coventry Investment Fund

The fund is available for the development of new commercial premises, extensions to existing firms and plans that would bring empty premises back into commercial use. Businesses could also qualify for cash to invest in new machinery or equipment or for developing research and development projects. All bids to the Coventry Investment Fund must show how their proposals will support business or economic growth in Coventry and lead to the generation of additional business rate income. Firms that express an interest in the fund will be given the support of a Council case officer to help develop their business case.

To find out more about the fund, including how to apply, visit www.coventry.gov.uk/cif

To obtain an outline business case form, e-mail the fund's management team at cif@coventry.gov.uk

High-tech Olympic torch is blazing a trail



■ Cllrs Ed Ruane, Abdul Khan and Lynnette Kelly with the Olympic 2012 torch on show at the Council House.

The engineering firm that turned its hand to the mammoth task of producing 8,000 torches for London 2012 is still basking in the Olympic feel-good factor two years on.

Premier Group, based in Exhall near Coventry, has been enjoying rapid growth since the Games, taking on 42 new staff and winning £8million in new contracts since then.

The company's clients include many of the country's leading car manufacturers, a sector

that has been leading Britain's manufacturing growth story.

The company employs over 180 people, including 22 apprentices, and produces work for auto industry giants Bentley, Jaguar Land Rover, Ford, Morgan and other OEMs.

The London 2012 Torch is on display at Coventry City Council House, Earl Street offering a permanent reminder of the excellent skills of local engineers.

superfast lane!

economic strength.”

As well as supporting businesses in affording superfast broadband services that are already available, a vital aspect of the project is in encouraging innovative technology delivery approaches that bring superfast and ultrafast broadband to parts of the city that currently have no adequate broadband. Where there are individual businesses, getting high-speed broadband can be prohibitively expensive. But by grouping together, innovative technical and commercial solutions can be possible.

Councillor Kelly added: “Companies like Serious Games International, Totem Learning and Touch Digital are vital to our economic success as great examples of world-leading technology. At the moment they have to use expensive private circuits to get the kind of connectivity they need. But there are several businesses in the same position in the same part of the city, so by helping them to join together in the SuperConnected Coventry project, we hope to be able to solve the internet access problems for large parts of the city”

For more information about SuperConnected Coventry, go to www.coventry.gov.uk/broadband.



■ Cllr Lynnette Kelly with Vicky Rose of Totem Learning Ltd, one of the speakers at the launch of the SuperConnected Cities project.

3D print opens up a world of opportunities

Students at Hereward College in Coventry have been learning to use computer-assisted design technology through sessions with staff and students from the University of Warwick.

The students who have restricted physical movement have come up with solutions to everyday challenges such as eating and drinking which they can then print out with the click of a button.

Designs include a straw-holder, created by 21-year-old Hereward residential student Ollie Baskaran, to help keep a straw in place when he drinks from a bottle. The simple design allows him to enjoy a beer or a soft drink from a variety of different bottles.

Ollie, who suffers from Muscular Dystrophy, said: “You can literally think of something and a few minutes later, it is in your hand!

“Without 3D printing, I would never have been able to get the idea professionally designed and manufactured as it would have cost too much. This technology opens up so many possibilities to make life easier for people with disabilities.”

■ Thirsty work: Ollie Baskaran shows off his straw-holder device.



Final call to have your say at polls

Council teams have been going door-to-door over the last few months – ensuring as many Coventry citizens as possible can vote in elections in Coventry, on Thursday 22 May.

Over 140,000 properties are now on the Electoral Register – but the Council will be giving it one more extra effort in March to get people registered, and make sure no-one loses their chance to vote in May. Council staff will be visiting neighbourhoods with low numbers of people registered, to make sure as many people can vote as possible. Martin Reeves, the Council's Chief Executive and Returning Officer for elections, said that registering to vote is the first step in having your say about what goes on in our city. “If people aren't registered, they lose their voice, and come election time won't be able to have their say about what goes on in Coventry.” He added.

There is still time to make sure you are on the register - especially if you've moved house recently or your circumstances have changed. Everyone who is registered will receive a poll card through their door at the start of May, explaining how to vote. Go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk or phone the elections team on 024 7683 3034

Cracking down on empty homes

A consultation is underway on a proposed policy to help reduce the number of empty homes across the city.

The Council has brought more than 1,500 empty homes back into use over the last five years thanks to a crackdown on the issue. Empty homes can attract anti-social behaviour and often becomes a magnet for pests as well as devaluing neighbouring properties. There are an estimated 134,181 properties in the city and since 2012 the number of empty homes has dropped from 2,587 to 1,179 – less than one per cent of the city's housing stock.

The consultation runs until Sunday, May 4. For more information or to take part in the consultation before a final Empty Homes Policy is agreed, visit www.coventry.gov.uk/emptypropertyconsultation

Ring road work herald

Work is underway to improve Junction 6 of the ring road, close to the railway station.

The work will kickstart the Friargate development which will create a thriving new business district for Coventry.

The work is funded by grants from the Government's Regional Development Fund and the European Regional Development Fund and will take 18 months to complete. The project will see a 'lid' put on the ring road to create a 100-metre wide connection between the station and the city centre.

From later this month (March), a large section of the raised junction will be closed to traffic and pedestrians. The road sections closed to traffic are shown on this map in red. The closed walking routes are shown in blue.

Councillor Rachel Lancaster, Cabinet Member for Public Services, said: "We have secured a massive amount of grant money to make a number of roads work better and to help kickstart investment that will lead to the creation of new jobs for local people.

"We will make this city great again, but it won't be without some short-term disruption. Of course the beauty of the ring road is people can make a choice further out of the city centre and approach by a

different junction.

"We will also have finished the work on the A45 and Hearsall Common – which was carefully timed to be completed before we start on the ring road work."

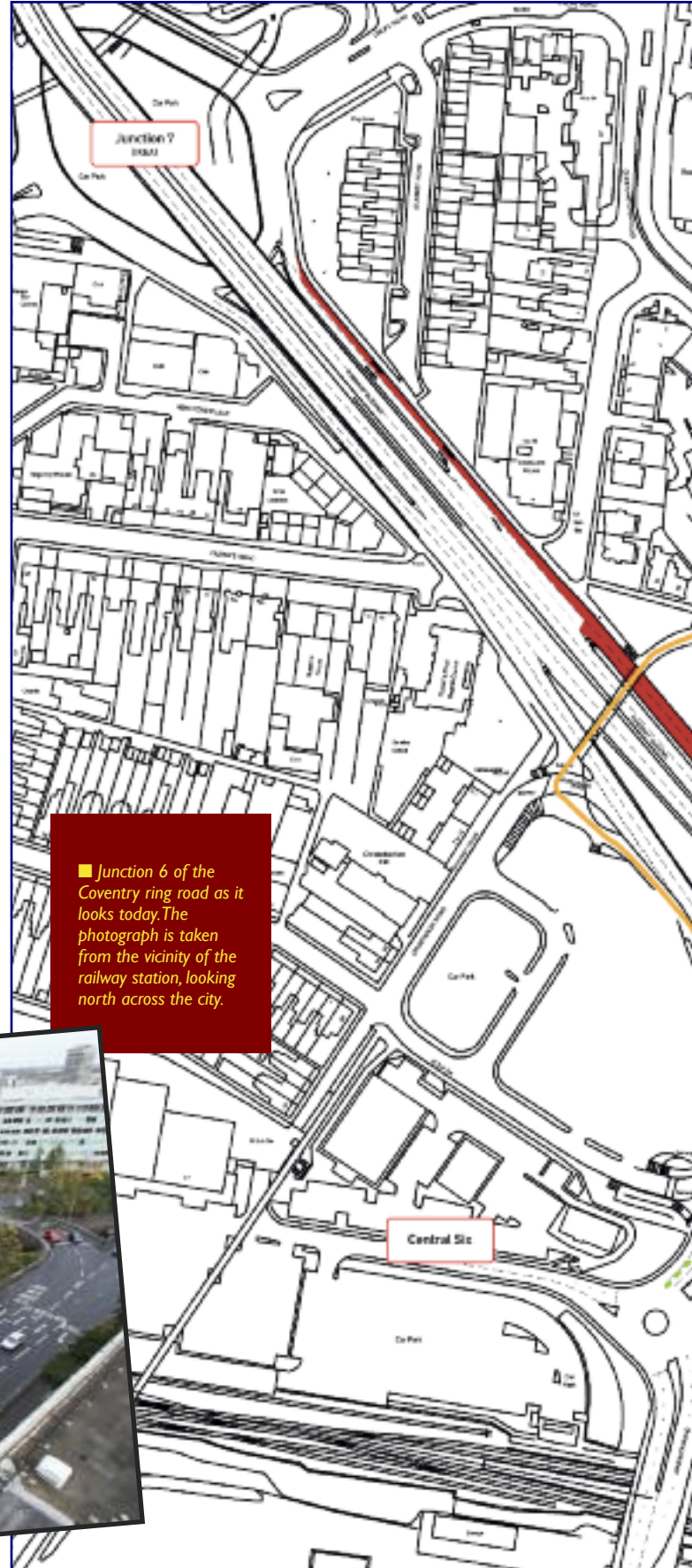
Drivers and pedestrians will be able to access the train station at all times – a new access road from Warwick Road will be created (shown in green) with usual access via Ringway St Patricks (from the police station junction) operating as normal – Central Six will be accessible from Warwick Road in the usual way – either heading towards the city centre or via the ring road

'We will make this city great again, but it won't be without some short-term disruption...'

heading towards junction 6 (the train station) from junction 5 (the police station) Drivers heading towards the city centre via Warwick Road will only be able to turn left towards Junction 7 (IKEA)

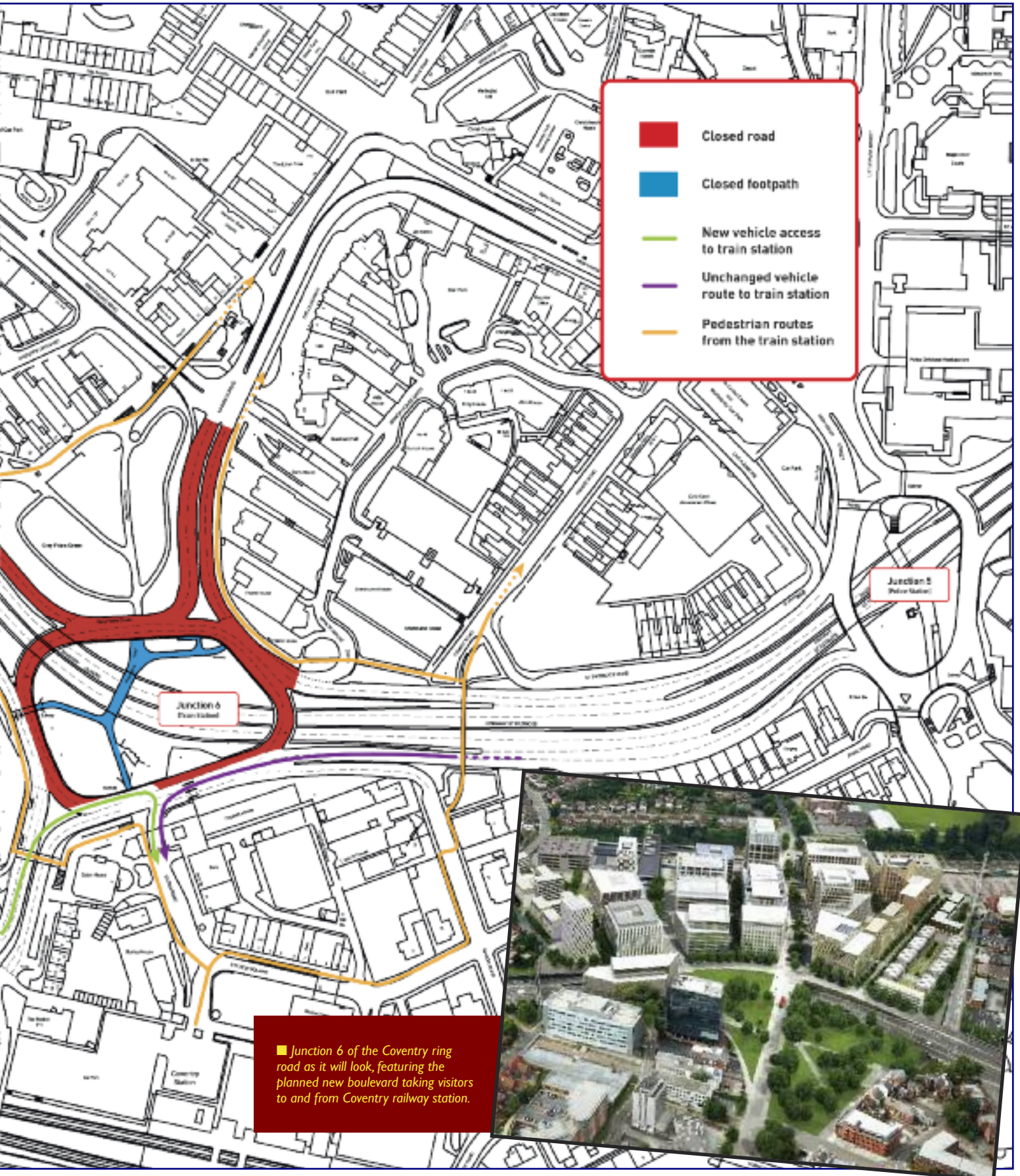
Drivers will not be able to leave the city centre via Junction 6 – pedestrians will be able to walk into the city centre from the station via the footbridge towards Friars Road or via the underpass between Grosvenor Road and Warwick Road.

Diversions will be clearly signed at all times.



DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT! To find out more at www.coventry.gov.

Opens new city gateway



■ Junction 6 of the Coventry ring road as it will look, featuring the planned new boulevard taking visitors to and from Coventry railway station.

Indoor cycling shuts the door on wind and rain

Over 100 adults and children have been learning how to ride a bike or brush up their skills at free indoor training courses.

The courses were so popular that more are planned in March. Participants don't even have to have their own bike as you can borrow one!

Courses are co-ordinated by Cycle Coventry and Coventry on the Move and split to teach adults and children aged four-15 years.

Councillor Rachel Lancaster, Cabinet Member for Public Services, who attended a course at the Ricoh with her daughter, said: "People I spoke to said the indoor course was ideal. It's great for the family."

Courses for those who can already ride or want to improve their on road skills are available outdoors all year round. Outdoor beginners' courses resume at the end of March at Xcel, Moat House and Foleshill. Free cycle maintenance

courses also run at Canley and Foleshill fire stations. Courses can be booked online at www.coventry.gov.uk/cycling or by calling 024 7683 1184.

Starting in May, the popular British Cycling guided 'Sky Rides' around the city return. These will be for all abilities and varying length.

Indoor Cycle Training dates and venues are as follows:

MARCH

15 (9.45am-noon, 1-3pm) – **Woodlands Academy** (adults and children).

29 (9.45am-noon, 1-3.15pm) – **Woodlands Academy** (adults and children).

8 (12.45-3pm, 3.15-5.30pm) – **Coventry Sports Centre** (adults only).

22 (1-3.15pm, 3-5.30pm) – **Coventry Sports Centre** (adults only).

■ **Other cycle events** – See pages 20-21.



■ Cycle training at the Ricoh Arena are (from left) Nefe Onokpe, Councillor Maya Ali and Councillor Rachel Lancaster with daughter Meridith.



Crew on hand to drive home the safety message

A Coventry fire crew arrived at City College Coventry to cut a young driver and her passenger out of their car in a 'life like' demonstration of the consequences of a car accident.

Lynn Ritchie, City College Coventry, explained: "Young drivers are vulnerable on the roads as they build up the experience they need to anticipate and so avoid risks. The demonstration really brought home the consequences of, for example, careless driving or driving under the influence of alcohol."

"We'd much rather educate young people so they drive safely than deal with the consequences on the roads," explained Kevin Brewerton of West Midlands Fire Service.

Students also met paraplegic Sophie Morgan who spoke about the car accident that left her badly injured and the impact it has had on her life.

The students also took part in a virtual driving activity run by Drive IQ, which is designed to educate them on driving safety.

Keep up to speed on the half marathon latest

The Decathlon Coventry Half Marathon is fast approaching and local people are being encouraged to check out the route and roads affected.

This year's half marathon is on Sunday 23rd March. The new and improved route, now incorporates a full loop of Coventry's city centre which starts the 13.1 mile challenge.

Amy Budd, marketing manager at GO2, said: "We have revised the course with both the runner and residents in mind."

The event is open to runners of all abilities with official charity partners Stroke

Association and Zoë's Place Baby Hospice.

The 2014 Half Marathon will also feature a new event, the Schools' Challenge. Children and teachers from schools across Coventry have been completing a Half Marathon distance by running a mile a week over 12 weeks. Schools will be running the final mile of the stage during the half marathon.

Also new for 2014 is the Company Challenge, which allows colleagues to enter a team to complete the course together.

For more information and details on the route visit www.coventryhalf.com



■ Council leader Ann Lucas helps open the Community Hub with representatives from West Midlands Police, Whitefriars Housing, Coventry Cyrenians and other support providers.

Help at hand, thanks to local Hub

Coventry's first Community Hub is opening its doors to support vulnerable people in the city.

The Hillfields Community Hub, at Paul Stacey House, Bath Street, will give people a community space where they can go to access help and advice from a range of services. The scheme has been set up in partnership with West Midlands Police, Coventry City Council, Whitefriars Housing, Coventry Cyrenians and other support providers.

CLlr Jim O'Boyle, ward councillor for St Michael's Ward, said: "There is no doubt in my

'Whitefriars Housing has donated the office space at Paul Stacey House so we have a more joined-up approach to support the whole community...'

mind that there is a need for this facility in Hillfields. It is important we support the Hub to help turn people's lives around and change their behaviour which in turn can only be good for residents."

Funding of £3,000 was given by the Council and match funding from the police. Donations were

also made by IKEA, Whitefriars and its suppliers Dulux and Jewsons, as well as time given by City College students to decorate rooms.

Mick Rawson, chair of Whitefriars Housing, added: "Whitefriars Housing has donated the office space at Paul Stacey House so we have a more joined-up approach to support the whole community. We are delighted by the input from the partners."

The venue will be used by organisations to offer local residents a wide range of services from adult education and training to health advice.

Ambassadors in training to promote Coventry

Fifty newly recruited Coventry Ambassadors have been learning the finer points of supporting events in the city as positive and proud Coventry volunteers. The recruits are the second wave of Coventry



Ambassadors to have joined the award winning volunteer scheme. Coventry Ambassadors were originally signed up to be part of London 2012. Each of the new recruits will receive a brand

new uniform featuring the branding for new Coventry University social enterprise EnV, - managing the Coventry Ambassadors and funded by Coventry City Council.

Consultation on the Coventry Sports Strategy has now begun and runs for the next six weeks. People can take part in the consultation by visiting www.covsport.org.uk

Brickie Kevin's leading the way with new role

The Coventry and Warwickshire Construction Shared Apprenticeship Scheme is celebrating the success of one of its former apprentices.

Kevin McShane joined the scheme in 2011 after completing a number of the Council's courses for young people not in education or employment.

After completing a bricklaying course at City College, he joined the Shared Apprenticeship Scheme. After a period as a self-employed bricklayer Kevin was recently offered a permanent position as Trainee/Assistant Site Manager with Keepmoat. The partnership between BAM Construct UK, the Council and local colleges achieved Apprenticeship Scheme of the Year 2013 at the National Federation of Builders awards.

Clr Lynnette Kelly, Coventry City Council's Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment, said: "I'm incredibly pleased at Kevin's success. The scheme concentrates on small numbers to allow intensive support to apprentices and has been achieving great results for young people entering the construction industry."



■ Flying high: Kevin McShane with Clr Lynnette Kelly and site manager Andy Staien.

Doing our bit to help the young

In October 2011 the Council's apprentice strategy set out to boost the number of apprentices in the organisation by March 2014.

The Council currently has 88 people employed as apprentices compared to 37 prior to the strategy being launched.

Since the strategy launched in October 2011, 150 young people between 16 and 24 have started apprenticeships.

Clr Damian Gannon, Cabinet Member for Strategic Finance said that it was a chance to earn and learn with more than eight out of 10 people securing jobs at the completion of their apprenticeship.

He said: "Apprentices receive excellent support with job coaching and mentoring. We've been able to secure jobs for 85 per cent of apprentices and the majority of those are opportunities at the Council."

To find out find out about apprenticeships, visit www.coventry.gov.uk/apprenticeships, or e-mail E2E@coventry.gov.uk

COLLEGE OPEN EVENING



Wednesday 19th March 2014
5.00pm - 7.30pm

A CHANCE TO PLAN FOR YOUR FUTURE TODAY



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www.covcollege.ac.uk



TALKS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE FOLLOWING COURSE AREAS

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- Art & Design
- Business & Accounting
- Computing
- Construction
- Early Years & Children
- Engineering
- Enterprise & Entrepreneurship (Peter Jones Enterprise Academy)
- Fashion & Photography
- Foundation & Vocational Learning for Young People & Adults
- GCSE & Science
- Hair, Beauty & Nails
- Health & Social Care
- Media
- Motor Vehicle
- Music
- Performing Arts
- Sports & Public Services
- Travel & Tourism

WHAT'S ON OFFER?

- ▶ Tours of our excellent facilities
- ▶ The opportunity to speak to the teachers about course content
- ▶ A chance to speak to some of our current students
- ▶ Information on the support available to you while at college
- ▶ Time to apply and book your interview slot



City College Coventry

Swarrowell Street, Coventry CV1 5DG

Free Parking available from 4.30pm in the college car park which is situated at the rear of the college on Bell Street. Postcode for SAT NAVs CV1 5GL. No parking is available at the front of the college.

To register your interest in attending this event please visit www.covcollege.ac.uk

Eva talks business

A leading expert on the retail industry who has contributed to an independent review of the UK's high streets has been talking to councillors about the potential for Coventry city centre.

Eva Pascoe, head of retail futures for The Retail Practice – a multi-channel retail and technology consultancy in the UK and Europe – was among a team who put together the Grimsey Review, assessing the state of the country's town centres and their future prospects.

Cllr Tony Skipper, who chairs the Council's Scrutiny Board for Business, Economy and Enterprise, invited Eva to explain more about the review.

He said: "The Grimsey Review is a very important piece of work. We want to understand more about the city centre as a thriving community location and not just a commercial one. Online and out-of-town shopping is increasing significantly and how many shops a city centre can sustain is a big question for us all."



■ Retail guru Eva Pascoe (above left) spells out her vision for the future of Coventry, contained in the Grimsey Review, to Cllrs Lynnette Kelly and Tony Skipper, and David Cockcroft, assistant director, city centre and development services, and (right) Scrutiny committee members (rear, from left) Cllrs Joe Clifford, Colleen Fletcher, Richard Sandy, (front, from left) Tony Skipper and Steve Thomas.



Open to Scrutiny

The Council and other organisations from the police to health services are facing massive challenges, searching for ways to improve services with less resources. Here, Citivision looks at the role of the Council's Scrutiny Boards, which are tasked with holding these groups to account...

The role of Scrutiny is to shine the spotlight on services so that the public can get a much clearer picture of how services perform.

Cllr Colleen Fletcher, chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination, said: "The Council is responsible for around 700 services but when you include all of the other local agencies it's a big task to monitor and review how effective these services are.

"We are here to speak up for local people and ask how do these services contribute to improving the quality of life outside homes, schools and local shopping areas? It's also the role of Scrutiny boards to analyse and review services provided by the police, health services and other public sector bodies.

"For instance, we are in the process of reviewing the impacts of welfare reform on local people and what local organisations are doing to provide support; and how partners are working together to improve

Scrutiny FACTfile

The Council has a Scrutiny Co-ordination group and five Scrutiny boards each with its own chair. Each of the boards review and look into the way particular services are operating. Scrutiny Co-ordination is chaired by Cllr Colleen Fletcher (vice chair Cllr Joe Clifford), and is made up of Cllr Richard Sandy (Finance and Corporate Services), Cllr Faye Abbott (Education and Children's Services), Cllr Tony Skipper (Business, Economy and Enterprise), Cllr Tariq Khan (Public Services, Energy and Environment) and Cllr Steven Thomas (Health and Social Care).

community safety and reduce crime. We will also be assessing topics like progress on the £7m Cycle Coventry Project and local tourism."

She added: "I want to hear what local people would like to see on the Scrutiny agenda next year. Is there a burning issue that they would like us to investigate further? We want to be open and honest and ensure that the public are at the forefront of the reviews that we undertake."

To get in touch, visit www.coventry.gov.uk/scrutiny, or e-mail scrutiny@coventry.gov.uk

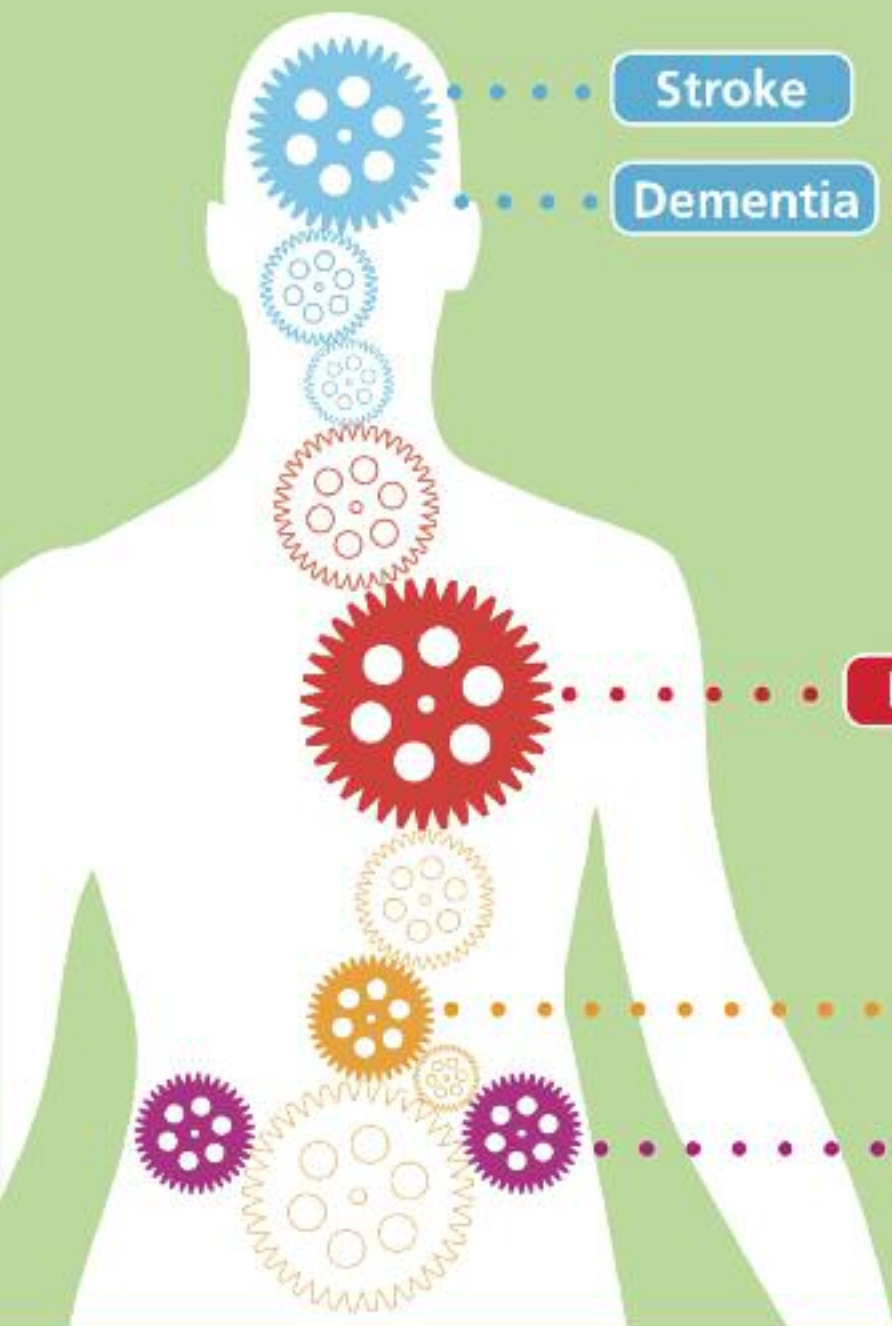
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Henley College Coventry needs homes for international students

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 Text: home to 88020* Email: sbrawn@henley-cov.ac.uk
*Text charges at your provider's rate

Henley College Coventry
 Henley Road, Bell Green, Coventry, CV2 1ED
www.henley-cov.ac.uk



NHS

Stroke

Dementia

Heart disease

Diabetes

Kidney disease

Aged 40-74? Contact your GP for a free NHS Health Check

For more information visit
www.coventry.gov.uk/nhshealthcheck



Council backs the cartoon heroes battling to save city children from obesity

The Council has stepped up its plans to tackle childhood obesity with the re-introduction of the popular Food Dudes healthy eating programmes which is being rolled out to 15,000 children at 42 schools across the city. The programmes were first launched in Coventry three years ago and proved to be extremely

effective, with lunchtime consumption of fruit increasing by 116 per cent, and of vegetables by 69 per cent.

The schools taking part in the first phase of the relaunch are Frederick Bird, St Patricks, Holbrook, Broadheath, Charter, Whitley Abbey, Alder Moor Farm, Castlewood and

St Mary and St Benedict. The remaining schools will roll out the programme through the remainder of the year. Councillor Alison Gingell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services, Coventry City Council, said: "Food Dudes is a fantastic initiative to get children actively tasting and eating more fruit

and veg."

The programmes, run by social enterprise Food Dudes Health, uses rewards and storytelling imagery to engage with the children. The stories are based on four cartoon heroes battling characters who are out to deprive the world's children of healthy food.

Backing the fight to end female mutilation

'Let's stamp out this barbarism'

A leading Coventry councillor has backed a national campaign calling on the government to help end female genital mutilation in Britain by asking head teachers to train and inform staff and parents about the horrors of the practice.

Last December a Council debate condemning the practice, led by Cabinet Member for Community Services Cllr Alison Gingell, was unanimously supported by all councillors. Now Cllr Gingell is calling on better enforcement of the law against people carrying out female genital mutilation procedures and wider awareness of the issue.

She said: "It beggars belief in this day and age that this practice continues, and happens in this country. Sometimes it's parents carrying out the procedures on their own daughters and sometimes they appoint practitioners to do it. It's carried out without anaesthetic, it causes real and lasting damage physically and psychologically and – unbelievably – so far there have been no prosecutions in this country although it's illegal."

Cllr Gingell is backing a call for health professionals to begin recording details of girls and women who are victims of the procedure on medical records and for better enforcement of the law. She also wants to work with communities affected by the issue in the city.

"I'm convinced there's more that the authorities can – and should – be doing to deal with this terrible practice. In Coventry we've got a good track record of

working together with communities to tackle big issues, so I'd like us to lead the way across the country by taking some clear and decisive action on this," she added.

Fadel Takroui, chairman of the British Arab Federation, said "It's really important that key organisations like the Council speak out against this barbaric practice, and we're delighted that Coventry is taking a lead."

Cllr Gingell will be leading work through the city's Health and Wellbeing Board, which



■ Fadel Takroui and Cllr Gingell spearhead the campaign against FGM.

brings together key representatives from across the NHS, public health and social care and councillors to raise awareness of the issue. It also campaigns for its eradication and to help educate and support young girls in the city who are being forced to undergo the procedure.

She has also signed the petition which calls on the education secretary to write to the leaders of all primary and secondary schools, urging them to flag up the dangers of FGM. The petition is available at www.change.org/petitions/educationgovuk-tell-schools-to-teach-risks-of-female-genital-mutilation-before-the-summer-endfgm



■ Cllr Kamran Caan, deputy cabinet member for health and adult services, helps promote the health check campaign in Coventry's Broadgate.

Don't miss out on your free NHS health check

Coventry residents aged between 40 and 74 years who have not had a health check in the last five years, are being encouraged by the Council to get on board of the health bus and get a free check-up. The free NHS Health Check assesses an individual's risk of developing conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, stroke and some forms of dementia. The check only takes about 30mins and it's just a matter of having a few simple measurements taken such as your height, weight, blood pressure and cholesterol, and answering some questions about your family history and lifestyle choices. Kam Johal, practice nurse at Broad Street Surgery, said: "We have had many patients taking up the free NHS checks at our clinic. They have been quite happy to have their weight and height measured as well as their blood pressure and general blood test." The mobile health unit will be at a number of venues across the city from 9am to 4pm. Visit www.coventry.gov.uk/nhshealthcheck for more information.

Drive to beat in-car smoking

Senior Coventry councillors have backed local MPs in taking steps to ban smoking in cars when children and young people are passengers.

Cllr Joe Clifford, chair of the Coventry Smokefree Alliance, and Cllr Alison Gingell, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Services, wrote to the three Coventry MPs urging them to sign up to the proposal. Now the House of Commons is supporting legislation.

Research shows that smoking in a car can create levels of pollution that far exceed safe limits. Cllr Clifford said: "The evidence is that thousands of young car passengers are exposed to harmful toxins every day."

NHS research suggests that more than 430,000 children aged 11-15 are exposed to second-hand smoke in the family car at least once a week.

Christine's prize



Council employee Christine Eade (**above centre**) has been awarded one of the UK's most prestigious Mental Health Services honours. Christine, who manages The Pod on Lamb Street in the city centre, won the National Mental Health Leader Award at the National Positive Practice Awards in Mental Health. The Pod is a Council resource for people with severe and enduring mental ill health.

Getting set for those lighter nights

Here are some of the things you can enjoy this spring in and around Coventry

MARCH

27 & 28 – Play Days, the Art Gallery & Museum (10.30-11.30am & 1-2pm, free). Play Days gives children aged 1-3 an opportunity to explore and investigate through sensory play. Drop in, no booking required.

APRIL

12 (until 27) – The Natural World, the Art Gallery & Museum (10.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-3.30pm, free). Throughout the Easter holidays, the museum and gallery is offering a host of workshops using art and science to explore natural history. Hands-on workshops encourage families to engage with the natural world. Workshop details vary – visit www.theherbert.org nearer the time.

12 – Painting Workshop with artist Michelle Stamer, the Heron's Cafe, Coombe Country Park (11am-2pm). Materials provided. Suitable for all abilities and all ages. Costs £30. Contact Michelle on 07749296061 to book a place.

14-21 – Easter Bunny Trail, Coombe Country Park (10am-4pm). Suitable for children. Costs £1 per sheet. Prizes for completed trails in the Visitor Centre. No booking required

16 – Pet Bug Rocks, Coombe Country Park (10-10.45am, 11-11.45am and 12-12.45pm). Families £2.50pp per session. Get up close to real life mini-beasts and paint your own pet bug rock.

23 – Survival Skills with Berty the Bushcrafter, Coombe Country Park (10am-12pm). **Shelter Building** in the woods (1pm-3pm), and **Firelighting**. Both suitable for families (aged 6+). £2.50pp or £4 for both sessions.

24 – Various Mystery Trails with the Spies in Disguise! Coombe Park (10am-12pm). Guy Fawkes is back and has hidden gunpowder in the park. Help the team on the trail (1-3pm). For families (not suitable for

Ricoh hosts the UK's top gaming festival



■ The UK's biggest gaming festival, **Insomnia51** (above), is coming to Coventry's Ricoh Arena on April 18-21. **Insomnia** is a culmination of all of the best bits of videogaming, including prize-based competitive gaming tournaments. Founded in 1999, the **Insomnia Gaming Festival** has been a place for gamers of all backgrounds to congregate, socialise, discover new things, and ultimately just play. For tickets, visit www.insomniagamingfestival.com or call +44 (0)845 868 1337. Prices range from £14 to £97.

pushchairs or small children) £2.50pp per session or £4 for both sessions.

25 – Various Henrietta and the Hungry Herons, Coombe Country Park (10am-12pm). Find out where the herons live, using the telescopes and binoculars on hand. Henrietta Heron's turn (1pm-3pm). Go pond dipping for fresh water mini-beasts for the herons to snack on. For families. £2.50pp per session or £4 for both sessions. Under twos free if accompanied by a paying adult.

26 – Dawn Chorus Walk, Coombe Country Park (5.30am-8am). Enjoy the early morning sights and sounds of birds at Coombe, followed by a BBQ breakfast. All ages. £5pp.

MAY

8 – Victorian Garden Tour and Cream Tea, Coombe Country Park (1.30-4pm). Adults £14. Enjoy a guided walk through the historic gardens and find out about plans to bring it back to its Victorian glory. Followed by cream tea at Coombe Abbey hotel.

17 – Pre-Season Fishery Tour, Coombe Country Park (11am-12.30pm). Tour of Coombe Pool – a must for new anglers. Free and suitable for everyone. Booking essential.

8 & 9 – Early Years Play Days, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum (10.30-11.30am & 1-2pm, free). See details for March 27 & 28 above.

16 (until August 31) – Roman Empire: Power & People, a British Museum Touring exhibition, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum. Highlights include sculpture from the villas of the Emperors Tiberius and Hadrian, coins from the famous Hoxne treasure, beautiful jewellery and even near-perfectly preserved children's clothing from Roman Egypt. For a full list of events linked to this exhibition, go to www.theherbert.org

26-31 – Romans on the Rampage, the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum (10.30am-12.30pm & 1.30-3.30pm). To celebrate the opening of the **Roman Empire: Power and People** exhibition, half term will be filled with workshops inspired

by the Roman army since the time of Caesar. Visit www.theherbert.org

29 – Eric Explores Butterflies and More, Coombe Country Park (10am-12pm). Explore the wildflower meadow and make nectar feeders. **Art in the Park** (1-3pm). Create some larger than life environmental art. For families. £2.50pp per session or £4 for both sessions. Under 2s free if accompanied by a paying adult.

30 – Natural Crafts in the Park with Arty Marty, Coombe Country Park (10-10.45am, 11-11.45am). Make your own May crown from hazel and willow and decorate with flowers. **Nature Plaques** (1-1.45pm, 2-2.45pm). Make and decorate your own air-dried clay tile. Families. £2.50pp per session or £4 for two. Under 2s free if accompanied by a paying adult.

Date tbc – Bluebell Walk, Coombe Country Park. Explore the woodland on a guided walk as it is carpeted with bluebells in May. The date of the walk at the end of April. E-mail coombe.countrypark@coventry.gov.uk for details.

If you've an event you'd like listed, contact *Citivism*, Room 27, The Council House, Earl Street, Coventry CV1 5RR or e-mail communications@coventry.gov.uk

NOTICEBOARD

■ **Gear up for cycling:** A series of free guided bike rides organised by Cycle Coventry and British Cycling is returning to Coventry. Rides for all abilities, from family to the more challenging, are being put on every Sunday from May 4 to October 19, and on Wednesday evenings from May 21 to July 30. Rides can be booked at www.goskyride.com/coventry from April. Sky Rides in the months ahead are as follows:

MAY

- 4 (2pm) – Kenilworth Greenway (Xcel),** steady.
- 11 (10am) – Coombe Abbey and Countryside,** steady.
- 18 (2pm) – Coventry Canal (Moat House),** steady.
- 21 (6pm) – Trains, Planes & Automobiles (P&R South),** steady.
- 25 (10am) – Longford Park,** easy.
- 28 (6pm) – Coventry Countryside (Alan Higgs),** challenging.

JUNE

- 1 (2pm) – Jubilee to Jodhpurs (Joseph Cash),** steady.
- 4 (6pm) Centre of England (P&R South),** challenging.
- 8 (10am) – War Memorial Park,** easy.
- 11 (6pm) – Coventry Canal (Moat House),** steady.
- 15 (9am) – Sent from Coventry (Transport Museum),** challenging.
- 18 (6pm) – Longford Park,** easy.
- 22 (10am) – Coombe Abbey and Countryside,** steady.
- 25 (6pm) – Kenilworth Greenway (Xcel),** steady.
- 29 (9am) – Coventry Countryside (Alan Higgs),** challenging.

■ **Poetry on your doorstep:** Come and celebrate all forms of poetry this spring with the following events:

MARCH

- 22 (also April 12) – Pop up poetry events,** Central Library and Coventry City Centre indoor market (10am-noon). Have a poem written specially for you! Meet pop-up poets Fergus McGonigal and Emma Purshouse who will be creating poems on the spot.
- 25 – Poetry workshop,** Bell Green Library (5.30-6.30pm). Meet Canal Poet Laureate Jo Bell who will be helping budding poets get the most out of their writing.

APRIL

- 5 (2-3pm) – Performance poetry,** Arena Park Library. Meet Emma Purshouse, Spoz and Jane Seabourne who will be performing their own poems based on the theme home-made, home-grown.

* All events are supported by Poetry on Loan which promotes contemporary poetry through public libraries in the West Midlands.



■ Mr Karim (front), whose daughter will benefit from the warmer homes scheme, outside his property with site manager Marcel Alford (left) and Cllr Abdul Khan.

Warmer homes drive for disabled people

The Council is set to make sure that disabled people in the city have warmer homes after securing a £597k government grant.

The energy saving measures, being carried out to a number of homes with a disabled resident, will include loft, external and cavity wall insulation, draught-proofing and the replacement of old or inefficient boilers. After the work has been done, the average estimated household savings will be £330 a year, with 13 households set to save over £500 a year. The energy saving measures were offered to 292 households that had previously accessed a Disabled Facility Grant, these grants help households to adapt their homes to better care for disabled family members. More than 107 expressed interest and 78 from all areas of the city were approved for improvements.

Councillor Abdul Khan, the Council's Cabinet Member for Energy and Environment, said the value of the programme should not be underestimated, with many people dependent on constant daily warmth to maintain their health. He added: "Low incomes and rising fuel prices are real and significant challenges so this package of support will make a real difference."

Eye in the sky focuses on household heat loss

Earlier this winter the Council worked with Blue Sky International to produce a heat map of the city using an aircraft fitted with a thermal camera. The survey will show homes that are leaking heat through their roofs and allow advice and support on energy efficiency and home insulation to be planned. An interactive map will also be produced to allow residents to enter their postcode and check how well insulated their roof is and whether it would benefit from further insulation – look out for details on the Council's website in March.

The Council has taken on Kier Services to manage the project and the work will be carried out by Rockwarm, a Nuneaton based firm. Rockwarm are members of the Renewable Energy Technology Alliance, and twenty nine of their employees will be working on the project. With all of them living locally, this will give a boost to the region's economy.

archive focus

New life for landmark

The restoration of the 19th century Grade II* listed Drapers Hall has been given the green light.

The newly formed Drapers Hall Trust is leading an exciting plan to restore Drapers Hall back to its former glory as a musical hub for the city and is raising funds for the project.

When restored, the hall will be the base for teaching the history of the guilds, as well as

being a performance venue and providing an archive of popular sheet music. The building has not had a permanent use for 20 years.

The Alan Edward Higgs Charity and Coventry University set up The Drapers Hall Trust to oversee project development. The hall's restoration is reliant upon the Council giving Drapers Hall to the Trust on a long-term lease at no cost to enable fundraising and in order for it to be refurbished and restored to make it accessible for people all over the city.

I BABLAKE

Cllrs Galliers and Kershaw hold regular surgeries: Coronation Club, Keresley Rd 12 noon -1.00pm on the first Saturday of the month. Allesley Parish Church Hall, 5-6pm on the second Monday of the month or contact them directly as below:
Cllr David Galliers: 07973 780871 e-mail david.galliers@coventry.gov.uk twitter @davidgalliers www.facebook.com/AllesleyCoundonAndKeresley www.bablakelabour.com
Cllr David Kershaw CBE: 024 7671 1107 or 07850 664576 or e-mail david.kershaw@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Andrew Williams: Call 024 7683 1101 or e-mail andrew.williams@coventry.gov.uk

I BINLEY & WILLENHALL

Cllr Dave Chater: For an appointment or home visit call 024 7667 2619 or 07759 062733 or e-mail dave.chater@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Ram P Lakha OBE: For a home visit or appointment call 024 7683 1039 or e-mail ram.lakha@btinternet.com or ram.lakha@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr John Mutton: Call 024 7683 1039 for an appointment or advice.

I CHEYLESMORE

Cllrs Foster and Noonan hold regular surgeries: Cheylesmore Community Centre 6.30-8pm on last Wednesday of each month (except December) or contact them directly as below:
Cllr Kevin Foster: Call 024 7683 1101 (day) or e-mail kevin.foster@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Hazel Noonan (Deputy Lord Mayor): Call 024 7683 3048 (day) or 024 7650 5109 (evenings) or e-mail hazel.noonan@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Harjinder Singh Sehmi: Last Friday of the month at Cheylesmore Social Club, Quinton Park, 6-7pm or call for an appointment on 07507 687268 or 07956 491443 or e-mail harjinder.singhsehmi@coventry.gov.uk

I EARLSDON

Cllr Allan Andrews: Happy to help where I can. Will visit at home or the Council House. Please call for an appointment on 024 7683 1276 or 07534 972383 or e-mail allan.andrews@coventry.gov.uk or follow on twitter @allanandrews
Cllr Michael Hammon: Call 024 7644 8585 for an appointment or e-mail michael.hammon@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Ken Taylor OBE: Call 024 7667 3717 for an appointment.

I FOLESHILL

Cllr Tariq Khan: For an appointment call 024 7683 1039 or 07415 534267 or e-mail tariq.khan@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Abdul Salam Khan: Call 024 7683 1030 (day) or 07903 847160 or e-mail abdul.khan@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Malkiat Auluck: Second Tuesday of the month 6.30-7.30pm at Foleshill Community Centre, Foleshill Rd or call 024 7663 7965 for an appointment.

I HENLEY

Cllr Lynnette Kelly: Call 024 7683 1032 or e-mail lynnette.kelly@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Kevin Maton: Call 07941 827229 or e-mail kevin.maton@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Ed Ruane: Call 07817 218137 or e-mail ed.ruane@coventry.gov.uk.

I HOLBROOK

Cllr Joe Clifford: Every Wednesday, 6.30-7.30pm at Holbrook Community Care Assoc, Holbrooks Lane. Call 024 7646 5315 or e-mail joseph.clifford@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Rachel Lancaster: Call 024 7636 0021, 024 7683 1002, or e-mail rachel.lancaster@coventry.gov.uk for an appointment.

Cllr Ann Lucas: Call 024 7683 1103 for an appointment or e-mail ann.lucas@coventry.gov.uk. Surgery on first Monday of each month 9.30-10.30am at Holbrook Health Centre, Wheelwright Lane.

I LONGFORD

Cllr Linda Bigham: First Friday of every month 3.30-4.30pm at Longford Primary Care Centre, Longford Rd, and 5.30-6.30pm at Scout Headquarters, Aldermans Green Rd. Last Friday of every month 6-7pm at St Thomas' Parish Church Hall, Longford Rd. Please call 024 7636 0898 to make a surgery appointment.
Cllr George Duggins: Second Saturday of every month 12-1pm at Bell Green Community Centre, Old Church Rd and 1.15-2pm at Royal Hotel, Old Church Rd. Second Sunday of every month 11.30am-1pm at Bell Green Club, Roseberry Ave or call 024 7683 1003 (day) or e-mail george.duggins@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Lindsay Harvard: First Saturday of every month 10.45-11.45am at Scout Hut, Aldermans Green Rd and 11.45am-12.45pm at Bell Green Community Centre, Old Church Rd. First Sunday of every month 11am-noon at the Church Hall, St Thomas' Parish Church, Longford Rd, and noon-1pm at Bell Green Club, Roseberry Ave. Call 024 7667 5717, or e-mail lindsay.harvard@coventry.gov.uk

I LOWER STOKE

Cllr John McNicholas: If you have a problem, need help or advice. I can visit you in your home and be contacted on 024 7683 1039 (day), 024 7650 4037 (evenings) or e-mail john.mcnicholas@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Phil Townshend: Call 024 7683 1034 (day) for details of surgeries or e-mail philip.townshend@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Catherine Miks: Call 024 7683 1039 or 07415 534274 or e-mail catherine.miks@coventry.gov.uk

I RADFORD

Cllr Mal Mutton: Call 024 7630 4497 or 024 7683 1039 for an appointment or e-mail mal.mutton@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Keiran Mulhall: Every Tuesday at Radford Social Club, 226, Radford Rd, CV6 3BQ from 6.30-7.30pm. Also Radford Social Club on the first Sunday of the month 11.30am-12.30pm. Or call 024 7683 1039 for an appointment.
Cllr Tony Skipper: Available to see Radford residents at Coventry Coachmakers' Club, 72 Radford Rd, CV1 4BY. To make an appointment or to leave a message, call 024 7683 1039.

I ST MICHAEL'S

Cllr David Welsh: First Saturday of each month, 12-1pm at the Redeemed Christian Church of God (former Howitzer Club), Albert St. Third Friday of each month, 3-4pm at the Regeneration Office, 121-124 Far Gosford Street. Call 07956 307 437 or e-mail david.welsh@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Naeem Akhtar: Surgeries every first Tuesday of the month, 5-6pm at Hillfields Youth Centre, Yardley St. For an appointment call 07747 003141 or e-mail naeem.akhtar@coventry.gov.uk.
Cllr Jim O'Boyle: Second Saturday of each month, 12-1pm at Zeenat Restaurant, Cambridge St, Hillfields, fourth Saturday of month, noon at Transport House, Short St. Call 024 7669 4873 or 024 7683 1039, or e-mail jim.o'boyle@coventry.gov.uk

I SHERBOURNE

Cllr Seamus Walsh: Call 07956 546983 or 024 7683 1039 (day), or e-mail seamus.walsh@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Alison Gingell: For an appointment call 024 7683 1002 or e-mail alison.gingell@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Damian Gannon: For an appointment call 07725 536259 or e-mail damian.gannon@coventry.gov.uk

I UPPER STOKE

Cllr Kamran Caan: For an appointment or home visit, call or text 07730 111101, or e-mail kamran.caan@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Sucha Bains: Barras Green Social Club, Coventry St, between 12 noon-12.45pm every Saturday or call 024 7645 9484.
Cllr Colleen Fletcher: For an appointment text 07939 111992, (will be happy to call you back) or call 024 7683 1039 or e-mail colleen.fletcher@coventry.gov.uk

I WAINBODY

Cllr John Blundell: Call 024 7683 1276 (weekdays) or 024 7641 9794 (evenings and weekends) or e-mail john.blundell@coventry.gov.uk for an appointment; will gladly visit.
Cllr Gary Crookes (Lord Mayor): For an appointment call 024 7683 3048 (day) or 024 7646 1777 (after 6pm) or e-mail gary.crookes@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Tim Sawdon: Call 024 7683 1101 (day) or 024 7641 5771 (after 6pm) or e-mail tim.sawdon@coventry.gov.uk

I WESTWOOD

Cllr Maya Ali: Please call 07949 653 656 or e-mail maya.ali@coventry.gov.uk and Cllr Ali will endeavour to contact you.
Cllr David Skinner: Call 024 7683 1101 (day) or 024 7646 8106 (out of hours) or e-mail david.skinner@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Richard Sandy: For an appointment call 024 7683 1039 or e-mail richard.sandy@coventry.gov.uk

I WHOBERLEY

Cllr Dan Howells: If you require help or advice I can visit you in your home or at a time and place convenient to you. To arrange an appointment call 07540 083974 or e-mail dan.howells@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Jayne Innes: Surgeries every fourth Saturday of the month except December, July and August from 12 noon at Allesley Park Library. Also you can ring 02476 405 132 or email jayne.innes@coventry.gov.uk for an appointment or home visit outside these times.
Cllr Bally Singh: Regular Surgeries are held every third Saturday of the month 10am-noon at St Mary Magdeline Centre, Sir Thomas White Rd. Also morning chat every first Friday of the month 8.30-9am at Stoke Bakery, Allesley Park. Call 07779 256898 for an appointment, or e-mail bally.singh@coventry.gov.uk

I WOODLANDS

Cllrs Hetherton and Thomas hold regular surgeries on the fourth Friday of each month at Tile Hill Library, Jardine Cres from 5-7pm
Cllr Patricia Hetherton: Please call 07985 811881 for an appointment or e-mail patricia.hetherton@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Steven Thomas: For an appointment call my residents' hotline 07535 423796 or email steven.thomas@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Julia Lepoidevin: For an appointment, call 024 7683 1276 (day), 07944 458 751 or e-mail julia.lepoidevin@coventry.gov.uk

I WYKEN

Cllrs Thay, Abbott and Sweet hold surgeries every third Friday of the month, 6.30-7.30pm at Wyken Working Men's Club, Ansty Rd, Wyken.
Cllr Robert Thay: For an appointment call 07875 031851 or email robert.thay@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Faye Abbott: For an appointment call 07944 996294 or e-mail faye.abbott@coventry.gov.uk
Cllr Hazel Sweet: For an appointment or home visit call 024 7661 6273 or e-mail hazel.sweet@coventry.gov.uk

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Cllr Philip Townshend, Deputy Leader, Community Safety and Equalities
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 Call 024 7622 6707
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 Call 024 7655 3159
 e-mail eleanor.connolly@parliament.uk
Geoffrey Robinson MP
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 Call 024 7625 7870
 e-mail robinsong@parliament.uk

European MPs

West Midlands Region

CONSERVATIVE - Malcolm Harbour, Philip Bradbourn, 285 Kenilworth Road, Balsall Common, Coventry, CV7 7EL. Call 01676 530621 or 01676 530297
LABOUR - Michael Cashman, Terry Duffy House, Thomas Street, West Bromwich B70 6NT Call 0121 569 1923
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS - Phil Bennion, Haunton Manor Farm, Haunton, Tamworth M79 9HN
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