

# Citivism

News, features and updates about what's happening in the city

Winter 2023



A personal message from Cllr George Duggins, Leader, Coventry City Council.

## Protecting services

You'll have seen media reports about councils across the country facing major financial challenges.

Although not as bad as many, Coventry has its own challenges and we are joining an ever-increasing number of councils in calling on the government to reform how all local authorities are funded.

We outline our concerns in this issue, but the facts are that nearly every council of all political colours are now struggling and, even though we are a well-run local authority, without change we are going to have to look at where, and how, further savings can be made across our services.

Elsewhere in this edition, you can find out more about our plans to set up a strategic energy partnership. This will help us to achieve a whole range of projects to address climate change, and will mean potential for job creation and support for households with things like retrofitting to make homes more energy-efficient and to save people money on energy bills.

We also explain our plans for a new home for Woodfield School, on the Woodlands Academy site, our improvements to Children's Services, as well as how our Adult Social Care services help people live more healthy and independent lives.

There are other updates and plans for Christmas inside, and I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a happy festive season and New Year.

## Big wheel and Christmas market coming to Broadgate



Many other magical festive events will be happening throughout Coventry



Explore Coventry this Christmas  
[www.visitcoventry.co.uk/christmas](http://www.visitcoventry.co.uk/christmas)  
 Coventry City Council | Coventry | Visit Coventry

We're unwrapping the ultimate gift this Christmas – a glistening big wheel and festive market stalls selling delicious food, delightful drinks and one-of-a-kind gifts in the heart of our city.

The big wheel and market are set to open at **11am** on **Saturday 18 November** and will be in place until **Sunday 7 January**.

They will be open every day except **Christmas Day** from **11am – 10pm**.

Cllr Abdul Salam Khan, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Events, said: *"I am thrilled that we will be bringing a magical Christmas offer to our city centre this winter at no cost to the Council."*

Late night shopping starts in November and you can park for free at council run, city centre car parks, if you enter after **3pm** on **29 November, 6 and 13 December** and **every night from 18 to 22 December**. Find out more at [www.coventry.gov.uk/christmasparking](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/christmasparking)

Coventry is a winter wonderland filled with activities and events that cater to all ages and interests. Find out more at [www.visitcoventry.co.uk/christmas](http://www.visitcoventry.co.uk/christmas)

## Concerned about someone sleeping rough?

**You can help someone sleeping rough get the support they need or even seek help for yourself from local services by making an alert through StreetLink.**

StreetLink is a website that enables you to submit an alert about someone sleeping rough to Coventry City Council and its Rough Sleeper Outreach Team.

It helps the rough sleepers team to locate and provide people with the support they need.

This includes anyone who is sleeping outside, preparing to bed down, or sleeping somewhere not designed for habitation. Individuals sleeping rough can also submit an alert to get help for themselves.

Cllr David Welsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, said:

*"The Council's Rough Sleeper Outreach Team works with rough sleepers regularly, encouraging them to make use of the emergency accommodation available. "But it is also important for local people to report when they see someone they are concerned about and StreetLink is the ideal way to do this."*

Visit: [thestreetlink.org.uk](http://thestreetlink.org.uk)



## Worried about the cost of living?

Don't suffer alone. We're here to help you.

Visit: [www.coventry.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/costofliving)

or call **08085 834 333** #OneCoventryTogether



## Why local authorities are facing tough spending decisions

A councillor responsible for finance is calling for urgent reform in the way local authorities are funded.



CLlR Richard Brown, Cabinet Member for Finance, argues that without change, more and more councils will increasingly struggle to set a balanced budget and will face being issued with a 114 notice – where spending is severely restricted.

It will also mean councils, including Coventry, will face difficult decisions on where

and how savings can be made across so many vital services to balance the books in future.

Coventry's case is no different to most other local authorities. Since 2010 the Council has lost more than £100m in core funding it receives every year. However, in 2010 it spent 40 per cent of its entire budget on social care and homelessness, but today that has risen to more than 70 per cent.

There is also clear evidence that shows that Coventry City Council has been, and continues to be, underfunded. The city receives one of the lowest funding levels per head of the population in the country at £821, way below the national England average of £910. Additional funding of £17m a year would bring us up to the average national position.

CLlR Brown said:

*“As we continue to cope with the aftermath of the pandemic and everything that meant for our services and residents, we are also struggling with the cost of living rises, increased demand for adults’ and children’s social care, the need to find extra housing and more, yet, we are expected to stay within our budgets and still provide the services our residents need and deserve.*

*“This year, despite doing all we can to reduce spend, Coventry faces in-year pressures of around £12m,*

*rising to a deficit of over £30m for the next financial year.*

*“We’ll be consulting on our budget for 2024/25 in December and we are going to have to identify a whole range of savings across services that as a Council we would always wish to protect. In recent years we have always balanced our budget through a mix of prudent investments, innovation and robust management; we have defied the odds and balanced figures, but sadly, even for a well-run authority like ours, that is no longer possible.”*

The Council has also produced some frequently asked questions about the financial situation. They include addressing myths such as wasting Council Tax payers’ money on things such as cycle lanes, when this is external funding that cannot be spent on anything apart from what it was awarded for.

For more information, visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/financeFAQs](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/financeFAQs). Details of the Council 2024/25 budget consultation will be available from 14 December.



## Free home water supply pipe upgrades

Severn Trent is upgrading Coventry homes that have lead or leaking pipes with new plastic water supply pipes – at no cost to the customer.

It is the homeowner's or landlord's responsibility to maintain and could normally cost up to £3,000 to replace.

For details scan the QR code to apply today or visit [www.stwater.co.uk/greenrecovery](http://www.stwater.co.uk/greenrecovery)



## Have you registered to vote?



Local elections will be taking place next year. Are you ready to have your say?

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 they won't be able to have their say about what goes on in our city.

Registering can also benefit you in ways beyond just voting. For example, it can help you in any situation where you get a credit check such as applying

for a mortgage, buying a car or even getting a phone contract.

It's quick, simple and easy to register. Just visit [www.gov.uk/registerstovote](http://www.gov.uk/registerstovote)

Don't forget! If you want to vote in person at a polling station at next year's elections, you'll need to take an accepted form of photographic ID. Accepted ID includes a form of photographic UK Driving Licence, a UK Passport or a Voter Authority Certificate.

To find out more, including the different ways to vote and types of ID accepted, please visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/elections](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/elections) or contact our Elections Team by emailing [electoral.services@coventry.gov.uk](mailto:electoral.services@coventry.gov.uk) or by calling them on 024 7683 3034.

## New hotel to drive city's regeneration plans

Hotel Indigo will soon open its doors next to the railway station, and working with Coventry Job Shop it is helping local people find work opportunities at the venue.

The hotel is part of a wider Friargate regeneration project that is set to transform the area of the city into a bustling hub of activity.

Developers Bowmer and Kirkland have broken ground on the project, creating 42 full-time jobs and 21 part-time roles managed by Castlebridge Hospitality.

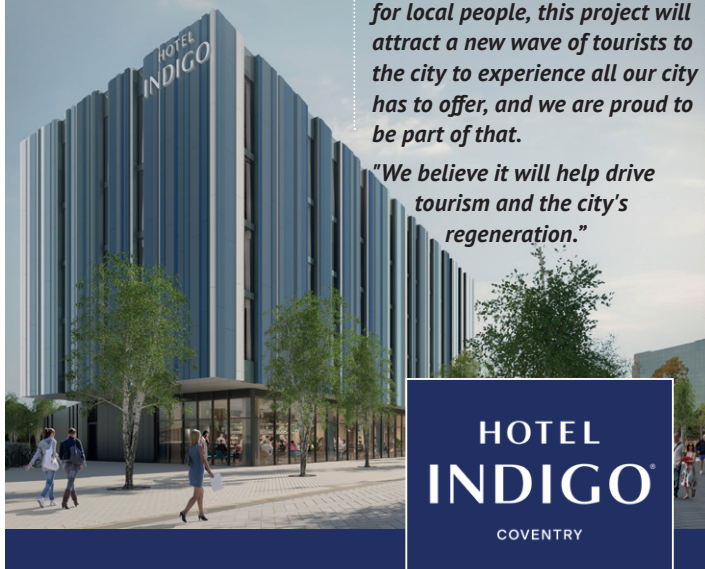
Michael Lyons, General Manager, at Hotel Indigo, said:

*"We are delighted to be recruiting local Coventry people to work with us in our beautiful new hotel and bring our neighbourhood story to life".*

Councillor Jim O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, said:

*"As well as creating new jobs for local people, this project will attract a new wave of tourists to the city to experience all our city has to offer, and we are proud to be part of that."*

*"We believe it will help drive tourism and the city's regeneration."*





## New single site for Woodfield School

Construction work is set to start on the former Woodlands Academy school site on Broad Lane.

The site will be the new home to Woodfield School, providing specialist education facilities in one location for children aged 5-16, with special educational needs and disabilities.

Woodfield School is currently operating from two different sites. The refurbished buildings will provide a new home for both the primary and secondary phases as well as providing some much-needed additional places.

CLLr Dr Kindy Sandhu, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, said:

*"When the Woodlands Academy site was returned to the Council, we saw it as*

*an opportunity to respond to parents' wishes and invest in a new single site for Woodfield School, which currently operates on two split sites.*

*"Moving to one new site will provide more efficient and improved facilities with purpose-built designed buildings providing greatly improved facilities for staff and pupils.*

*"Replacing old school buildings with modern, energy-efficient facilities will also help us to reduce our carbon footprint."*

The aim is for the new development to open by September 2025.

## Job Shop move to West Orchards

Staff at Coventry City Council's Job Shop held a celebratory job fair recently to mark their 10-year anniversary operating from the Bull Yard.



The Job Shop first opened in Hertford Street in March 2012 as part of Coventry City Council's Jobs Strategy to help local people find work and after proving a huge success it found the need to move to bigger premises in Bull Yard in 2013. Since that time, more than 53,000 Coventry residents have registered and the team

has supported over 12,500 people into employment.

As part of the City Centre South developments, the Job Shop will be relocating to a new unit in West Orchards. This move is being funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) in agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority.

## Food Hub help

**Coventry Food Network has 15 Social Supermarkets, run by staff and volunteers, that provide support to local residents who find themselves in difficult or challenging circumstances.**

Social Supermarkets, also known as Grub Hubs or Food Hubs, offer discounted food parcels, typically £25 worth of food for a cost of a £5 membership per week. They all have some criteria to ensure they are helping those who need it most.

Your nearest Social Supermarket can be found at [coventry.gov.uk/costofliving](http://coventry.gov.uk/costofliving)



## Activities for the school holidays

**Coventry Holiday Activities Food Programme will return from 23 December to 5 January. It's a citywide partnership programme that gives young people the chance to take part in great free activities in the school holidays while also getting a meal.**

Over 4,000 children, young people and families took part this summer in different activities including free trips, free entry to The Wave, ice-skating, sports, outdoor activities, arts, DJ-ing and many other projects.

One of the Council's key priorities is to make the programme more inclusive, and about a third of our eligible children have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

The Council has also had funding towards the scheme from its partners at Coventry

Building Society. The national programme is funded by the Department for Education. Visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/HAF](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/HAF) to find out more and to see if you are eligible – don't miss out!

CLLr Dr Kindy Sandhu, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, said:

*"Holidays should be a time to try out new things and discover new skills, so programmes like this can help reduce the inequality in access to summer activities, plus help address the issue of people going hungry over the holiday season."*

## Double launch event to celebrate work to support children, young people and families



**Coventry City Council and partners across the city have joined forces to launch the new Early Help Strategy and its associated programmes that will change the way children, young people and families are cared for and supported.**

The Coventry Early Help Strategy 2023-25, the Family Hub and Start for Life programme are the latest steps in the Council's aim to make sure support is available when, where and how families need it and will bring a number of agencies together to offer care and support in local

communities across Coventry.

It will also work to offer extra support to those most in need, including those not in education, children with experience of abuse and domestic abuse, who have physical or mental health needs and who are living in poverty.

It will develop the work of the city's eight hubs, and change the way families, children and young people are supported.

It will also develop the work of the Start for Life campaign which is delivering a range of services to help babies, children and parents in those crucial first 1,001 days and let families know there are people there to offer support and care in those times.

CLLr Patricia Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said:

*"Our recent good Ofsted inspection shows that we have much to be proud of in Coventry. We have made excellent progress and now we want to make even more dramatic changes to the lives of families, children and young people in the city in those crucial early days of family life."*



To see more about the Early Help Strategy, visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/earlyhelpstrategy](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/earlyhelpstrategy)

To learn more about the Family Hubs, visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/familyhubs](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/familyhubs)

and to see details about Start for Life, visit [www.coventry.gov.uk/start-life](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/start-life)



## Families help create new artwork

**A new mural has been given pride of place at the Foleshill Families for All Hub.**

The artwork was created by members of the Hub's Wellbeing on Wednesdays (WOW) Group, working with local artist Andrea Mbarushimana.

It is over four metres long and made partly from recycled materials. It is inspired by Foleshill's families and nature and depicts houses that can be found in Foleshill surrounded by wildlife and people.

The 'Artist on My Street' project worked with over 30 local children, young people and their families in fun workshops.

CLLr Patricia Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, said:

*"The artwork is amazing and really adds to the great family atmosphere at the Hub. It is so bright and vibrant, just like the Hub."*

'Artist on my Street' is a community engagement initiative created by Artspace Coventry. This follow-up project, delivered in partnership with Foleshill Creates & Foleshill Families for All Hub, was funded by The Arts Society.



**Do you suspect a child or young person is being harmed?**

- Contact the police on 101 or 999 for emergencies.
- Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on 024 7678 8555.

## Fostering film is getting results



**A new film has been produced to encourage people to be foster carers here in Coventry and across the region.**

It shows how any of us can foster a child or young person.

The 'Any Of Us' project is the largest public sector fostering film collaboration yet, with over 80 participants from Northumberland to Brighton and Liverpool to Kent.

The film looks at three very different people who all show some of the attributes needed to be a foster carer.

The main characters' stories are all interwoven with teenager Chloe, as we see her journey into fostering.

*The film has been produced by Reel TwentyFive and project managed by CAN Digital/Rachel Brown*

The film is now available to view at [www.coventry.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/fostering)

**FOSTER WITH COVENTRY**

## Adult carers survey

Residents who are informal carers for adults are being encouraged to take part in the biannual Survey of Adult Carers in England.

The national survey is developed by the Care Quality Commission and the Department of Health and Social Care, and all Local Authorities in England with social care responsibilities must take part.

Coventry City Council's Adult Social Care Services are sending out between 800 and 1,000 to a random sample of carers. All answers will be treated as strictly confidential.

If you do receive this survey, we would be grateful if you could please respond as your feedback is incredibly valuable and will be used both locally and nationally to better understand and improve the support available.

## Improving adult social care

Anyone who is looking for information about adult social care in Coventry can find out about the services the Council provides in its latest annual Adult Social Care Report for 2022-23.

The Council has published its latest report setting out the steps it is taking to improve services and the challenges facing social care.

The Adult Social Care Annual Report and Key Areas of Improvement 2022/23 describes the performance of adult social care and the progress made in Coventry against the priorities for the year.

It also provides case studies to illustrate how service users and carers in Coventry have been supported.

Cllr Linda Bigham, Cabinet Member for Adult Services, said:

*"The report is an opportunity for us to highlight examples of the work of adult social care,*

*the commitment of our staff and the feedback from service users.*

*"At some time or other many of us will need to engage with the services provided – and that's why it is so relevant."*

Recent years have seen an increase in cost of care due to external factors, including the National Living Wage, increases to employer pension contributions, other inflation costs, the increased complexity of the care needs that people are experiencing.

Cllr Bigham added:

*"Although we do face increasing pressures, I know that we have committed staff who are very passionate about what they do. I really value them."*

Photo: Annette



For a copy of the report visit

[www.coventry.gov.uk/ascannualreport](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/ascannualreport)

Annette's journey from hospital to home is highlighted in the report.

## Limiting HMOs and improving neighbourhoods



The Council has introduced a new policy to help control the number of residential properties turned into houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in parts of Coventry.

Cllr David Welsh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, said:

*"It's called an Article 4 Direction and it means we won't see any more HMOs come forward unless they get planning permission and meet a range of standards.*

Areas of the city where the policy will come into place include: Cheylesmore, Earlsdon, Foleshill, Lower Stoke, Radford, Wainbody, St. Michaels, Sherbourne, Whoberley, Westwood and Upper Stoke.

*"It's part of a strategy to improve neighbourhoods and reduce the amount of waste and anti-social behaviour in areas where there are high numbers of HMOs. We want these areas to be better places where people want to live.*

*"We also have other policies, including a landlord licensing scheme, bringing empty homes back into family use and buying houses for temporary family accommodation.*

*"Residents' groups have called for this action, and I've wanted it for some time. I am delighted that it is now in place.*

*"We'll now be monitoring the policy and hope to see improvements."*



## Shhh, this is a resting space

Did you know that there are five resting spaces in Coventry?

Quiet spaces in Coventry city centre have opened for people who need to rest and relax for a time in comfort. The venues are to help people with and without disabilities who have visited the city centre and may be feeling overwhelmed, experiencing chronic pain or lacking energy, to plan time to rest before moving on or travelling home.

Ashley Kirton founded Coventry Resting Spaces project 18 months ago.

The project is an independent group supported by Grapevine, Coventry – an organisation which helps people of Coventry who are disadvantaged or disabled to achieve their goals and dreams. Ashley has set up a team around him, to help with the project.

The group has set up five resting space venues, in **St Mary's Guildhall, Central Library, Methodist Hall, Belgrade Theatre and The Litten Tree Building (LTB).**

If you can offer your own public space, please e-mail the group.

Email or visit our social media for further info



Coventry resting spaces  
[coventryrestingspaces@gmail.com](mailto:coventryrestingspaces@gmail.com)

## UK first as city sets up energy partnership

Coventry City Council has joined forces with E.ON to launch a pioneering 15-year partnership which will transform the city's approach to carbon reduction whilst helping people save money and boosting the local economy.

The initiative will build a cleaner and more sustainable city and drive a new green economy that will bring jobs and skills for generations to come.

The partnership is believed to be a first for the UK. The Council and E.ON will work together to develop ideas and projects for the benefit of Coventry residents.

Cllr Jim O'Boyle, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, said:

*"No other city in the country is doing this. It will help Coventry move ahead with a range of projects that the Council would not have been able to achieve on its own."*

*"E.ON is based in Coventry and has been for almost 30 years, and it brings expertise, knowledge and skills, which will help move forward on a range of schemes to benefit the city."*

*"Coventry is already spearheading a number of major green projects, including the installation*

*of hundreds of electric charging points – the highest number of any city outside of London. It has also developed a state-of-the-art new materials recycling facility and is well on the way to becoming the country's first all-electric bus city."*

Projects discussed for delivery by the partnership, so far, include the creation of a 30MW solar farm, bringing solar power into schools across the city and decarbonisation of a number of Council vehicles and depots. Work is also intended to include solar energy for public buildings, and improving energy efficiency across homes and businesses.

Chris Norbury, Chief Executive of E.ON UK, said:

*"It will mean better insulation for homes, more energy-efficient public buildings, shifting from fossil fuels to locally-produced renewable energy and, perhaps most importantly, creating thousands of good jobs."*

For more details, visit [coventry.gov.uk/sep](https://coventry.gov.uk/sep)

## On board with the e-double-deckers



A project to create the UK's first all-electric bus city by 2025 has taken a major step forward with National Express Coventry now operating 130 new double-decker zero emission all-electric buses in the city.

The electric buses take four hours to charge and can run for up to 175 miles depending on the time of year. The buses produce zero carbon emissions.

The project comes after the completion of 1,250 electric vehicle charging sockets in Coventry, contributing to the ongoing improvement of the city's air quality.



## Insulating hundreds of homes

Energy improvement works to 2,000 homes will soon get underway across Coventry Citizen housing.

Works including external wall insulation, installing energy-efficient doors and windows, increasing loft

insulation and improving ventilation to reduce the potential for mould growth have already been completed in 95 homes in the city.

It will deliver more energy-efficient homes reduce the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions and will support households in keeping their homes warm.

The scheme is a joint project between Citizen and Coventry City Council, and will be completed in summer 2025.

## Energy saving award for Central Library



The Central Library has won an EMA (Energy Management Award) for Energy-Efficient Project of 2023, as it gets Net Zero Ready.

The award comes after a 24-month project funded and delivered by Coventry City Council Energy Management Services, including draught-proofing the windows, upgrading to LED and Solar PV lighting, installing ASHP (air source heat pump) for heating, and removing gas and battery storage.

Carbon savings are up removing 69%. The work is one of many projects delivering energy and carbon savings across the city.

## Sponsor A Tree Outside Your House

Residents can now make their streets greener and healthier by sponsoring new trees.

Request to sponsor a tree outside your house by the end of November, and it will be planted this winter.



[treesforstreets.org/Coventry](https://treesforstreets.org/Coventry)





## Cost-effective funeral options

A new service providing high quality, lower cost funeral options throughout Coventry and surrounding areas is coming soon.

Offering fully inclusive funeral packages, with clear pricing and no hidden costs, the service will be delivered by a qualified and experienced team.

Coventry Funeral Service will ensure that families and their loved ones are treated with the care and dignity they deserve.

Tom Fitzpatrick, Dip FAA, Funeral Home Manager, said:

*"We are here to guide, support and provide a professional service to local residents and we look forward to being able to open our new service soon."*

CLlr Patricia Hetherton, Cabinet Member, City Services, said:

*"Our team already takes fantastic care of the city's cemeteries and crematoria and soon it will also provide a first rate but lower cost funeral option to local residents."*

*"It will help in some small way and relieve some of the pressure on people."*

Dear Mummy,  
When you smoke,  
I smoke too.  
Please stop.  
Love Bump x



## Domestic Abuse Support

### Safe to Talk

Coventry City Council's domestic abuse website

If you need domestic abuse advice or support go to Safe to Talk, Coventry City Council's domestic abuse website. It explains about services for survivors, children/young people and perpetrators.

There is also support around honour-based abuse, forced marriage and FGM. There is also an online chat function for anyone including professionals. Call **0800 111 4998 8.30am - 5pm Monday to Friday or 10am - 1pm Saturday and Sunday.** [safetotalk.org.uk](http://safetotalk.org.uk)

### NEW Choose to Change programme

Relate Coventry has received Home Office funding from West Midlands Police and Crime

Commissioners to expand the work of the Choose2Change Project. This means Relate will be able to run more programmes working with men and women who want to change the way they behave in their relationships where there has been harm caused by domestic abuse.

The service is open to anyone over the age of 18 years living in Coventry. If you want to find out more or refer yourself please email [c2c@relatecoventry.org](mailto:c2c@relatecoventry.org) or call **024 7622 5863**.

## Christmas at the Guildhall

St Mary's Guildhall, located in the city's historic Cathedral quarter, will be decorated with luxurious and opulent decorations, traditional greenery, and glittery lights along with two real 18ft Christmas trees to provide a Christmas card-worthy backdrop for visitors.



Find out more and book your tickets at [www.stmarysguildhall.co.uk](http://www.stmarysguildhall.co.uk)

The venue, which is operated by No Ordinary Hospitality, is also bringing its popular **Victorian Christmas** special event back on **Wednesday, December 6 at 11am and 2pm**, with mince pies, mulled wine, carol singing in the Great Hall and a one-man performance of **Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol**.

**Father Christmas** will be stopping by **every Saturday in December** for storytelling in the Great Hall and gingerbread decorating in the Medieval Kitchen.

Next door, the Guildhall's Tales of Tea restaurant will be serving up special festive lunches- while its acclaimed afternoon tea will get the Christmas treatment.

A children's festive afternoon tea menu is also available.

### Residents and health and social care workers in Coventry are being urged not to delay getting their winter COVID-19 vaccination and flu jab.



Flu and COVID-19 vaccines reduce your risk of serious illness if you have an underlying health condition

You can get your flu jab from your GP or from pharmacies across Coventry and Warwickshire.

To book visit: [www.nhs.uk/seasonalvaccinations](http://www.nhs.uk/seasonalvaccinations), or call **119**, or find a local vaccination walk-in site.



## Coventry remembers

The city is remembering the fallen at its **Remembrance Sunday Service, in War Memorial Park, 10.45am on Sunday 12 November, to honour and pay respect to those who lost their lives in the two World Wars and other conflicts.**

The day also plays host to Coventry's Civic Remembrance Day, the annual Communal Grave Service at London Road Cemetery which takes place at 3pm.

This service, which remembers the civilians and volunteers who died during the Coventry Blitz in 1940, takes place at the Memorial built to honour their memory, and is open to members of the public to attend. Throughout November, the city also hosts its annual Peace Festival which includes art workshops, walking tours and peace trails in the city, plus the annual Lord Mayor's Peace Lecture. For details visit [coventry.gov.uk/peace](http://coventry.gov.uk/peace)