

YOUR COVENTRY

News about what's going on in your city ♥ winter edition 2024

- Magical big wheel is back in Broadgate
- Enjoying park life 365 days a year
- Update on bin rounds over Christmas
- Looking out for our neighbours



NOVEMBER

LEADER'S MESSAGE

Your update from the Leader of Coventry City Council

Welcome to the latest edition of **Your Coventry – the resident magazine which highlights the ways the Council is here to support and work for you as well as showcase the great things happening across our city.**

Rightly the Council is here to provide help and advice to those who need it, and sadly more and more people are needing to for a variety of reasons. Although we deliver around 700 services a year, 80 per cent of our net budget is now spent on just three areas – children's social care, adult social care and housing and homelessness.

As well as experiencing unprecedented levels of demand for these key services, the funding we receive has not kept up meaning

we have been forced into making some difficult decisions recently to set a balanced budget which we are required to do by law.

As a Council, we also receive one of the lowest funding per head of the population in the West Midlands and indeed the country. There is more about that on page 11.

Although there has been some additional money in the recent autumn budget for areas such as social care, unfortunately 14 years of underfunding cannot be resolved immediately meaning, just like the residents the Council serves, we still have difficult financial decisions to make in the future.

But despite these challenges, the Council continues to work hard to support those who need it and deliver

services and events that matter most to people.

Teams are ready to deliver a range of winter services over the coming traditionally colder months from gritting to keep warm keep well support and advice to name just two. I'm also pleased the Council, working with our police colleagues, have created Safe Spaces for young people. Details of all of these things, and more can be found in this edition.

There are also other updates on how Coventry is on course to become the UK's first all-electric bus city and plans for Christmas inside. On that note, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you all a happy festive season and New Year.

Coventry wall of shame

Fly-tipping fines increased

The Council has increased fly-tipping fixed penalty notices (FPNs) to £1000 to further support its efforts to tackle fly-tipping in the city. Until now it was £200 for an FPN and £100 for littering.

The steeper fines serve as a clear warning that illegal waste disposal will not be tolerated and offenders will face serious consequences.

Examples of fly-tipping are highlighted on the Council's social media channels, called the Coventry Wall of Shame. The short video clips reveal brazen fly-tippers flouting the law.

Residents are encouraged to help identify the culprits. Wall of Shame

Members of the public are being encouraged to report anyone they recognise on the Wall of Shame by emailing flytipping-cctv@coventry.gov.uk.

Don't forget, you can report fly-tipping by going to coventry.gov.uk/flytipping or calling 08085 834333.

episodes are also shared on our Your Coventry e-newsletter. To subscribe visit coventry.gov.uk/newsupdates.

In the past year the Council has dealt with almost 6000 (5883) instances of fly-tipping.

Council postal address set to change

From 1 January 2025, the new address to use when contacting the Council will be **Coventry City Council, PO Box 7097, Coventry CV6 9SL**

Please use the new address for all correspondence.

Other ways to contact the Council can be found at coventry.gov.uk/contactus



Parks are open to enjoy all year round

Coventry City Council parks, open spaces, and woodlands are open 365 days a year, so whatever month it is, families can enjoy the outdoors and everything it has to offer.

The Council's parks team and volunteers work all year round to make the open areas well-maintained, safe, and welcoming for all.

All our facilities, including toilets, will stay open except for Christmas Day.

There are lots of exciting events to enjoy, including the Coombe Luminate Light trail, a Christmas trail pack,

little elves' workshops and a pop-up Christmas tree shop at Memorial Park.

Most of these will run until Christmas Eve, with the trail finishing on Sunday 22 December and re-opening on Boxing Day. Please find us on Facebook for all the details. Facebook: Coombe Abbey Park / War Memorial Park



Dean Wainwright



Gritters at the ready for winter

A fleet of eight gritters and a stockpile of 4,000 tonnes of rock salt are at the ready across Coventry as winter and the colder weather approaches.

The gritters are set to grit more than 415km of the road network when needed.

The Council says that cycleways in the city will also be treated if there are cold snaps. By taking all necessary precautions it will ensure that Coventry roads are kept safer for our communities as we enter the winter months.

Crews are on standby 24/7 during this period, as we work to keep road conditions safe and quickly respond to any changing weather conditions. Gritting does not guarantee that the highway will be free of snow or ice.

Reminder for motorists

Even once a road has received a gritting treatment, the salt requires activation from the movement of vehicles. That's why drivers should take extra care.

For more details visit coventry.gov.uk/gritting

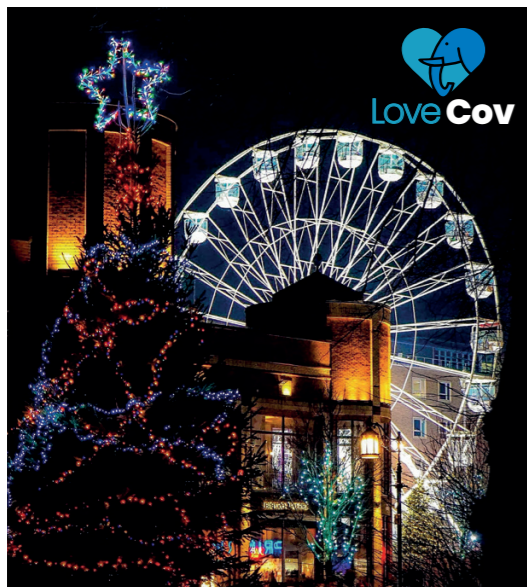
Working for you

The Council is here for every resident in the city throughout their lives. A lot of what we do goes unseen until you need us – but we're here to help from the moment you're born, through your life in the city and when you need us in later life.

Every day, your Council Tax helps to pay for more than 700 different services which support everyone from children and young people to families and vulnerable older people – making sure nobody is left behind in Coventry.

We're also still working for you over the festive season, keeping services open and moving. For a list of services you might need, visit: coventry.gov.uk/workingforyou





Sky's the limit as giant Christmas wheel returns

The eye-catching big wheel and Christmas market have returned to Broadgate for the festive period!

Visitors can enjoy both the market and big wheel throughout the day and into the evening. Stunning views of the city can be captured from 100ft high whilst riding the big wheel in Broadgate, before heading to the market stalls offering a range of festive food, drinks and gifts.

The wheel and market will operate every day until Sunday 5 January, except Christmas Day.

Late night shopping

Late night shopping has begun in the city and the Council is offering **free parking for entry after 3pm every Wednesday until 18 December** in Council run, city centre car parks.

Find out more at coventry.gov.uk/christmasparking
Coventry's festivities cater to all ages and interests. For details visitcoventry.co.uk/christmas



Cracking festive competition

This festive season, all Coventry residents can enter the Love Cov Christmas Cracker competition for the chance to win some magical prizes.

The competition is a Christmas collaboration between Go CV, Visit Coventry and Coventry BID. Local businesses around the city have donated a whole treasure trove of festive experiences and prizes.

The competition is now open and closes Tuesday 3 December.

All residents can enter for FREE as long as they are a Go CV member. Becoming a Go CV member is completely free too and gives access to exclusive offers, discounts and competitions all-year round. Sign up or enter the competition at go-cv.co.uk

Exploring Coventry this festive season

There are more ways than ever to celebrate Christmas in Coventry and Warwickshire.

We can all get into the festive mood and find plenty of ways to keep the entire family entertained over the festive period. Explore

Coventry's attractions and events from museums, to theatres and an extensive list of Coventry's bars, restaurants and cafes that offer heart-warming food and drink and a welcome retreat after a busy day.

The city is home to a vibrant and diverse shopping scene, offering a mix of well-known retail chains and a variety of independents for every shopper.

For more details go to visitcoventry.co.uk/christmas



Work approved to restore 19th century summerhouses



A restoration project is underway on a series of 19th century summerhouses on a Coventry allotment.

Located at Stoney Road Allotments in Cheylesmore, the three summerhouses - originally called urban pleasure gardens - have fallen into disrepair, but

Historic England has now approved a grant to fund their restoration because of their national significance.

The site, which is Grade II* listed with Historic England, contains the last remaining plots of the Park Gardens, established on the Cheylesmore Estate, 200 years ago.

The site is still actively used as allotments and sub-tenanted by the Stoney Road Gardens Association (SRGA).

Louise Brennan, Regional Director (Midlands) at Historic England, said: "We are really pleased to be able to fund the work. I can't wait to see them brought back into use."

Improvements to parks to increase accessibility

Ten parks across Coventry have seen lots of improvements to help people get more active, with the help of a public health grant.

The works include the creation of a new, illuminated boundary footpath in Jardine Crescent Sports Ground, also known as The Ponderosa - in time for darker nights - and resurfacing of ball games areas in Eagle St Open Space, Red House Park, Longford Park, Caludon Castle Park, Barras Heath and Nauls Mill Park, plus the resurfacing of footpaths in Stoke Green and Morris Common, also known as Stoke Heath.

Red House Park, Gosford Green, and The Lindfield have all seen the installation of new playground safety surfacing.

Repairs and replacement of damaged playground equipment have also been completed in Caludon Castle Park.

Cllr Kamran Caan, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport, said: "We know how important green spaces are to our health and wellbeing. I'm pleased that public health funding has been invested in such a positive way."

New fencing has also been installed in Longford Park. Tennis courts in Spencer Park have also been improved with additional funding from the Lawn Tennis Association.

Sporting chance for parks pavilion



Community group and charity, Friends of Spencer Park, has taken over the lease at the park's sports pavilion.

It will now be responsible for the condition and future of the beloved community facility.

Owned by the Council, the agreement for the lease and approvals started in the summer of 2022. Friends of Spencer Park has

since fundraised and secured planning permission for renovations.

The bigger goal is to revitalise the Edwardian pavilion and transform it into a vibrant café and community activity hub.

Coventry City Council will continue to manage the remainder of Spencer Park.

Ken Taylor, Chairman of Trustees for the Friends of Spencer Park, said:

"It's an exciting time for the Friends of Spencer Park volunteer team and supporters.

"We thank the Council for its support."





Neighbourhoods to benefits from thousands more trees

Coventry has successfully received funding towards a reforestation project for 13 sites across the city.

The Council has been awarded £294,915, alongside an additional £91,383 from match funders, to plant 151 semi-mature trees and 7,068 small, 'starter trees' created from seedlings across 10 of the city's wards. The project reflects a global initiative called Tiny Forests, where communities create native forests with

small footprints that attract biodiversity to areas which, because of their location within cities, have previously not been wooded.

Planting more trees will help iron out social inequalities, providing all communities with access to green spaces.

Cllr Patricia Hetheron, Cabinet Member for City Services, said: "This is such fantastic news as it will help us kickstart our ambitious plans to have thousands more trees over the next decade and we can't wait to get planting!"

More trees in the city will also help to manage the extreme temperatures that are becoming much more frequent with climate change. They will also help to reduce airborne pollution, can act as natural flood defences, and help to remove CO2 from the atmosphere.



Most EV chargers of any UK city

The Times reported in October that Coventry has the most electric vehicle chargers per head of any local authority in the country and boasted the third highest numbers at just under 2,084.

With many more planned for installation, it shows that the Council's forward-thinking policies around future transport, alongside our CVLR and electric bus plans, are drawing national attention to our city.

Further boost in drive towards all-electric bus fleet

Coventry's ambitious target to be the UK's first city with all-electric buses by 2025 has received another boost, with the news that another 64 buses are being rolled out across the city by operator Stagecoach.

The latest decision is part of Coventry's Electric – a trailblazing £140m project that reinforces Stagecoach's commitment to run zero-emission buses on all its services which link Coventry to surrounding areas in Warwickshire.

This major advance means that more than 200 buses,

80% of all those operating within and travelling into the city, will now be electric battery powered.

The electrification of Coventry's entire bus fleet is a key pillar in our aim to cut carbon emissions and help to reduce air pollution. The new buses will be the equivalent of taking the emissions of 14,000 cars off the roads of Coventry.

Buses will be fitted with modern amenities, with USB charging points, free WiFi, high-spec passenger information systems, and enhanced wheelchair and buggy space.



Coventry Funeral Service

Since being established earlier this year, the service has grown to develop an excellent reputation within the city, focusing on delivering a high-quality, cost-effective service.

Offering fully inclusive traditional funeral packages or direct cremations with clear pricing, the service has supported many Coventry families through such a difficult period.

Over recent years, the average cost of funerals has risen to around £6,000-£7,000, a high

figure creating additional worry at such a distressing and challenging time. The service is here to help and offer independent guidance and support for costs, choice of service or just to be a friendly voice.

Coventry Funeral Service is delivered by Coventry City Council. For more information on the service, costs and how it can support local families, please call **024 7697 7702**, or visit coventryfuneralservice.co.uk

Venues encouraged to be a safe haven

The Council, working with West Midlands Police, has launched a Safe Spaces project, for children and young people with a variety of organisations already involved.

Safe Spaces creates safe havens throughout the city at venues like McDonald's, The Burges (pictured right) Coventry University, and The Wave.

They were set up following feedback from primary and secondary school pupils who were concerned about safety when out in the city centre.

More organisations are welcome to join the scheme.

To find out about the scheme and how to get involved, visit childfriendlycov.co.uk/safespaces



Keep warm, keep well

Keeping warm throughout winter is really important. Cold weather can bring many challenges to our health and wellbeing, especially if you need extra help during winter. There are lots of things you can do to get prepared for the season.

There are also lots of places all over Coventry that are free to call in to throughout the day where you can find a warm welcome as well as access information, take part in activities, or connect with others.

For information, tips, advice, help and support on keeping warm and well in winter, or to find a warm welcome location, or charity that might be able to help you, visit: coventry.gov.uk/keepwarm

Support for people struggling financially

If you're struggling financially or concerned about the future, getting help early can make a big difference. Lots of support is available at coventry.gov.uk/costofliving

Stopping loan sharks

The Illegal Money Lending Team is encouraging anyone who has fallen victim to loan sharks to get in touch via its helpline or online support.

The team relies on witnesses to help catch and convict the culprits.

Anyone affected by illegal money lending should call the **Stop Loan Sharks 24/7 Helpline on 0300 555 2222** or access support online at stoploansharks.co.uk.

Live Chat is available on the website from **9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday**.

For details about credit unions and debt advice services visit coventry.gov.uk/moneyanddebtadvice

Credit Union

The Clockwise Credit Union offers support for people in Leicester, Leicestershire, Coventry, Warwickshire and

Rutland. As a not-for-profit organisation it can pass on the savings to its members by providing affordable loans, safe savings and ethical financial products and services.

Visit clockwise.coop or call **0330 17 55 792**



Eyesore finally demolished

The Council has completed work to demolish an empty block of low-rise flats at 1 to 15 Jasmine Court, Stoke Aldermoor.

The building has been cleared for future redevelopment. It follows a long period of legal efforts by Council Officers.

The Council is increasing its efforts to tackle issues around empty properties in the city – especially with a high demand for good quality housing in the city.

It is continuing to use all legal powers to remove any further

obstacles to the redevelopment of the site.

Cllr Naeem Akhtar, Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, said: *“I’m delighted that our efforts are paying off to bring empty homes back into use.*

“We are hopeful that eventually suitable social housing, providing family homes, will replace the demolished flats.”

Coventry South improvement scheme works has started

Work has started on the first phase of a fully segregated cycleway on London Road.

The route, which goes from Abbey Road junction to ASDA island, is part of wider work to improve connectivity between the city centre and the area by Coventry Airport, where the proposed new Gigafactory will be located.

To keep updated on the scheme, including the traffic management, visit the project page: coventry.gov.uk/coventrysouthimprovementworks

School streets rollout

A number of school streets scheme trials are underway in the city.

This means traffic will be restricted on roads for a short time at the start and end of the school day, with enforcement cameras at schools including Cardinal Wiseman, Southfields, Stanton Bridge and Ravensdale.

Knights Templar was the first scheme introduced in February 2023 and made permanent earlier this year. The aim is to improve road safety and air quality outside schools, as well as making it easier for children to walk or cycle to school.

It also helps to address the problems people living close to a school can experience due to school-related traffic.

People living in a street under one of the four schemes, need a permit

to drive in these roads between certain hours all year round. Anyone driving on the roads without a valid permit or exemption will be committing an offence. They may receive a £70 fixed penalty fine.

For details visit coventry.gov.uk/schoolstreets



Tackling climate change in Earlsdon

As part of the Earlsdon Liveable Neighbourhood scheme, brand new Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) have been installed in the area, one at Hartington Crescent and the other outside Earlsdon Primary School on Earlsdon Avenue North.

SUDS are an eco-friendly drainage alternative that use nature’s pipes - plants and soil - to reduce flood risks by catching rainwater run-off and slowing down the flow of rainfall into our drains and rivers. SUDS are also hugely beneficial for adding greenery and wildlife habitats to the urban environment. It’s all part of tackling climate change in Coventry and working towards a cleaner, greener, healthier city.

Fostering is...everything

Fostering can mean everything to those involved. This is the message of a powerful new fostering film supported by Coventry City Council.

The film, titled “Everything” shows the long-term impact fostering can have, with relationships between carers and children lasting well into adulthood.

Cllr Pat Seaman, Cabinet Member for Children’s Services, said:

“We want to show people how rewarding and life-changing fostering is.

“The film will help us to reach more people in our communities and encourage them to find out more about this really rewarding role.”

You can watch the film at coventry.gov.uk/foster

Coventry needs more foster carers to make that massive difference to local children’s lives.

Call the team on **024 7683 2828**

email pssfostering@coventry.gov.uk

or visit coventry.gov.uk/foster



FOSTER WITH COVENTRY



Helping children in care have a great Christmas

Children in care in Coventry are being treated to a great festive day out.

Around 300 young people aged up to 15, some with their foster carers, have been invited by the Council and Coventry Rugby Club to enjoy a range of fun and games.

The day will include the much-loved Round Table Santa Sleigh, a grotto, slime with Wild Kids Science, a silent disco, arts and crafts, board games, baby sensory sessions, and lots more.

The event is part of Coventry Rugby Club’s commitment to Child Friendly Cov. Read more about the city’s work to be Child Friendly at childfriendlycov.co.uk

City of peace and reconciliation

Coventry once again remembered and honoured those who lost their lives in the two World Wars and other conflicts recently.

The city’s Remembrance Day events, held on 10 November, remained hugely significant for the city. The horrors of The Blitz in November 1940 were followed by the city’s

subsequent commitment to rebuild itself and promote peace and reconciliation. We will never forget our loved ones who died far too young.

coventry.gov.uk/remembrance



Look out for your neighbours this winter

If you have elderly or vulnerable neighbours, make sure you check in with them this winter. The dark cold nights can encourage bogus callers to target older and vulnerable people.

Distraction burglaries often increase during winter, particularly around Christmas. Older people, in particular, are often targeted by scammers in their homes. Or some people may

struggle to get out in the colder weather to get medication or shopping. The winter months can also be long and lonely for many people. This is especially true for older people or those with a

disability or long-term health condition. This is why it is important to check in on others and ensure they are warm and safe this winter. If you can help your neighbour in any way, please do so. Visit: coventry.gov.uk/keepwarm for a range of available advice and services.

Contact details for your local councillor, wherever you live in the city.

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Running services despite underfunding challenges

As a Council, we know that different services matter more to different people, whether it's better roads, improvements to parks or support for carers, and we consider all these things and many more when we plan our budget each year.

At the same time, Coventry City Council has had to face large reductions in government funding since 2010, while battling rising prices and increasing demands on its services. The figures below set out what this underfunding looks like and how we target resources across hundreds of services.

FUNDING:

Local Government Funding has been significantly impacted since 2010

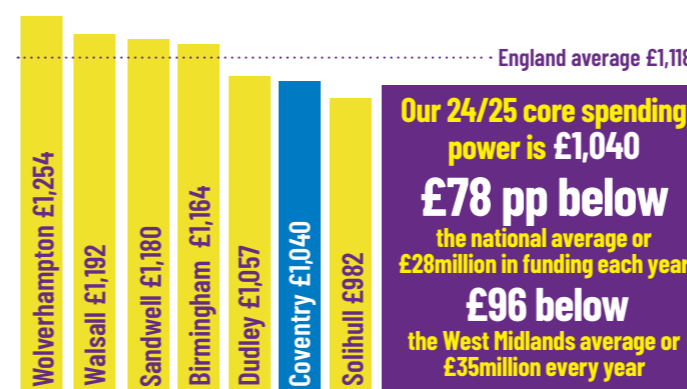
Over the last 14 years, Coventry's core spending power has fallen in real terms by:

£1.5bn in that period

Over £100m (on average) every year

That's £655 for every Coventry household, since 2010

Although an issue for all councils, Coventry has been doubly disadvantaged as we receive one of the lowest funding levels per head of the population in the West Midlands and the country.



Funding takes no account of population growth, yet Coventry is amongst the top 10 for growth since 2010

In other words, without any extra funding, the consistently increasing population means our money has had to stretch further than most other Councils.



DEMAND:

Coventry City Council delivers around 700 services every year

Although there have been some cash increases in funding in the last two years, these have not kept pace with inflation and do not sufficiently reflect increase in demand on services - so still another real term pressure on funding.

In 2010, we spent about 52% of our net budget in three areas:

- children's social care
- adult social care
- housing and homelessness

Because funding is not 'needs based' and has not kept up with demand or inflation, today over 80% of our net budget is spent in these three areas - meaning we now have less than 20% to spend on all other services.



ONGOING PRESSURES:

By law, every council must set a balanced budget meaning it cannot overspend.

All of this means that we are having to make savings every year because of growing demand and insufficient funding that reflects need.

This financial year we have a savings programme of **£30.4 million**

We have uncommitted reserves of **£10.3million** that could help this situation, but reserves can only be spent once.

Due to increasing demand and concern about making every planned saving, a predicted overspend of **£7.1million** is being predicted at Quarter 1 in this financial year.

Christmas bin collection schedule



There will be some changes to scheduled bin collections over the festive period depending on your usual collection day:

Usual Collection date	Christmas Collection date
Tuesday 24 December 2024	Collections as usual
Wednesday 25 December 2024	Friday 27 December 2024
Thursday 26 December 2024	Saturday 28 December 2024
Friday 27 December 2024	Monday 30 December 2024
Tuesday 31 December 2024	Collections as usual
Wednesday 1 January 2025	Thursday 2 January 2025
Thursday 2 January 2025	Friday 3 January 2025
Friday 3 January 2025	Saturday 4 January 2025



Garden waste collections brown-lidded bin

- » If you have subscribed to brown-lidded bin collections, collections will **pause** from **Monday 9 December** until **Friday 10 January**.
- » Collections will start again on week beginning **Monday 13 January 2025** or **Monday 20 January 2025**, depending on your scheduled collection day.

Bins out by 7am please

Mental health support in a crisis

The winter months and festive season can be a challenging time for our mental health and wellbeing.

For urgent support

Contact the Samaritans on **116 123** (365 days a year). For urgent medical needs call your GP, or **NHS 111** or if you are in a life-threatening situation call **999**.

For other urgent Mental Health Support call **NHS 111** (Hours of operation: 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

For more information visit the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust's 'Find help now' web pages.

If you live in Coventry or Warwickshire and are feeling low, anxious or stressed, struggling to cope, or need to talk to someone in confidence to find the right service, call **0800 616171**. The Mental Wellbeing Line team provides connection, advice, information and signposting, 24/7, 365 days a year.

For more details visit coventry.gov.uk/mentalhealth

If you have any comments contact the Your Coventry newsdesk at communications@coventry.gov.uk All details correct at time of print (Tuesday 12 November 2024).