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THE VOICE OF THE BOROUGH

Thursday, August 14, 2025 No. 534 90p

Journey to 2030 secured with new plan



By **ANDREW BATT**
abatt@wokingham.today

WOKINGHAM borough council has approved its Council Plan for the next five years.

Shaped by feedback from residents and partners, the plan supports the shared Communities Vision 2035 and focuses on four key themes:

Fair - making sure everyone has equal access to opportunities and services.

Green - protecting our environment and working together to tackle climate change.

Safe - helping everyone feel secure in their homes, communities and public spaces.

Connected - improving transport, digital access and community links.

The council has also adopted a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy for 2025 to 2029.

This policy strengthens our commitment to fairness and inclusion, making sure that these values are embedded in everything we do.

Together, these documents will guide how the council make decisions, deliver services and support its local communities.

A spokesperson said: "We'll monitor progress regularly to make sure we stay on track and continue to meet the needs of our residents."

"Thank you to everyone who took part in the consultation and helped shape our journey to 2030."



Lib Dems welcome deputy to the borough - Full story on P6

'IT ALL FEELS ONE SIDED AND DISCRIMINATIVE'

Vulnerable tenant set to be evicted for noise complaints despite lack of evidence - Full story on P11



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DUO RETURNS WITH NEW LIVE ALBUM p18

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WE COVER WOKINGHAM BOROUGH



Berkshire village is best for beer

FINCHAMSTEAD has renewed its claims to be the centre of independent craft brewing after two beers brewed in the village were revealed as champion beers.

The winning beers are brewed less than a minutes' walk from each other on an industrial estate in Finchampstead, part of Wokingham borough.

Last week, the Campaign For Real Ale (CAMRA) announced that Siren Craft Brew's Broken Dream Breakfast Stout, and Elusive Brewing's Oregon Trail West Coast IPA, were champions of their categories at the 2025 Champion Beer of Britain competition.

While missing out on the coveted 'Champion Beer of Britain' crown that Broken Dream won in 2018, it does mean that visitors to Siren's Tap Yard at the Hogwood Industrial Estate are spoilt for choice when it comes to great beer. Both breweries operate taprooms on-site, meaning visitors can enjoy a short brewery crawl with a huge and ever-changing selection of beers available at both venues.

Broken Dream was awarded gold in the Specialty, Differently Flavoured



category, while Oregon Trail took gold in the IPA category.

Berkshire brewing has been well represented in the competition in recent years.

Siren's gluten-free Session Pale Lumina – which celebrated five years in July and was listed as the 8th best beer in the UK by WeAreBeer in 2025 – was

a finalist in 2023 with Windsor & Eton's Best Bitter Guardsman winning a bronze medal in 2024.

Broken Dream has had multiple category wins since 2018 and the much-missed Bingham's Vanilla Stout – brewed a few miles away in Twyford – winning 'Champion Beer of Britain' in 2016.

■ For info visit www.sirencraftbrew.com/



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Winnersh Dance club celebrates 50 golden toe-tapping years



By EMMA MERCHANT
emerchant@wokingham.today

A BOROUGH ballroom club celebrated five decades of dancing with a night of smooth moves and live music.

As well as spinning on the dance floor, Winnersh Dance Club members were able to enjoy a buffet.

Duo Sugar and Spice provided music for the special half-century event.

Beverley Chiles from the club said: "It feels like quite an achievement to have kept going for 50 years, and to still be popular and enjoyed for that length of time."

"We were very lucky to have Sugar and Spice live duo playing for us; they also performed at our 40th anniversary celebration, so it was good to have them back 10 years later to be with us again."

"It was good fun, lovely to catch up with some of our past members, and to see people joining in with the dances."

The group was founded in 1975 by Winnersh couple Sidney and Vera

Hatcher, who offered ballroom, barn and sequence dancing sessions.

These days members can enjoy modern ballroom, Latin, jive, sequence, and line dance, as well as social dance events held several times a year.

Any dance couples with basic dance knowledge of ballroom, Latin, or sequence can join, with members learning new sequences each week, followed by refreshments and a time of social dancing to practise steps.

"It stretches your brain, it's great fun, and it helps to keep you fit," said Beverley.

The usual dress code is smart casual, with opportunities to dress up for special dance evenings.

Specialist dance shoes are not necessary.

Meetings at Winnersh Community Centre take place every Thursday at 8pm, except during the months of August.

■ For information, and to join the club, visit: winnershdanceclub.co.uk



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Cantley contract close to being signed

By ANDREW BATT
abatt@wokingham.today

THE news that the football operations at Cantley Park are set to be managed by the Berks & Bucks Football Association was raised at the recent full council meeting of Wokingham borough council.

As exclusively revealed by *Wokingham Today* on July 3, the county football association is set to sign a 10-year agreement with Wokingham borough council.

This was a result of the council exploring ways to address the ongoing financial losses at the park on Twyford Road, which were previously reported as being up to £50,000 per year.

Cllr Rebecca Margetts asked Cllr Mark Ashwell, the executive councillor for economic development, sport, leisure and art, said: "On July 2, the council issued a press release stating that Berks and Bucks FA would be the new leaseholder for football facilities at Cantley Park.

"It quotes Cllr Ashwell as saying: 'I am pleased to see Cantley Park is going to be given a new lease of life under Berks & Bucks FA.'

"I believe that this could be good news - if it was the case. However, the Conservative group has been told by officers that no decision has been made, and no lease has been agreed or signed.

"Is this the case, yes or no?"

In reply, Cllr Ashwell said: "The answer is yes and no.

"Firstly, I am really pleased to be able to confirm that we are continuing to finalise the details of an arrangement with the Berks & Bucks Football Association, and that we believe will provide a financially sustainable solution to maintaining this really important services that makes up part of our Cantley



Park facility.

"The press release explained at the time that the council was "... in the process of appointing" and that "... the arrangement was subject to contracts".

"A formal decision had not been made at that time.

"As you can imagine with such business, officers from both organisations will work in principle to explore the opportunity and as those details become clearer appropriate formal governance and

decisions will be enacted.

"As I was chairing a second resident and business engagement session that we called the Cantley stakeholders forum, I felt it important to get views from service users and other service providers at an early stage and the press release was issued to explain the intended direction of travel and reasons for that option being developed.

"I have got to say that it was really well received by all. I can confirm right now that as the arrangements

have been developed further, we have been able to get to the position of taking a formal officer decision in line with the council's constitution.

"This was made by the deputy chief executive on July 17, which now allows officers to finalise and agree contracts (as would be the case with decisions taken by the executive)."

We expect the final steps to be completed in the coming weeks ready for the services to commence in the coming months."

Most new housing in south Wokingham 'not part of the town'

WOKINGHAM town council has reacted with disappointment to plans by Wokingham borough council to reorganise parish boundaries.

In a response to the council's community governance review, it wrote how it was "... very disappointed and surprised that the borough council has recommended that most of the new housing being built between Floreat Primary School and Tesco, on the southern side of Wokingham, will not be part of the town.

"New residents will undoubtedly believe they are moving to the town of Wokingham, recognised as one of the best places to live in the UK.

"Despite the fact that they will live in an area completely connected to the rest of the town, and will be using the services in the town, under the borough council's current recommendation these new residents will not be considered a part of it.

"The rest of the town's residents, however, will be funding some of the services they use, and the parks and events they enjoy, which is unfair.

"Previously, as the town's housing expanded, the town's boundaries moved to include those new residents.

"It seems self-evident that this should continue to be the case.

"We ask that residents commenting on the recommendations put forward by WBC take all this information into account."

Wokingham borough council is asking for feedback on the review to ensure the arrangements for towns and parishes are as effective and appropriate as possible.

The previous review was conducted in 2016 and it is advisable to do a review every ten to 15 years.

The review is a legal process where we review how people are represented to ensure it is appropriate.

As well as town and parish councils, the review will also consider the electoral arrangements, such as the number of councillors and warding arrangements.

■ You can find out more, and have your say on the council's engage website.



Cotton Traders to open its doors in Wokingham with special gifts on offer



BRITISH heritage fashion brand, Cotton Traders, has announced the opening of its doors at Wokingham Squire's Garden Centre on Monday 4th August.

The new store opening will take over c.1,000 sq. ft of one of Wokingham's popular garden centres and will generate 5 new jobs for the local community. To celebrate the opening, Wokingham Today readers can enjoy £10 off when they spend £40 or more in store with the code SR1B.

There will also be £50 gift cards hidden around the store for five lucky customers to find, which can be spent either in store or online, plus lots of great free gifts.

Customers can expect a wide product offering across men's and women's summer clothing, including stylish shirts and blouses and lightweight layers, perfect for the warmer season.

The new store will showcase Cotton Traders' latest collections, allowing customers to feel the quality of Cotton Traders' clothing and try on pieces including timeless basics, outerwear, footwear and accessories.

The new store has been designed to ensure each customer's in-store experience is enjoyable, seamless and supported by friendly, professional customer service.

Cotton Traders is confident its new store will encourage customers to visit Squire's Garden Centre and experience all the destination has to offer, from food and drink to fashion and homeware.

Nick Hamblin, CEO at Cotton Traders comments: "We're delighted to be opening our doors in Wokingham - it's a garden centre with an incredible legacy and fantastic retail offering. We pride ourselves on producing high-quality clothing that is both affordable and timeless, and look forward to welcoming the local community to shop our latest collections."

Cotton Traders' new store is located at Squire's Wokingham Garden Centre and is set to open on Monday 4th August in time for shoppers to enjoy the SS25 collection.

Still no decision on future of Shute End



By ANDREW BATT

THERE has been no decision on the future of Wokingham borough council's headquarters at Shute End.

At the recent full council meeting, Cllr Peter Harper asked the Cllr Stephen Conway, the leader of the council, for an update on the situation.

He said: "The council last year advised it was considering moving its headquarters to the former Marks and Spencer building on Rose Street.

"Can you update me on the latest situation on the future council headquarters, and when a decision will be reached?

In reply, Cllr Conway said: "In January this year, the executive considered the findings and outcomes from the latest stage of feasibility work undertaken on the council's future office provision.

"Having considered this work, the executive agreed that the options of a full refurbishment of the existing Shute End offices, or a relocation to 28-38 Peach Street, Wokingham, or a leasehold

or freehold of a building, are the current viable options for future Headquarters provision.

"It was noted in the January 2025 executive report that the next stage of work on the future headquarters will need to be informed by the receipt of further clarity on the implications and timescales of any local government reorganisation and the outcomes of work to test and ratify future workforce ways of working and attendance levels in the office.

"At this stage no further substantive work is currently being undertaken whilst we wait for the outcomes of these two pieces of work.

"Future workforce considerations are aiming to conclude in the autumn, with outputs that will inform our future HQ requirements, particularly in terms of the required capacity of the building.

"In the meantime, the officer teams are working on implementing a short-term investment plan for maintenance and improvements at Shute End to ensure the existing headquarters remains fit for purpose and safe for our workforce and our customers."





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Daisy drops in to Wokingham

By **ANDREW BATT**
abatt@wokingham.today

WOKINGHAM Liberal Democrats welcomed their party's deputy leader, Daisy Cooper, to the borough.

She was in the borough to mark the recent election result that saw the party take overall control of Wokingham borough council.

Speaking exclusively to Wokingham Today, she said: "I'm here today to congratulate our supporters and councillors, to thank them for working so hard and to share in their celebrations.

"It's an incredibly difficult time to be running a local council.

"We all know that local government budgets were cut repeatedly under the last government, and there doesn't appear to be much change coming under the new government.

"It is difficult for every local council of any political persuasion, but I know from speaking to MP Clive Jones and the team that they'll be working incredibly hard to protect services against the odds, and to make sure that we maintain civic pride."

Cooper, who is MP for St Albans, is also the Liberal Democrat's treasury spokesperson.



Daisy Cooper takes a selfie with Wokingham Liberal Democrat supporters, councillors and MP Clive Jones (centre, holding dog). Picture: Andrew Batt.

Questioned about the government's current fairer funding consultation that could see Wokingham borough missing out on up to £50 million of funding over the next three years, she said: "If the government doesn't change course, then effectively what they're proposing is simply moving the pain of chronic underfunding from one local area to another.

We know that local government across the country has been chronically underfunded for years and

years, and they are just shifting that pain from one area to another.

"That will leave local councils in a completely invidious position where they will have absolutely no choice but to stick council tax up, because that is only that's really one of the only taxes that local authorities have in terms of their tax-raising powers, unlike central government, which can raise taxes in lots of different ways.

"When you look at the government's recent spending

review a couple of months ago, it had already built in assumptions that local authorities were going to put their council tax up to the maximum amount.

"And now we're looking at this so-called fairer funding formula, which suggests that councils will have to put it up even further, so I think people are going to be incredibly alarmed by this.

"I think every local council is going to really struggle because, we know that in places like Wokingham, there are huge

pressures on social care, there are huge pressures on special educational needs, and huge pressures on road budgets.

"It's really important that our councils can get fair funding."

Asked whether she feels the government may look to change its position on funding, she said: "Time will tell.

"If you look at how the Labour government has operated over the last year, there have been a number of examples where it has performed a u-turn.

"On the other hand there are examples, such as the absolutely hated jobs tax, which is really killed-off economic growth, where the government has stuck to its guns, and has continued regardless, and irrespective of both the warnings and the consequences that have arisen since.

"So, it's really quite hard to call it. What I would say is that the government has at least put this out to consultation, and if it is serious about listening, then hopefully it will take on board the comments that it gets.

"You can bet your bottom dollar that Clive here in Wokingham, and Liberal Democrats more broadly, will be speaking up for local government and the importance of protecting local services, particularly in social care and for special educational needs and disabilities services."

Council to start installing new zebra crossing this week

WOKINGHAM borough council is set to start installing a new zebra crossing on Wiltshire Road in Wokingham this week.

The road will be closed between Crutchley Road and Bishops Drive until August 28. This follows work to install a crossing on Warren House Road, which is due to be completed on August 8.

These works have been scheduled during the school holidays so disruption will happen while roads are quieter.

A new zebra crossing is also being installed on Bearwood Road in Winnersh this summer.

This work is taking place during the closure for the current SGN upgrade work, which is happening until the end of the month. By sharing the site, Wokingham borough council said it can reduce disruption as we don't have to close the road twice.

It will also be reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph between Harvest Drive and Alder Mews. The rest of Bearwood Road will keep a 40mph speed limit.

The reduction will help make the area safer for pedestrians, and ensure the crossing works safely in line with national guidance.

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Pub noise: neighbour vows to fight on

By **JAMES ALDRIDGE**
Local democracy reporter

A Wokingham town centre pub has been allowed to keep putting on DJ nights until 2am at weekends – but a neighbour has pledged to fight the decision.

The Redan in Peach Street has been operating as the main cocktail bar in the town since 2006. Last year, it underwent a £40,000 renovation.

The area has been used to host DJ sets, as the pub has a licence for music until 2am and closure at 2.30am on Friday and Saturday nights.

Christina Davis, who lives in Rose Street, called for the licence to be reviewed by Wokingham borough council, saying the events caused a disturbance due to thudding house and rave music, and the behaviour of clients.

A hearing was held on June 30 to adjudicate on the review.

Andy Rogers, the manager and leaseholder, argued he has a good working relationship with the council's environmental protection team to provide a safe and fun place for people to social at The Redan, which he called 'Wokingham's premier late night venue'.

Councillors ultimately decided to vary the licence conditions to conduct a noise management plan, which would introduce measures to limit noise levels.



The Redan on Peach Street, Wokingham.

However, Ms Davis, who works as a health visitor, intends to appeal the decision, accusing the council of bias towards the venue.

She said: "How on earth can this be?"

"Nothing has been taken into consideration; there have been two serious attacks."

She referred to incidents of assault recorded on May 31, and September 31, 2023.

Ms Davis added: "I contacted

the council's anti-social behaviour team on May 31.

"I said 'can you attend urgently? The Redan is awful tonight'. They completely ignored me. 40 mins later a man was seriously injured."

Ms Davis also argued that neighbours suffer from general disturbance from the venue.

She said: "People bang on doors, they shout, there is dreadful behaviour as they leave, and it comes from

dispersal at the Redan.

"We've had a year of our lives stolen all since the refurbishment put the DJ outside. The public nuisance is very bad."

"The news has come as a massive shock, as the council has been biased towards the Redan, the other properties in Peach Place have not been permitted to go past midnight."

She referred to the now closed Leafy Elephant gin bar,

which adjusted its operating hours after neighbour objections to its application in 2018.

Ms Davis has the right to appeal to a magistrates' court, as magistrates have the power to review the decision.

She said: "I am 100% making an appeal, which I have to do within 21 days,

"I'm appointing a solicitor, and I won't stop until this is rectified."

Good causes sought for lottery

THE Wokingham Borough community lottery, launched in June, is already raising money for good causes, benefiting the borough and our residents.

Many organisations have signed up as good causes, but there's still plenty of room for more to join.

Good causes include local not-for-profit organisations, charities, schools and community groups such as Scouts and sports clubs.

The Community Lottery runs each Saturday. Tickets cost £1 per week with at least 50p going to good causes. The rest is split between prizes and running costs. There is a minimum play for one month.

Each week, players have a chance to win £25,000 if they match all six numbers.

When you play the lottery, you can choose who you want to support.

Businesses not meeting the requirements of being a good cause can still get involved.

Your support or sponsorship can help community projects in the borough. This benefits the community whilst also helping to fulfill your social value commitments.

Wokingham borough council plans to hold super draws throughout the year, where players can win multiple prizes. Examples of prizes include vouchers, memberships, dining and activity experiences.





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Family celebrates five generations of women

A family from Berkshire are celebrating the new chapter after the arrival of its newest member, marking the fifth generation of women in the family line.

The Hookway family are basking in the joyous occasion of the birth of Delilah, who was born at the Royal Berkshire Hospital on June 21st.

The family explained how Joan Green, born on February 12th 1929, spent her earlier years in Caversham before relocating to Earley after the tragic loss of her younger brother Trevor.

Joan had two children: Susan Hookway, born November 16th 1951 and Philip Green, born September 8th 1954.

Susan had two children of her own: Susan had two children of her own: Lee Hookway, born December 14th 1971 and Lisa Hookway, born May 23rd 1976.

Lisa then continued the legacy with two children of her own: Luke Hookway, born February 12th 1995 and Sophie Hookway, born April 13th 1999.

The family now has five generations of women in the family after Luke and his wife Paige Hookway welcomed the birth of their daughter Delilah in June, making her the great-great-granddaughter of Joan Green.



In January 2024, at the age of 94, Joan moved into Abbeyfield Care Home in Winnersh as her dementia progressed and it was no longer safe for her to live on her own.

It was there, surrounded by her family, that a very special occasion took place.

Joan met her great-great-granddaughter,

Delilah, for the very first time in a truly exceptional moment for all of the family to remember.

The family explained how Joan's face lit up with joy upon setting eyes on Delilah. She spoke clearly and sweetly: "Isn't she small, she's lovely."

Autism award for Berkshire theme park

LEGOLAND Windsor has become the first UK theme park to achieve a national charity award in recognition of its work to provide an autism-friendly environment and inclusive customer service for autistic people.

It has gained the National Autistic Society's Autism Friendly Award, which supports businesses to be more inclusive for autistic people through providing accessible customer services, information and environments.

The award recognises the measures LEGOLAND Windsor has in place to support autistic people and their families, including autism training for the park's staff and reasonable adjustments including: access passes for those who are not able to queue for long times; sensory spaces; ear defenders; flashcards and communication cards; and accessible information about the park.

At least one in 100 people are autistic, which means more than 700,000 people in the UK, but many autistic people and their families still struggle to access community spaces, businesses and shops.

By meeting the standards set out in the Autism Friendly Award, businesses can ensure they offer an industry



approved autism-friendly environment.

The award can be adopted by any customer facing organisation, including businesses in the retail, transport, arts, entertainment and leisure industries.

Kate McBirnie, global head of accessibility at Merlin Entertainments, said: "At Merlin Entertainments, accessibility means more than just open doors – it means building an inclusive environment where every guest can explore, connect, and fully enjoy the magic of our experiences."

"We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to make unforgettable memories, and we're proud to play a part in making that a reality."

"Receiving this accreditation is an

important milestone for the LEGOLAND Windsor team, and we're deeply grateful to the National Autistic Society for their support and recognition.

Christine Flintoft-Smith, head of autism accreditation and projects at the National Autistic Society, said: "It's fantastic that LEGOLAND Windsor is the first theme park in the UK to achieve the Autism Friendly Award, and we congratulate the team on all their hard work to create a more autism-friendly place."

"It's so important for theme parks, and all public leisure spaces, to be more inclusive for autistic people and their families, so that everyone can be supported to enjoy a fun day out."

Meet Mary Poppins at fun day



YOU can meet Mary Poppins and Bert at a Summer fun day taking place this weekend.

The event, on Sunday August 17, is taking place at Dinton Pastures Country Park in Hurst, between 11am and 4pm.

It's free to attend and organised by JL Events, who have run many events this year at Wokingham borough's country parks.

It includes:

- Rides, bungees and inflatables.
- Meet Mary Poppins and Bert (12noon until 2pm).
- A licensed bar and delicious food.
- Face painting, crafts and games.
- Small animal holding.
- Craft stalls and more.

The Summer Fun Day is suitable for everyone, and you can also walk around the lakes and grounds at Dinton Pastures.

Newest member wins short story competition



EACH year the Thames Valley Writers Circle holds a competition for members in memory of Arthur Redway, who not only always made members smile at their meetings, but opened his house and garden at Cold Ash each summer for members and their families.

This year's story was restricted to 150 words and had to include 5 words chosen at random. It was judged by all members of the Circle without knowing the names of each author.

They selected as the winning story, 'Yoshi wins the Day' which was

written by Alison Trott, the Circle's newest member, with a story about two brothers who fell out, but were reunited years later.

Runner up was Les Williams with Dubai or Bust, the downfall of a money fraudster, with Davis Brunell, taking a rest from his Cornish Conundrums books with Aberfan, a tale of a Welsh mining disaster.

■ Further details of Thames Valley Writers Circle can be found on their website

Writers Group presents three short stories

By **EMMA MERCHANT**
emerchant@wokingham.today

A BOROUGH writers' group has revealed its annual short story competition winners.

Wokingham Writers Group's three best stories can be read in Wokingham Today.

The competition theme this year was External Influences, with the judge, author Louise Morris, looking for originality, interpretation of theme and quality of writing.

Louise's stories are inspired by women in the past who achieved extraordinary things, but whom history has forgotten.

Her debut novel, Operation Moonlight – about Special Operations Executive secret agents who helped win World War Two – won the Penguin Random House First Novel competition and was published in 2022.

Competition winners this year are:

Highly commended – Harriet Escapes, by Rachel Parker

Highly commended – A Tale of Three Clues, by Liz Godwin

And overall winner – From Under her Feet, by David Palin

Harriet Escapes, by Rachel Parker

I saw the mouse in the courtroom on day one – keen eyes watching me from the skirting-board, whiskers quivering as if she was picking up a wireless message.

A family friend – I've forgotten his name – gave me a pet mouse when I was a little girl.

I called her Harriet.

She was whip-smart, I used

to think.

I don't know why.

Perhaps, because her tail looked like a tiny whip?

When I told the other jury members about her, I got lectured by the foreman, Gareth.

"Helen, in a 'he-said, she-said' trial like this, we need to bring to bear all our powers of concentration.

"A man's future is at stake."

Powers of concentration! Condescending tw*t.

Later, I thought, 'What about the woman's future?' But it was too late to answer him back; the moment had passed.

On day two, the defence barrister cross-examined the woman in the dock.

He's more dramatic than the prosecution, more of a performer.

"Could you explain to the jury exactly how you escaped without a single physical injury?" he asked, turning to us, smirking.

Just then, the mouse shot out of the woodwork and darted across the courtroom.

"She's lightning-fast," I told the other jury members later. "Did anybody else see her?"

"How do you know the mouse is a she?" Gareth asked.

He shook his head and tutted loudly.

That night, I couldn't sleep.

I kept remembering the mouse scuttling across the courtroom floor.

Suddenly, I had a vision of myself walking to the bottom of our old garden, carrying Harriet in her cage,



Winner of this year's Wokingham Writers Competition David Palin with judge and author Louise Morrish. Picture: Wokingham Writers Group

opening the cage door, coaxing her out.

"Run away, Harriet.

"At least you can escape."

Then I'd cried hot tears.

I wish this trial could just be over.

On day three, the accused man was in the dock.

The defence lawyer spoke to him as if he was a trusted family friend.

I looked for the mouse everywhere but couldn't see her.

"I think she's gone to ground," I told the other jury members at lunch.

They just looked at me blankly.

I overheard Gareth muttering: "I have serious concerns about Helen – our secret for now..."

It was on the bus home that the terrible memory returned – Harriet's eyes shining in the back of her cage – how she went quiet.

I remembered the family friend I'd

called Uncle.

Putting his grown-up hands on mine.

"Do you want to stroke it? It'll be our little secret."

I pulled the bus alarm and had a panic attack on the pavement outside.

Bas*d, bas*d!

I would have been, what...eight?

The next day I arrived at court early.

Sleep or no sleep, just try and stop me.

The woman was called to the dock again.

She looked exhausted.

Suddenly, I spotted two bright, little eyes under the bench.

My Harriet, alive and well!

Whatever the sentence, I'm going to tell the woman in the dock all about Harriet.

How she's survived all these years.

How fast she is, how keen.

Whip-smart.

How proud of her I am.

Wokingham Writers is a friendly group of individuals with a common interest in creative writing.

Members range from keen hobbyists to aspiring novelists and published authors.

The group supports and encourages members with their writing projects, large or small, with meetings held at Wokingham Library on the third Saturday of each month.

Anyone interested in joining should ask at Wokingham Library.

■ For more information, visit: louismorrish.com



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From the opposition

Cllr Pauline Jorgensen



Proper consultation and action needed on inclusion

AT last July's Full Council meeting, Wokingham Borough's Liberal Democrat-led administration brought forward an Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (IDE) Strategy.

Conservative councillors welcome and support the broad aims of the strategy. We believe in an inclusive Borough that respects and reflects the full diversity of our residents.

I want to see a Borough which is fair and inclusive. However, what we received was not an inclusive policy, but a prime example of gesture politics – with worrying omissions.

If the Council is serious about inclusion, it must demonstrate this through deeds, not empty words. A strategy that fails to include all community voices - or ignores them in practice - is not only ineffective, but also fundamentally flawed.

One glaring oversight was the absence of any consultation or reaching out to the Borough's Hong Kong community - one of our fastest-growing groups. And yet, despite raising this issue at two earlier meetings, during earlier stages of the policy's development, I was disappointed to see they were still left out.

By its very nature, inclusion must not be selective. For most this may seem obvious.

It is not enough just to hold a few engagement sessions with the same communities that the Council is already engaging with. The Council needs to reach out to those communities who don't always get heard but deserve to be listened to.

My Conservative colleague, Cllr Peter Harper, rightly raised another critical concern – disability access in local infrastructure projects. While the IDE strategy speaks eloquently about equity, the Council's actions tell a different story. With the recent redevelopment of California Crossroads, the administration ignored advice from Guide Dogs for the Blind, who recommended a formal pedestrian crossing to support visually impaired residents. Similarly, the proposed A329 London Road redesign includes so-called "island bus stops" that force passengers to cross busy cycle lanes – posing a real danger for visually impaired and disabled users.

How can the Council claim to champion equity and inclusion, while designing infrastructure that excludes vulnerable people from safely getting about our Borough? This strategy is no use to anyone if it is merely a set of empty principles that aren't reflected in the Council's actions.

As Conservatives, we believe that inclusion should be built into everything the Council does – not just written into glossy strategies. That means listening to those with lived experience, consulting properly, and acting on feedback. It means putting accessibility and representation at the heart of planning, not treating them as afterthoughts.

If you tune into any Council meeting (please do, they're available on Youtube) you will find that there are lots of strategies and statements of intent, put simply, words. What you will see a lot less of from this Liberal Democrat administration is a forward plan, delivery, tangible results, promises kept, or in short, action.

The IDE strategy could be a force for good, but what we see instead is inclusion that really means some but not all residents, and ideals that aren't translated into real-life decision making. We urge the administration to go beyond political gestures and deliver genuine, positive action residents want to see.

Cllr Pauline Jorgensen is leader of Wokingham Conservatives

Letters

We love to hear from you! Send us your views on issues to email: news@rdg.today. We reserve the right to edit letters
Views expressed in this section are not necessarily those of the paper

From the chamber



Cllr Imogen Shepherd-DuBey

MANY of you will have heard by now about the current proposals for the Government's Fair Funding Review 2.0, which suggests that Wokingham Borough Council stands to lose £47m of funding over the next three years.

That would make us almost totally reliant on the council tax to cover service delivery costs, but nearly all of our council tax increase each year would be needed to plug the gap created by the withdrawal of government support, leaving nowhere enough left to cover inflationary pressures and increased demand for our services and we will still have to pull from other areas.

Most of our lost financial support is being sent by the government to parts of the country with higher levels of deprivation. I totally understand that the better off parts of the country, like ours, need to help those that are worse off. But this plan, as it stands, does not take into consideration that many councils are already at breaking point. Local Councils have been squeezed and squeezed over many years by different governments, and any financial latitude has already been squeezed out.

The government's proposals do not take into consideration what it actually costs to run the services that our residents need. They also do not take into consideration the cost of living in this area, particularly with higher housing costs, which has an impact on the costs of delivering basic services. Over 70% of our Council funding is spent looking after elderly and disabled adults and children, leaving a relatively small percentage for all other council services, such as grass cutting, roads, and bin collections.

While our MPs are working with us to get Wokingham a better deal, we cannot wait for the government to make up its mind on what it might do. We are already planning for next year's budget and looking at how this will affect the Council, going forward.

While we cannot say exactly what will happen, there is no way that this level of loss of government support can be completely absorbed without impact.

What I can promise you is, that we will do everything we can to look after the vulnerable and those who need our help the most, first. We will also redouble our efforts to reduce future costs by prevention and early intervention initiatives and continue to work closely with our partners in the community to maximize our ability to help our residents.

I strongly urge any resident who is interested in the Fair Funding Review 2.0 to respond to the Consultation, which ends on the 15th August 2025. Please help us to support the services our residents want us to provide.

From the chamber



Cllr Rachel Burgess

Disrespect for residents and disregard for facts

FULL Council often shows Wokingham Borough Council at its worst. The July 31 meeting was no exception, with instances of political point scoring, a display of disrespect for residents and fellow councillors, and time wasting for political advantage.

The first example was the debate over the delivery of a new sixth form building at Emmbrook School.

Residents have understandably been concerned about delays to the building's construction compared to the original timeline. However, the Liberal Democrat administration has now committed £240,000 for enabling works to proceed this summer. Given the decimation of local authority funding under the Conservative government, the suggestion that the Liberal Democrats would allocate £240,000 to a project they had no intention of completing is absurd.

The Conservatives chose to make the debate personal and, frankly, nasty.

The discussion was marked by repeated assertions that the Liberal Democrats were untrustworthy, accompanied by unpleasant personal attacks on Prue Bray – one of the most respected councillors in the chamber – and on Council Leader Stephen Conway.

This unedifying display from the Conservatives ignored the clear intention of the administration to

proceed with the new building, wasting valuable time for both councillors and officers, and ultimately exploiting residents' genuine concerns for political gain.

Another low moment at the meeting was Conservative Cllr Dave Edmonds' question regarding "ill-conceived" 20mph zones, in which he asked whether the Executive Member for Active Travel, Transport and Highways had "come to his senses."

As the Executive Member calmly explained, the risk of pedestrian fatality is up to five times greater when struck by a vehicle travelling at 30mph compared to 20mph. Numerous studies conclusively demonstrate that lowering the speed limit save lives and reduce costs; the evidence is unequivocal.

Yet in an environment saturated with digital outrage, facts apparently become irrelevant.

Cllr Edmonds' attempt to exploit what is, in part, manufactured anger echoes the recent backlash against 20 mph zones in Wales. The Welsh backlash was to some extent fuelled by online campaigns that were, in reality, led by Conservative councillors, some of whom had previously publicly supported 20 mph zones in their home areas.

By apparently choosing to ignore the fundamental reality that 20mph zones stop children being killed, Cllr Edmunds demonstrated that the Conservatives' choice to perpetuate a "war on motorists" narrative is both disingenuous and disappointing. In my experience many residents support for pedestrian safety. One can only surmise he values political posturing over evidence, and over residents' wishes.

Another candidate for the "war on motorists" badge surely must be the California Crossroads redesign. It has been shortlisted for awards,

and promotes pedestrian safety and active travel, something all political parties in Wokingham support. The Conservatives continue to use the junction to stir up anger for political gain despite being the ones who instigated the scheme. They will mention it at any opportunity – most recently at Full Council during a debate about Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

We also had a question about Labour's introduction of VAT on private schools. A key aim of the policy is to invest in our state school system; an aim the Conservatives appear unwilling or unable to recognise.

In this case, the questioner, Conservative councillor Yusra Salman, claimed that there were children in Wokingham on school waiting lists because of the policy. Executive Member Cllr Prue Bray clearly and calmly stated that there was no insufficiency of places because of Labour's policy and there was no measurable impact on pupil/place demand from the VAT changes. In another show of disrespect from the Conservatives, Cllr Salman asked her to 'check [the numbers] properly please'. Another complete disregard of the evidence to support an entrenched political narrative.

Politicians remain Britain's least trusted profession, and instances of this kind of conduct, even here in Wokingham, offer a clear explanation as to why. I am sorry to say that Full Council meetings can be profoundly disheartening, even leading me to question my own involvement at times. Yet, I stay because I remind myself of the purpose of my role: to represent residents and to effect positive change, however modest, on their behalf.

Cllr Rachel Burgess is the leader of the Labour group on WBC

From the leader



Time to roll our sleeves up

AUGUST is usually a quiet time in the council calendar. Evening meetings are few and far between and lots of people with children of school age are away.

But this August, officers and councillors at Wokingham Borough Council are working against the clock to put our case to ministers on the need for them to revise the proposed local government finance settlement.

You may have read already that over the next three years Wokingham is set to lose nearly all the core revenue support it receives from central government to help us cover the rising costs of delivering a wide range of services, including support for disabled children and adults, people with learning difficulties, and the frail elderly.

That would leave us almost wholly reliant on council tax to cover the costs of day-to-day delivery of services, but with the loss of such a significant amount of government support we will have nowhere near enough income to address inflationary pressures and increasing demand for services.

For many councils already in financial trouble, such a blow could prove fatal. Even in well-run Wokingham, where strong financial management and taking tough decisions on income and expenditure mean that we still have a good level of reserves, more tough decisions are inevitable if the government persists with its proposals.

We need to persuade ministers that their plans for the redistribution of funding away from places like Wokingham, and to councils it considers to be in greater need, will cause enormous damage if they are not at least moderated.

We recognize that the government is committed to redistribution, and our efforts are being devoted to convincing ministers to temper the impact by introducing a floor, or minimum level of financial support, for all councils.

Our chosen method of approaching this challenge is to identify potential allies amongst councils that are similarly badly affected and seek to work with them. Yelling from the sidelines about the unfairness to Wokingham alone is not likely to change ministers' minds.

So, over the last few weeks, Wokingham has reached out to more than fifty councils in the same boat as we are. The response so far has been encouraging. Bracknell and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead are lobbying alongside us for a moderation of the government's proposals. We have also had positive replies from councils further afield, of all political complexions.

Wokingham's role in the campaign is starting to be noticed, with some coverage even in the national press.

Besides direct approaches to councils, we are working with our two MPs to form a parliamentary campaign group. Clive Jones, MP for Wokingham, is writing to scores of other MPs to try to mobilize support. Yuan Yang, MP for Woodley and Earley, has had meetings with ministers to put our case and that of similarly affected councils.

This is the key period to try to get our message across. In the autumn the government will announce its decision on how it will proceed with the funding settlement for councils.

It will be far harder to get the government to make concessions after it has published its decision than before. Despite the lure of the summer sunshine, now is the time for us to redouble our efforts to protect Wokingham.

Cllr Stephen Conway is leader of Wokingham Borough Council

Vulnerable young man to lose home following noise complaints

By **EMMA MERCHANT**
emerchant@wokingham.today

A VULNERABLE young man is facing eviction on September 1.

Following a series of noise complaints, which his family claims are unfounded, he is just weeks away from losing his home.

Oliver, 22, lives alone in a flat managed by Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH).

Following a series of complaints made by a neighbouring tenant, he has been given notice to leave, despite the lack of any audio evidence to back up their claims.

"The tenant hasn't submitted any recorded proof of noise, yet MTVH believes them rather than us," said Oliver's mum, Ruth.

Oliver is a young man with Asperger's syndrome, who suffers from anxiety, and panic attacks.

He's also being assessed for ADHD and struggles with low mood and sleep issues.

Despite this, with some basic prompts and community support, he has been managing well.

But stress and fear caused by the ongoing complaints have left him increasingly anxious and unsure of his future.

Initially, Wokingham Borough Council housed him in hotels.

Then came a temporary house-share - isolated and far from home.

When he was finally offered a flat managed by MTVH, closer to family, it felt like a lifeline, says his family.

But within days noise complaints began.

"There's no insulation and every wall is hollow," said Ruth.

"Oliver likes to game, so I worried he might have been shouting when winning or losing.

"I had a firm chat with him, and apologised to the neighbour."

The family then went to considerable lengths to address concerns:

With Oliver's permission, they installed a camera in his living room, and a visual noise meter to help him monitor and regulate his volume.

They sound-proofed the flat with carpet, installed cupboard door pads, and repositioned furniture, but still the complaints continued.

Then the housing association recommended putting a second camera in Oliver's bedroom.

"It's an outrageous suggestion," said his mum.

"He doesn't play games in there, and it's a clear invasion of privacy.

"The safeguarding team at Wokingham Borough Council told us on no account to agree to this."

Meanwhile, the tenant who had made the initial complaints was seen on a doorbell camera to be frequently knocking on Oliver's door, triggering concern from social workers.

Oliver was advised not to answer.

"This tenant has made it clear they don't like Oliver," said Ruth.

"Sometimes they said he was screaming and shouting when he wasn't even there."

Ruth tried to compare the neighbour's complaints with the family's own footage, but MTVH shared encrypted files, readable only after numerous requests.

"The delays were very unhelpful," Ruth said.

"The living room camera overwrites data, and every day footage was disappearing."

Even a noise test, conducted by MTVH officers, involving trying to replicate loud activity in Oliver's flat, resulted in virtually no noise detected below.

Then came what Ruth describes as a "devastating ordeal", an online ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) Perpetrator Interview conducted by MTVH.

"It was horrific, and even the name of the meeting sounded like a decision had already been made," she said.

And the family was shocked when a social worker, arriving just 20 minutes late, was denied access to the meeting.

Soon afterwards, MTVH issued a formal Investigation Outcome and Tenancy Warning.

Even as the housing association admitted the family's footage showed 'no trace of noise' they said that complaints from three individuals—who Ruth believes to be the original tenant, their relative, and a friend—were enough to conclude that anti-social behaviour had occurred.

Their letter stated: 'It would be wise to place [a] device in your bedroom... the only way to prove your innocence in this matter and disprove the allegations made against you.'

"We've been pressured several times to put a camera in his bedroom," said Ruth.

"But it's not right, and we're just not doing it."

Two months later Oliver was served with a



Section 21 Notice to leave his flat.

"Change is really difficult for Oliver, and he will be devastated," said Ruth.

MTVH said: "The action we are now taking is the result of persistent anti-social behaviour which has had a profound impact on the lives of those affected over a prolonged period of time, and follows a full and thorough investigation.

"Our investigation has found clear evidence of multiple, recurring instances of serious anti-social behaviour including regular noise nuisance in the early hours of the morning.

"The action we are now taking has not been taken lightly, but all other efforts of resolution have been exhausted, and we believe it to be necessary and proportionate.

"While audio monitoring can be a legitimate part of investigating reports of anti-social behaviour, under no circumstances would we ever require audio monitoring equipment to be installed in residents' homes, especially not in a private area such as a bedroom."

Yet Wokingham Today has had sight of evidence that MTVH has, more than once, advised Oliver to install a camera in his bedroom.

Ruth asks: "Why was Oliver explicitly told that placing a device in his bedroom was the only way to prove his innocence?"

"Shouldn't the burden of proof lie with the accuser?"

"Why are written complaints being treated as irrefutable evidence, when no corroborating

audio has ever been found?"

"And if noises were loud enough to be disturbing, wouldn't they be captured by the living room camera?"

"Why ask for a bedroom device at all?"

Ruth says the family feels feel betrayed by a system that promised care but delivered suspicion and silence.

She says the family's efforts have been meticulous, respectful, and focused on resolution, but that they've been met with indifference and inflexibility.

"It all feels one-sided and discriminative," said Ruth.

"We need help, to make sure that MTVH is accountable, and that this never happens to anyone like our son again."

The family says they are desperately seeking legal support, and are calling for public backing.

"The actions taken against Oliver are not just unfair—they are deeply wrong, especially for someone so vulnerable," said Ruth.

"Oliver deserves not just a home—but dignity, justice, and a voice."

Wokingham Borough Council was invited to comment but said it does not report on individual cases.

Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of the individuals involved.

■ **Anyone able to offer legal assistance is asked to contact the family, via: news@wokingham.today.**

Affordable homes for Wokingham town centre

By **ANDREW BATT**
abatt@wokingham.today

WHAT has been hailed as a "transformative new housing development" is set to be built in Wokingham town centre, providing 21 high-quality, affordable homes for residents.

In a statement, Wokingham borough council said: "This major development represents a significant investment in affordable housing, which will be near the junction with Wellington Road and Station Road."

Wokingham borough council submitted a planning application for the site, with the aim for construction to start next summer and finish later in 2027 if permission is granted.

The site, previously earmarked for office use, has been reallocated for residential development in the council's emerging Local Plan due to a surplus of office space and a growing need for affordable housing.

Town centre sites are particularly needed so residents can access services easily.

The council is proposing that all 21 homes

be provided as affordable housing, which far exceeds the 30% minimum typically required.

Most will be one-bed flats, with a few two-bed properties.

This has been made possible through a combination of developer contributions, the Government's Brownfield Release Fund grant and some council borrowing.

Once built the homes would be managed by the council and allocated to priority groups, following its housing policies.

All homes will meet national space standards and accessibility regulations, ensuring they are suitable for a wide range of residents, including those requiring wheelchair access.

"This project is about more than bricks and mortar, it's about building a stronger, more inclusive community," said Cllr Stephen Conway, leader of the council and executive member for housing, partnerships and the local plan.

"By delivering 100% affordable housing in a central, well-connected location, we're investing in the people who need it most and

ensuring Wokingham Borough remains a place where everyone can thrive.

"Making it easier for people to access the things they need, thanks to its proximity to public transport and town centre amenities is a key part of choosing to use this site for affordable housing."

The development also improves the townscape at a key entrance into Wokingham. Designed with local materials and in keeping with the character of the area, the building will make the route between Wokingham station and the town centre more pleasant and attractive.

With excellent access to public transport, shops, and services, the site is ideally located to support sustainable living.

The council has also considered parking and access, aligning with the Town Centre Masterplan's vision to reduce car dependency and promote walkability.

The statement concluded: "This initiative is a cornerstone of Wokingham borough council's housing strategy, demonstrating a clear commitment to inclusive growth, social equity and long-term community wellbeing."



PRIDE OF READING AWARDS

Meena works tirelessly to create a great bar



Nominated for the Hospitality Award, Meena Arch, sponsor Cream Design

ABAR owner in Caversham, Meena Arch has been praised for her skill at creating a great experience but also for the way she looks after her staff.

Her nominator for the Hospitality Award, sponsored by Cream, said of Meena Arch: "Not only does Meena work tirelessly to create a great experience at Angel Bar for her clients but she really values, rewards and develops her staff.

"Meena also makes great contributions to the local community through her work with Pub Watch, Caversham Traders Association and Reading Business Club," they added.

"Always willing to connect people and give her time, she's a real asset to Caversham's small

business scene.

"If there's something Meena doesn't know about hospitality, then it isn't worth knowing!" they said.

Another nomination said: "Meena, Paul and the Angel Bar team go beyond the norm. They offer their services for free to organisations in and around Reading and put on many events at non-profit. They are truly wonderful individuals and deserve some recognition for all their efforts."

Cream

Tomson's team supports refugees



Nominated for Neighbourhood Champion, Tomson Chauke, sponsor Reading Football Club

B Radio, said: "A great contribution from Tomson was shown by his involvement in Limpopo Groove, a football team, refugee support group and many other activities including drumming workshops."

INVOLVED in many community activities, radio host Tomson Chauke has been nominated for the Neighbourhood Champion award sponsored by Reading Football Club.

The founder of the Sanctuary Strikers football club, which supports refugees and asylum seekers, has also been nominated for the Cultural Contribution award, sponsored by M&G Real Estate.

A nominator for Tomson who co-hosts the Berkshire Culture Connect show on Berkshire's



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PRIDE OF READING AWARDS 2025

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW CLOSED

Anurita's work explores living sustainably

Nominated for Putting Reading on the Map, Anurita Chandola, sponsors The Purple Turtle and Jacobs the Jewellers



A SPACEWEAR and textiles artist with an interest in the planet Mars, Anurita Chandola has been nominated for Putting Reading on the Map, sponsored by The Purple Turtle and Jacobs the Jewellers.

Anurita's work investigates how living resourcefully on Mars can inspire more sustainable ways of being on Earth. A graduate of the Royal College of Art, she explores the intersection of fashion, sustainability and space exploration, said her nominator.

The award recognises a group, business or individual who by their commitment and dedication, will have raised the profile of our fantastic town in a positive and influential light regionally, nationally or internationally.

Anurita investigates how to care for the emotional and physical well-being of future space travellers through clothing, the nomination says.

Her work combines storytelling, resourcefulness and innovation, creating garments out of NASA's Perseverance rover parachute fabric and leading textile design for the Building a Martian House project.

She recently gave a TED talk exploring how to create meaningful wardrobes for life on Mars using sustainable and culturally rooted practices.

Anurita has worked with local events to offer sustainable fashion workshops, led the Sustainable Fashion Show at Reading Water Fest for two years and educates children in local schools about sustainable fashion.

An expert in sustainable fashion and textiles, she offers guidance on revitalising wardrobes, minimising waste and addressing sustainable fashion challenges.



Female-focused gym has grown into powerful community movement

Nominated for Entrepreneur of the Year, Natalie Higley and Nicky Stevens, sponsor Rabbits Vehicle Hire



STRONG Women's Club, a female-focused strength training gym in Caversham, has grown into a powerful community movement in just three years under the leadership of self-funded founders Natalie Higley and Nicky Stevens.

Their nominator for the Entrepreneur of the Year awards, sponsored by Rabbits Vehicle Hire, added they have gone from a small idea to a thriving business supporting over 100 women each week.

"Their mission? To change how women feel in their bodies, by creating a space where strength, education, and community come first."

The nominator added: "What sets them apart is their deep commitment to inclusivity and impact. "From helping women build lifelong confidence through lifting, to recently expanding

their support to young girls navigating their changing bodies, they are creating generational change."

They said: "They've raised the profile of their business through grassroots growth, member-led success stories, and a clear purpose that resonates far beyond the gym."

The club also works with other local businesses for their special events and to provide education for their members.

"They have also been successful in building a diverse community of women of different ages, athletic ability, ethnicity and life experience, who support each other and build friendships."

The club have taken part in tractor pulls, assault courses, walks, paddle boarding as well as social events.

"Nicky and Natalie are passionate, purpose-driven entrepreneurs who have built something truly special – and Reading is stronger for it," said the nominator.



Faith Christian Group has helped for over 30 years

Nominated for Charity of the Year, Faith Christian Group, sponsor Reading Today



FOR over 30 years, Faith Christian Group has been a lifeline to those facing homelessness, poverty and crisis, said their nominator for Charity of the Year sponsored by Reading Today.

They said their wide-reaching initiatives include Readistreet, providing hot meals and support five nights a week in the town centre; Readifood, which distributes over 150 food parcels weekly to families referred by schools and professionals; A Bed for the Night, which offers

emergency winter shelter for the homeless and asylum seekers; and six Reading Pantries across the town, giving access to affordable food and essential household items.

"What makes this charity truly exceptional is its volunteer-led model, bringing together people from all backgrounds, including churches, schools and the wider community, to serve others with compassion and dignity.

"Volunteers not only prepare and distribute food and clothing but also offer friendship, warmth, and a listening ear—making each service user feel seen and valued."

They added: "Faith Christian Group goes beyond emergency aid, focusing on restoring hope and dignity. They continue to meet urgent need while building long-term community resilience. Their work embodies the very heart of what it means to serve Reading with kindness and integrity."



TORQUAY, SOUTH DEVON & DARTMOOR NATIONAL PARK

Departing Mon 20 Oct '25

Torquay is the perfect location to enjoy a seaside getaway in the heart of the English Riviera!

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel from Crawley
- ✓ 4 nights at the Riviera Hotel, Torquay (JG3 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ 2 for 1 bar offer (October dates only)
- ✓ Entertainment some evenings
- ✓ Scenic drive through Dartmoor National Park
- ✓ Cruise on the River Dart
- ✓ Excursions to Buckfast Abbey, Princetown, Tavistock, Dartmouth & Totnes

Optional excursion to Brixham & Teignmouth (£14pp)

5 Days by Coach only £369

Single Supplement £75



SHAKESPEARE'S STRATFORD & THE COTSWOLDS FAIRYTALE VILLAGES

Departing Fri 3 Oct '25

Join us as we discover some of the fairytale highlights in the Cotswolds, honey-hued Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold and Broadway. We also head to Stratford-upon-Avon, a pretty town of Tudor buildings and the birthplace of William Shakespeare.

SO MUCH INCLUDED...

- ✓ Return coach travel from Crawley
- ✓ 3 nights at a selected hotel in the Coventry area (JG2 rating) with dinner & breakfast
- ✓ 2 for 1 bar (6pm-9pm) on selected drinks
- ✓ Excursions to Stratford-upon-Avon & the Cotswolds (Moreton-in-Marsh, Stow-on-the-Wold & Broadway)

4 Days by Coach only £219

Single Supplement £60



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Asian shop turned into Vietnamese restaurant in Reading town centre



By **JAMES ALDRIDGE**
Local democracy reporter

A food and convenience store in Reading town centre has been turned into a Vietnamese restaurant.

K&K Supermarket, a shop that sold Vietnamese and ‘Asean’ food in St Mary’s Butts has been converted into the new restaurant Pho 86.

The website for Pho 86 states: “Our story started with a craving. After settling in the UK, our founders missed the soulful flavours of home – the slow-simmered broths, the fragrance of fresh herbs, the unmistakable warmth of a family meal.

“These dishes carried memories of Vietnam: street-side pho stalls, weekend meals with loved ones, and recipes passed down through generations.

“So we opened Pho 86 to bring that same spirit to life – a space where authentic Vietnamese flavours and heartfelt hospitality

come together.

“Since then, Pho 86 has become a welcoming spot for homesick hearts, curious food lovers, and anyone searching for a genuine, lovingly prepared Vietnamese meal.

“Every dish we serve is made with care, tradition, and time-honoured technique.”

The restaurant opened at the end of July, with a photo shared online showing a celebratory balloon arch and the first customers enjoying their meals.

The owners have applied to start serving alcohol with meals from 11am to 10pm each day of the week.

The application has been submitted to Reading Borough Council’s licensing department, and is subject to a statutory consultation.

You can comment on the application by emailing licensing@reading.gov.uk.

The deadline for representations is Wednesday, August 27.

Deloitte appoints James Brass as new senior partner

By **JAKE CLOTHIER**
jclothier@rdg.today

FINANCIAL advisory, risk management, and industry consultant Deloitte has appointed James Brass as its new office senior partner for Reading, it has announced.

Brass will lead a team of over 800 in his new role, based in the firm’s office at Abbots House.

Brass is Deloitte UK’s technology audit lead partner with over 20 years’ experience in audit and assurance.

His work has focussed on UK and US listed TMT companies.

Deloitte’s Reading office employs over 800 people, with specialisms including audit and assurance as well as tax and legal work.

Fifty of the firm’s partners are based in the city, while there were over 200 promotions across the office in June this year.

Brass will also focus on the office’s commitment to the local community through its local charity partner, Ability Net, an organisation which



Financial advisory, risk management, and industry consultant Deloitte has appointed James Brass as its new office senior partner for Reading, it has announced. Picture: Deloitte

empowers disabled people through technology skills and support, and its work with the John Madejski Academy.

James Brass, office senior partner for Reading at Deloitte said: “My priority is to ensure that Reading remains a great place for our people to work, develop and thrive. We have so much talent here across a variety of specialisms, underpinned by our commitment to fostering a collaborative and

supportive environment.

“This is an important time for the region, with growth in the Thames Valley powered by the technology industry and advances across life sciences and healthcare. Our role is to engage with the public and private sectors, as well as academia, in an effective way to capitalise on the mutual growth opportunities.”

Richard Bray, managing partner for the regions at

Deloitte, said: “James is the ideal leader to drive forward our Reading office. He has extensive experience, detailed knowledge of and a commitment to the Thames Valley community. The Oxford-Cambridge Arc supports over two million jobs, and it’s crucial that our teams in the South East are engaging effectively with businesses and leaders within it. James will be at the heart of that for Deloitte.”

Gym memberships to support healthy recovery

A CHARITY team has made a splash to fundraise for Cranstoun, helping fund gym and swimming memberships to support residents in recovery.

The team joined the recent Wokingham Lions’ Swimathon at Wokingham leisure centre.. They completed a relay, undertaking 60 laps in 50 minutes, raising just over £1,000 for the cause.

This will be matched by Places Leisure, bringing the total to more than £2,000.

Cranstoun helps people in the borough facing alcohol and drugs recovery, domestic abuse, housing issues and those in contact with the

criminal justice system.

The money will be used to fund around two dozen 12-week gym memberships for the charity’s drug and alcohol clients.

A client helped by the initiative last year, said: “The gym and swimming membership helped me so much. It changed my quality of life, and I was swimming every day and going to classes and realised I can get a natural high from exercise instead of the horrid drugs which were destroying me.”

Cranstoun hopes to offer the memberships to its clients next month.

A new boutique has opened in Wokingham borough with the goal of supporting new families.

Bumbles and Boo has opened its first shop at Unit 16, Suttons Business Park in Earley.

Founded in 2018 by two working mums, Bumbles & Boo is inspired by the joys and challenges of becoming parents.

Named after their daughters’ nicknames, the brand began as a way to create beautiful, practical gifts that support new families.

The decision to launch a physical store came in response to a noticeable gap in the local market - in that there simply weren’t enough dedicated baby product shops in the area.

The brand is built on the belief that shopping for new arrivals should feel joyful, supportive, and personal.

The boutique provides a friendly, consultative shopping experience, perfect for parents, grandparents, and gift-givers looking for something truly thoughtful.

With free on-site parking and a relaxed, out-of-town setting, visiting couldn’t be easier. They also offer a click and collect service, so you can conveniently shop online and pick up your order in-store.

Co-founder Emma Weldon said: “We’re incredibly excited to welcome the local community into our new boutique, and we can’t wait to share our world of thoughtful gifting and baby essentials with you.”





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Operation Spotlight sees over 300 arrests in road safety push



By JAKE CLOTHIER
jclothier@rdg.today

A NATIONAL campaign to tackle road safety has seen more than 300 arrests across Thames Valley.

Operation Spotlight has seen the Thames Valley Police Roads Policing Unit collaborate with other forces to focus activity on four fatal offences: speeding, drink and drug driving, mobile phone use and failing to wear a seatbelt.

In July, 163 arrests were made in connection with drink driving, and 165 in connection with drug driving, totalling 328.

A total of 690 tickets were issued: 337 for speeding, 76 tickets

for using a phone while driving, and 277 to people failing to wear seatbelts.

Detective Chief Inspector Justin Thomas, Head of the Roads Policing Unit for Thames Valley said, “The figures during last months’ operation are tragically clear. These fatal four offences ruin lives every year and they are avoidable.

“If you commit any of these offences, you are increasing the likelihood of killing or seriously injuring not only yourself but others.

“We want everyone to be safe on our roads, please think twice and remind others to do the same, call them out.”

Free chicken sandwiches for a year up for grabs as Popeyes opens second Reading branch

By JAKE CLOTHIER
jclothier@rdg.today

FRIED Chicken restaurant Popeyes has opened its doors at a second branch in Reading.

On Friday, August 8, the new restaurant at Reading Gateway retail park opened with a launch day extravaganza.

On opening day, the first 50 customers in the queue were treated to exclusive Popeyes UK merchandise and the first 100 bagged a free Chicken Sandwich.

The first three customers won the ultimate prize of free Chicken Sandwiches for a year.

The restaurant brings 52 new jobs to the local area, and will include 62 seats, self-service kiosks, and collection points for orders made online.

The new Hot Honey Chicken Sandwich will also be available from opening day, following demand from fans for its return to the menu.

It marks a sweet and spicy twist on the Popeyes classic, drizzled with Hot Honey sauce, topped with cheddar cheese and pickles, and served in a brioche bun.

The sandwich is joined by the return of the bigger-than-ever Hot Honey range, featuring the new Hot Honey Saucin’ Boneless, the comeback of Hot Honey Saucin’ Wings, and the Hot Honey Box Meal.

The Breakfast menu will also be



available from 8am until 10am every day, and will include a Breakfast meal deal for just £1.99, consisting of the bacon roll, a cajun hash brown and a drink, which can be claimed exclusively through the Popeyes app.

Tom Crowley, Popeyes® UK CEO, said: “We can’t wait to open our second Popeyes location in Reading.

“After the successful launch of our Broad Street restaurant, we are continuing our growth in the region with the opening of our newest restaurant at Reading Gateway - bringing even more people a taste of New Orleans.”

■ More information is available via: popeyesuk.com/



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TEST YOUR BRAINPOWER

No. 5583

Quiz Challenge

1. The German Ocean and the Frisian Sea were early names for what?

2. In June 2025, which Italian volcano erupted, propelling a dense column of ash and smoke several kilometres high?

3. A Blenheim orange is which type of fruit?

4. Which European porcelain factory used two blue crossed swords as its trademark?

5. Which famous racecourse is situated in the Bois de Boulogne near Paris?
6. Which 2025 film, starring Al Pacino, deals with the subject of exorcism?

7. The rock opera Tommy was written by which guitarist from The Who?

8. Losing My Virginity is the title of the 1998 autobiography of which business mogul?

9. The concept of logarithms was invented by which 17th century Scottish mathematician?

10. Who was the first monarch of the house of Tudor?

FIVE ALIVE EQUALISER

WA	EB	BD	GO	TE
BH		AR		SA
UE	DX	ID	TE	RS
AS		GE		OA
ET	OL	ED	AC	TY

Here are two miniature five-square crosswords using the same grid – but the letters have been mixed up. You have to work out which letters belong to which crossword.

5 9
3 ○ 4 ○ 2
4 7
8 ○ 2 ○ 6
2 8

Place the four signs (add, subtract, multiply, divide) one in each circle so that the total of each across and down line is the same. Perform the first calculation in each line first and ignore the mathematical law which says you should always perform division and multiplication before addition and subtraction.

CROSS CODE

4	18	11	25	18	10	21	18	22		26	22	13
18		22		7		18		20		2		18
23	20	6	25	6	8	19		9	6	8	14	4
		10		12		19		25		24		25
11	2	18	25		21	20	22		10	3	12	18
3				18	22	22	2	22		18		22
21	18	18	25	12	18		11	2	3	22	18	14
12		16		9	20	26	18	14				20
6	8	26	17		15	6	14		11	22	18	13
4		18		20		22		1		20		
17	6	22	18	14		26	12	3	4	25	18	22
18		11		5		12		12		6		20
14	2	25		18	7	18	22	13	21	2	14	13

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13													
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	A	21	22	R	23	24	25	26											

Each number in our Cross Code grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. You have three letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the alphabetical list of letters as you identify them.

SUDOKU

Each row and each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9, and so must each 3 x 3 box.

9	6	8						
		1				5		
7	5		9					2
8	1				6	4		
6	4		8	5				3
				1		6	7	
5	7		1		8	3		
	3				5	7		
	8	4	3				2	5

1						3		
	6			8		9		
8			7		5			
6				2			9	
4		3				6		
				4				7
2				9				1
3							2	
	9			5	4			

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8												
9						10						
11		12				13	14					
						15						
16				17			18		19			
20												21
22				23								

ACROSS

1. It is bound to be a shopping list (9)

6. Complain endlessly about an old bird (3)

8. Sections of the tree scheduled for complete removal (4-3-6)

9. Part of leaf pales out of recognition (5)

10. One who chooses to be at cross purposes? (7)

11. About to quote or read aloud (6)

13. Costly attack? (6)

16. Retrial ordered to establish what 1 Down went before (7)

18. Somewhat more lethargically offered for rent again (5)

20. In disordered haste at the funfair (6-7)

22. The point where one is punctual (3)

23. Passes on a tradition with ease (5,4)

DOWN

1. Motor causes endless trouble (3)

2. Soldiers coming from Oporto head off (5)

3. Tract of grassland left uncultivated (7)

4. Mechanical device tagged differently (6)

5. Ghostly eastern lake (5)

6. Lizard egg found in the heath (7)

7. Strongly opposed to having mixed other bran (9)

9. Withdrew, although had only a minor injury (9)

12. Fellow allowed a string of beads (7)

14. Exploit mechanism for directing horsepower? (7)

15. Where one has to go, given time (6)

17. Sucker for an old physician (5)

19. Passes on to follow the game (5)

21. Manage to go quickly (3)

QUICK CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4		5		6
		7							8	
9										
14										
17										
22										
26										
27										

ACROSS

1. Medicinal mineral (8)

5. Stopper (4)

7. Constant (9)

9. Reasonable (4)

10. Plunge (4)

11. Animal (5)

14. Public square (5)

15. Wading bird (5)

16. Roofing material (5)

17. Melodies (5)

18. Tooth (5)

19. Overweight (5)

22. Always (4)

24. Chore (4)

26. Painter (9)

27. Thick string (4)

28. Accuse publicly (8)

DOWN

1. Church service (4)

2. --- men's morris (4)

3. Use a razor (5)

4. Book of maps (5)

5. Tie securely (4)

6. Machine regulator (8)

7. Resolute (9)

8. Rock of ----- (9)

11. Lowest male voice (5)

12. Die away (5)

13. Topic (5)

14. Pitiable (8)

20. Offspring (5)

21. Killed (5)

23. Tall grass (4)

24. Bean curd (4)

25. Small hawk (4)

NONAGRAM

M	O	P
I	S	E
C	O	T

How many words of four letters or more can you make from this Nonagram? Each word must use the central letter, and each letter may be used only once. At least one word using all nine letters can be found.

Guidelines:

31 Good; 37 Very Good; 43 Excellent.

Any word found in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (Tenth Edition) is eligible with the following exceptions: proper nouns; plural nouns, pronouns and possessives; third person singular verbs; hyphenated words; contractions and abbreviations; vulgar slang words; variant spellings of the same word (where another variant is also eligible).

SOLUTIONS

14	D	15	K	16	X	17	H	18	E	19	G	20	A	21	B	22	R	23	W	24	Q	25	T	26	C
1	J	2	O	3	U	4	S	5	Z	6	I	7	V	8	N	9	F	10	M	11	P	12	L	13	Y

1	8	4	3	6	7	9	2	5
2	3	6	4	9	5	7	8	1
3	9	5	2	1	4	6	7	8
4	7	9	1	2	8	3	4	6
5	6	4	7	8	5	9	2	1
6	1	3	8	7	5	1	2	4
7	8	3	9	4	1	8	6	2
8	2	1	6	8	3	5	9	7
9	5	6	2	3	8	1	7	4
10	1	7	9	4	2	6	5	3

1	8	4	3	6	7	9	2	5
2	3	6	4	9	5	7	8	1
3	9	5	2	1	4	6	7	8
4	7	9	1	2	8	3	4	6
5	6	4	7	8	5	9	2	1
6	1	3	8	7	5	1	2	4
7	8	3	9	4	1	8	6	2
8	2	1	6	8	3	5	9	7
9	5	6	2	3	8	1	7	4
10	1	7	9	4	2	6	5	3

QUICK CROSSWORD: Across – 1 Catalogue; 6 Moat; 8 Root-and-branch; 9 Sepal; 10 Elector; 11 Rectile; 13 Charge; 16 Trailer; 18 Relet; 20 subtrahend; add; divide; Total: 10.
NONAGRAM: Clockwise from top left – multiply; 6 The Ritual; 7 Pete Townshend; 8 Richard Branson; 9 John Napier; 10 Henry VIII.
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NONAGRAM: Clockwise from top left – multiply; 6 The Ritual; 7 Pete Townshend; 8 Richard Branson; 9 John Napier; 10 Henry VIII.
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LIVEMUSIC

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RaW Sounds Today



Andrew Merritt

EACH week, there are 10 great acts in our playlist, all with a connection to Reading or Wokingham. As always, we have a wide variety of musical styles, but we think they're all worth a listen, and we hope you find something new to enjoy as well as maybe getting out to experience the thrill of live music. This week's playlist is solely acts who will be performing at Wokingham Festival this year!

1. JNR x Natalie Gray- Meant to Be –

Natalie Gray qualifies for the playlist on at least three counts. The flame-haired synthpop artist is originally from Reading, she headlined at Readipop Festival last year, and she's just been announced as part of the line-up for Wokingham Festival on Sunday 24th August! This is an epic tech-house dance track, a collaboration with producer JNR, and what we believe the young folks call a banger! Her just-released latest single, Camouflage, dedicated to anyone who is tired of wearing a mask, or not fitting in, is also well worth a listen.

2. Tom Robinson Band - Power in the Darkness –

TRB emerged in the days of punk rock in the late 70s with a blend of sing-along anthems and campaigning lyrics. Tom Robinson himself built a career as a radio presenter of both music and speech, and is an accomplished raconteur. Nearly 50 years on, the messages of the band's songs, such as this one, are just as relevant as when they were written, and we are thrilled at the prospect of seeing the band headline at Wokingham Festival on Monday 25th August, where they'll be sure to play all the hits!

3. Solstice - Plunk –

Another track from Solstice's acclaimed latest album, Clann, its prog rock credentials of an unusual time signature and longer run-time are augmented by a funky feel and heavenly vocal harmonies, plus a great guitar solo from founder-member Andy Glass. Just one more reason we're looking forward to this year's Wokingham Festival when Solstice will be on the main stage, just before Tom Robinson on Monday 25th!

4. Selina and the Howlin Dogs - Gemima –

Selina and the Howlin Dogs have been delighting audiences with their original blues rock for some time now, with appearances at festivals including several at Wokingham Festival. They are back on the main stage again this year, and one of the songs we're looking forward to seeing performed live is this brand new release, *Gemima*, which was originally written by band member Alan Burgin forty years ago! This timeless piece of rock and roll is the second track from their forthcoming album, "Third Time Lucky".

5. Bonnie and the Jets - Naked –

Wokingham Festival has been developing an international flavour in recent years, with Focus and Sonic Whip from the Netherlands. This year, already featuring in the playlist is Leonie Jakobi (from Germany, though living Liverpool) and, flying in from Oslo, Norway, we have Bonnie and the Jets bringing their brand of upbeat blues rock. This recent number reminds us that whoever we are and whatever we do, we all came into the world the same way.

6. EBB - No One's Child –

EBB were voted Best New Band by the readers of Prog Magazine for 2024, and they've just been announced as an addition to the Monday line-up at Wokingham Festival. This newly released track from their live album recorded just down the road in Southampton will give you a flavour of what to expect, though it doesn't convey the full theatricality



Natalie Gray *Picture: Andrew Merritt*

of their performance - find them on youtube or come along to the Festival to experience that!

7. Leonie Jakobi - The Life My Parents Had –

We've featured Leonie Jakobi before, after we saw her on a road trip to Southampton, and we're delighted at the prospect of seeing her perform again soon, on the Marquee stage at Wokingham Festival on Monday 25th August. This is a lovely upbeat track as Leonie muses on what she has in life and how it compares with what her parents had.

8. Cold July - In My Head –

Cold July hail from Guildford, where they formed at ACM just last year, and their sophisticated sounds belies their young age. This is their second single, which showcases their three part harmonies and rich production, and the intelligent lyrics examine a situation where something is at once too close and too far. They just played at Limitless in Basingstoke, and we look forward to seeing them on the Marquee stage at Wokingham Festival on Saturday 23rd August.

9. One Eyed Man - Breakfast in Bed –

Stuart Hutton is the One Eyed Man, born and bred in Berkshire before travelling all over the globe gaining many experiences which have been the inspiration for his musical output. This is one of his original compositions about falling in love and the joy of getting to know someone new. We saw him on the Marquee stage at Wokingham Festival four years ago, at Wokingham and at Are You Listening? Festival two years ago and this year we will be seeing him grace the main stage on Saturday 23rd August.

10. Josh Roberts - Caught Up –

Josh Roberts is from Maidenhead, and we caught him performing recently at Milk as part of Are You Listening Festival in Reading in May. This is his latest single, released just last month, drawing on the experience of dealing with a relationship that ends. Josh made his Glastonbury debut last year, and we look forward to seeing him on the main stage at Wokingham Festival this year, on 24th August!

**You can listen to all the songs featured
in our Spotify playlist at [https://bit.ly/
rawsoundstoday](https://bit.ly/rawsoundstoday)**

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Naturally speaking

A NEW addition to the borough's countryside is a colourful wasp – or is it a spider?

It's definitely a spider, although anyone spotting it could be forgiven for making the mistake.

Argiope bruennichi is a wasp spider that bears vivid yellow and black stripes.

It has recently been observed during recent conservation work around the pond at Hazebrouck Meadow in Arborfield, where volunteers were excited to discover the harmless mimicking creature.

Originally from the Mediterranean, it was first seen in the UK in the 1920s, and has gradually expanded its range, particularly along the south coast.

Spider wasps are becoming more common in the UK mainly due to the warming climate and natural spread of their numbers.

Preferring grasslands, they build large orb-shaped webs that often feature a distinctive zig-zag silk pattern.

Though the spiders look dramatic, they pose no threat to humans.

Their stripy disguise is a defence mechanism designed to protect them from predators unwilling to try a mouthful of what they suspect is a wasp.

Their presence at Hazebrouck Meadow is a promising sign that work to manage the site is helping to support biodiversity and attract a wider range of species.

Lots of residents have also spotted wasp spiders in their gardens, and have been comparing sightings online.

Opinions are divided.

'Cutie', 'gorgeous', 'creepy', and - just 'nope' are just some of the comments posted.

'They're cool,' said one person, "leave them alone."

Wasp spiders are a rare and fascinating find in the UK to be enjoyed and marvelled at.

■ For information, visit: wildlifetrusts.org

CHURCH NOTES

Healing positivity

RECEIVING a diagnosis for a serious medical condition earlier this year was a very big shock.

And what happens next will depend a lot on how I react to it.

If I want the best possible outcome, I need to have a very positive attitude, and a very big contributor to achieving this is living in the present moment.

With the future uncertain, I am forced to rely on the present moment.

And that means not dwelling on the past.

I must consider what's ahead, in terms of what I can do, now, to affect the future - here in the present moment.

It's important to me as I live with this diagnosis, but living in the present is important at any stage of life.

It's difficult to plan, when the future is so uncertain - I can't plan holidays or to go to the theatre or music concerts, which I love.

But looking back to the past and regretting mistakes isn't helpful, and makes a positive mindset much more difficult to achieve.

So the present is the place where I can find contentment - and the only place where I can take action.

Living in the present also means that I get more out of each day.

I'm more aware of what's going on around me, and I am able to pay more attention to those I love.

Geoff Peck is a member of Woosehill Church, which meets on Sundays at 10am.

■ For information, visit: woosehillchurch.org

Dan Le Sac and Scroobius Pip

decade– 20 years af

By CHERRY BURNS

ON FRIDAY, August 1, the long-awaited return of a duo which started here in Reading arrived with the surprise drop of a new album.

Hip-hop and spoken word pairing Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip put out their first new musical release in 11 years, *Live in Places* (2006-2014).

The album is a retrospective of sorts, spanning their formative years in the mid-2000s, up to shows which would prove to be some of their last before stepping away in 2014.

Speaking on the new album, Pip explains: "Dan had hinted at it, and then I kind of pushed it forward, thinking it was the 10 year anniversary of our last gig- then Dan had to let me know it's been 11, so it wasn't going to be.

"Not to get too deep, but we'd both been through periods on social media where it felt like we can't talk about our career, because if we do people get annoyed that we're not touring any more.

"I've posted pictures before of really great memories that came up on my phone, and people have gone 'oh, stop teasing us.'

"And it's been long enough now that it felt like this would be a really nice way to celebrate what we did over the years."

Dan says: "It's just really difficult to be able to celebrate the stuff you've done without getting told off by the Internet

"We're more willing to be told off lately- more resilient to it."

Pip adds: "You're allowed to like things from the past, but not necessarily want to go back there.

"I've no desire to be in school again, but that doesn't mean I didn't love periods of that."

The new album features a number of mixes of some of the pair's most celebrated songs from across their live performances and appearances.

It stands as a record of their work between 2006 and 2014, a parenthetical which Pip explains: "Alludes to what that album is in a short-hand way.

"It's not one live gig that we purposely recorded to be released, it's a collection from a load of different gigs over the years."

One of those very first live gigs was right here in Reading's own South Street Arts Centre.

"Reading is where we first shared the bill together- and maybe our second or third was at Plug and Play.

"It's mad how relevant Reading is to our whole career."

Dan, who has lived in Reading for a number of years, says: "I was also the promoter on three of our gigs.

"We had one at the Fez [Club], which me and my friend Tim played upstairs under the name I Bet Ya, and that's where Pip played with the likes of Nathan Fake and Vincent Oliver.

"In the downstairs was this group called Cracked, who did an electronica night every Sunday night at the Rising Sun Arts Centre.

"We wanted to use those opportunities to get on the bill, and that gig ended up being the first time I played as Dan, having been DJ Sackboy before that."

Pip adds: "Mike [from Cracked] ended up putting in some money for the video for *Thou Shalt Always Kill*."

That video would garner the moniker of 'the most requested song of all eternity' on John Kennedy's XFM show, and was dubbed "the hottest track in the world right now" by Zane Lowe in 2007.

"That was our first video, which led to our whole career- I was living out of my van essentially, and we didn't have one hundred quid each to film a video.

"I was paying two people's rent at the time, and that became the start, what launched it all.

"We got to tour the world because of two blokes in Reading that promoted at the Fez- it's always been key to us."

However the world of music has shifted momentarily since the mid-2000s, and the barrier for entry for a budding musician has become almost monolithic.

With marquee streaming services paying fractions of fractions of pennies for streams, only the most ubiquitous acts see any return on people actually playing their music, and have to rely on touring to support themselves-an option that so many performers just don't have.

And that is just one of the reasons that the album itself hasn't appeared on services such as Spotify, Pip explains.

"Adding anything to Spotify-because of their support of Israel and just f*cking AI killing machines in general, their investment and support on that-feels weird.

"When you decide you're not going to put it on Spotify, you think 'are we going to put it on Amazon Music?'

"Well, Jeff Bezos could solve poverty in a day, but he's flying Katy Perry to the moon for some reason-they're all not great.

"BandCamp isn't perfect, but it is-at least for the moment-still made for artists."

Even BandCamp, however, is not necessarily immune from an almost ubiquitous decline-often dubbed the internet's 'ensh*tification'.

Dan says: "Eventually it will succumb-it has sort of already, but nowhere near..." he trails off- "it's fine.

"I've been on it for about nine years now, and the first thing I put on there was *Cherished, Overthrown*.

"It was this collection of all the demos which I'd offered to Pip or [Rhode Island rapper and activist] B. Dolan, or [London singer-songwriter, producer] Sarah Williams White.

"And that then felt like a closing bracket on my career before I went and got a job.

"But it got a lot of support, which meant I kind of eeked it out- but no, I'm done. I always feel done."

There's also a closeness, an intimacy, with a BandCamp release, they explain, which isn't there with more straightforward streaming services.

Not only can artists charge for releases, or encourage a pay what you want donation, the output is also made available for download to the user.

"If someone is buying the download, they're gonna listen to it- they own it, it's right there for them.

"Having put out multiple albums on streaming, you notice that the first track can get, like, 10 times the plays of the final track."

Dan has composed a number of videogame soundtracks for the likes of Disney, as well as indie titles, including in the *Tron* franchise, both *Subsurface Circular* and *Quarantine Circular*, and *Arcsmith*.

This uneven distribution of listens was particularly true of some of his latest output, his work on the soundtrack of the videogame *Tron: Catalyst*.

"It's some of the best work I've ever written, but it's in the last five tracks-they just don't get heard compared to the start of the album, so format is important."

Pip adds: "This is an album-not to get all 'artists who had the peak of their career in the early 2000s'-but it is made to be listened to as an album.

"While it is taken from loads of different gigs, there was so much back and forth about how we get it right, making those transitions right, so that it isn't jarring.

"If it's on a streamer, the most popular four songs just get grouped together- it's not been made that way."

It also comes as something of a breakaway from previous attitudes to live albums.

Dan says: "Live albums kind of generally live in this second class or B-list band.

"A record deal signs over your recordings; live performances are a different recording, so a lot of bands would sell off a live album to someone other than their record deal holder.

"Some live albums are just for people to grab some cash off of a label, and I think that means they've got a kind of tainted history.

"But a live album can be a really wonderful thing if you put the effort into it."

Pip says: "Not to get too w*nky and artisty about it, but when we were touring, I had no desire for a live album.

"I loved the fact that those performances existed in those rooms at that time for those groups of people.

"There'll be things that happen just for those people in



Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip at Bestival in 2006

the moment."

He adds: "I always wanted to release a live album, once we'd played it a few hundred times, how we'd delivered them- everything evolved."

"On the rare occasion I heard an album, I'd think 'oh is that how it goes?'-it's not the album, and then it would get so much better."

It has only become harder for many artists to find subjects and methods of consumption from their actions.

Artists like Kneecap and Bob Vylan, who come under particular scrutiny for the violence in their live shows and in their music, while others like Spotify's Daniel Ek have millions in AI military defence companies.

Pip says: "It's hard to imagine at times that people who aren't political in their content are when you're deeply politically engaged."

"Everyone's different-for those that want to be completely possible to just be alright with the world."

"For us it's great to be able to make our own music, and not have to compromise."

Scroobius Pip's first album in a while starting out in Reading



Picture: Jules Annan

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Dan explains: "When labels and distributors are involved, they're taking their cut, so we kind of have to put it on the evil platforms, or nobody really gets paid.

"Whereas when it's just the two of us on BandCamp, we can agree to take that hit.

"But it's really hard with politics; I've always felt incredibly uncomfortable that I'm very politically vocal while also making money through a parasocial relationship with those who follow me.

"It's a juxtaposition- if I go on social media and advocate trans rights every single day, I do make more money.

"I absolutely believe in trans rights-and I don't mind making more money either- but that gets you into a dangerous situation where you can be seen as being disingenuous.

"I don't want to be making money out of someone else's pain."

Pip says: "People have different limits and different amounts of exposure.

"I remember when the Harry Potter game came out recently- it seemed to me that any good person wouldn't be streaming it because of JK Rowling.

"But I was speaking to somebody about it, and they asked 'oh is she not a good egg?'

"And they just weren't in on that- which was almost good in a way; it's a lot of poisonous, very ugly stuff- but you'd assume that they were making a statement by endorsing it."

Dan adds: "It's about giving people a little grace, not assuming that because they haven't posted that thing that they're an evil person.

"People maybe don't know or might need a gentle explainer- nine times out of ten it's mild ignorance that can be fixed."

Both Dan and Pip have, since leaving music and performance full-time, continued their direct engagement with their audience.

To date, Pip has amassed ten years' worth of conversation of speaking to contributors from the fields of film and television, comedy, art, and social issues on his podcast, *Distraction Pieces*.

But they have also continued that 'in the moment' interaction through a different kind of streaming: live streaming.

Both attract audiences through Twitch, a service which sees viewers chatting and contributing while a performer plays videogames, crafts, produces music, or even just converses with the audience.

Dan says: "I only started because I was alone in the house; I met a streamer at a photoshoot or an event, and she was talking about it in terms of being such a social part of her day.

"We had just ended Dan and Pip, and I'd recently ended a relationship, so I was just trapped in this house down Oxford Road, kicking my heels.

"Twitch was a way I could just exist and be in the world again; I also started seeing a girl who lived in America (who I've now married!) and it was a way of us being able to be a part of each other's day."

Pip explains: "For me, it feels very distant from the live stuff, but I get reminders that I used to be on stage, and it feels so different.

"But it does scratch some of that itch- it is happening live, there's that excitement and it can be in the moment- especially if there's a lot of organisation.

"There can be moments that are like those old days, the pressure and the resulting buzz."

■ **Dan Le Sac vs Scroobius Pip, *Live in Places (2006-2014)* is available to stream and download via [DanLeSacVsScroobiuspip.bandcamp.com](https://bandcamp.com/DanLeSacVsScroobiuspip)**



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SPORT
TODAY

FOOTBALL

WOODLEY IN THIRD AFTER MAINTAINING UNBEATEN START TO LEAGUE CAMPAIGN

By **ANDREW BATT**
abatt@wokingham.today

WOODLEY United missed the chance to regain top slot in the Combined Counties League Division One on Tuesday night.

Their opponents Langley, who had failed to record a single point in their opening three matches, earned a 1-1 draw.

On target in the first half for Woodley United was Troy Williams, with his fifth goal of the season.

Woodley United sit in third place, undefeated with 10 points from their opening four games, ahead of their trip to Amersham on Saturday where they face Sport London Benfica.

There was a reality check for Wokingham Town, who suffered a 3-0 defeat at Amersham Town.

Saturday's result came after moral-boosting victories in their opening league and FA Cup matches this season.

Reading City picked up their first points with a 101 draw at Ashfield Town (Middx), with George Armstrong grabbing the equaliser on 65 minutes.

Both Wokingham Town and Reading City take a break from league action this weekend.

Reading City will face Didcot Town on Saturday in the preliminary round of the Emirates FA Cup, while Wokingham Town's tie at home to Larkhall Athletic will take place at Lowther Road on Sunday, with a 3pm kick-off.

Pre-season action continued for some of our ladies' teams last weekend.

Wokingham Town Ladies and Finchampstead Reserves took part in an entertaining 3-3 draw, while Ashridge Park suffered a defeat against Liphook United.



Woodley United v Langley on Tuesday night. Picture: Andrew Batt



FOOTBALL

Royals defeat Pompey to progress in Carabao Cup



READING FC bagged their first win of the new campaign with an away victory at Fratton Park as they got the better of Championship side Portsmouth.

The Royals have had a tough start to their League One season having lost their opening two fixtures without scoring a goal, while Portsmouth kicked off their Championship season last weekend with an away win at Oxford United.

However, Noel Hunt's side were able to deliver a knockout blow to their Championship opposition despite making nine changes as they confirmed their place in the second-round draw.

More than 1,000 Reading fans made the trip down south to see their team pick up their first win of the season and will be hoping that this result will be the catalyst to kickstart their campaign.

Andre Garcia opened the scoring for Reading in the 34th minute and Kelvin Ehibhatiomhan doubled that advantage just four minutes later with a cool finish.

A Portsmouth side which included former Royal John Swift were unable to inspire themselves to a fightback as Reading went through despite grabbing a goal in stoppage time to make it 2-1.

Reading will be looking to gain their first points of the 2025/26 season when they host AFC Wimbledon in League One at the Select Car Leasing Stadium on Saturday.

Portsmouth: Killip, Swanson, Matthews, Bowat, Farrell, Swift, La Roux, Devlin, Kosznovsky, Yang Min-Hyeok, Waddingham
Subs: Ani, Archer, Bianchini, Chioma, Dozzell, Poole, Segecic, Singerr, Thomas
Reading: Stevens, Ahmed, Stickland, Burns, Ryan, Rushesha, Spencer, Doyle, Camara, Garcia, Ehibhatiomhan
Subs: Pereira, Fraser, Jacob, Kyerewaa, Elliott, Okine-Peters, Abrefa, O'Mahony, Savage
Goals: Garcia 34, Ehibhatiomhan 38', Singerr 90+3'



Ashridge Park Ladies Pictures: Andrew Batt



Wokingham Town Ladies v Finchampstead Reserves Pictures: Andrew Batt



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**SPORT
TODAY**

FOOTBALL

Made in Reading: Michael Olise nominated for Ballon d'Or award

By **ANDY PRESTON**
apreston@wokingham.today

FORMER Reading FC star Michael Olise, who spent some vital years in his development with the Royals, has been nominated for the Ballon d'Or award.

The 23-year-old had a tremendous first season in Germany with Bayern Munich where he netted 12 goals and claimed 15 assists, more than any other player in the Bundesliga. He also scored five times in the Champions League.

His impressive performances saw him named as the Bundesliga Rookie of the Season before he scored three times at the Club World Cup for Bayern.

Olise joined Reading's academy in 2017 and it wasn't long before he made his mark on the first-team.

He made his first-team debut in March 2019 and went on to play 73 games in all competitions for Reading before Premier League Crystal Palace activated his £8million release clause.

Olise continued his remarkable development during three seasons at Palace which prompted Bayern to splash out around €60m to sign one of the hottest prospects on the continent.

He is also making his mark on the international stage and has so far won eight international caps for France and has scored two goals.



Michael Olise

FOOTBALL

Royals reveal ninth signing of summer



READING FC have revealed their ninth signing of the summer transfer window with the addition of midfielder Kamari Doyle.

The 20-year-old joins on a one-year loan deal from Premier League side Brighton & Hove Albion.

Doyle began his career at Southampton, making his senior debut at just 16 years old in an EFL Trophy fixture against Charlton Athletic in October 2021. He signed his first professional contract on his 17th birthday and played a key role in Southampton's youth success – lifting the Under-18 Premier League South title in 2021-22 and Premier League 2 Division 2 in 2022-23, as well as helping the club reach the semi-finals of the FA Youth Cup.

First Team Manager Noel Hunt said: "There was a lot of interest in Kamari from other clubs at our level, which shows how highly he's rated. We're really pleased to have secured his services. He's a technically gifted player with great vision and bravery on the ball.

"Kamari has already shown he can perform at this level with two strong loan spells. He brings creativity, energy, and goal threat to our midfield.

"We've done our homework, spoken to those who know him well, and the feedback has been fantastic – he's a determined, focused young player who wants to improve and contribute. We're excited to work with him and help him continue his development here at Reading."

CRICKET

Berkshire CCC denied place in NCCA final



Cricket Picture: Wikimedia Commons

By **DAVE WRIGHT**
sport@wokingham.today

BERKSHIRE have been denied a place in an NCCA final by Dorset for the second time this season.

In June, they lost to them in the Trophy semi-finals by six wickets at Wargrave, and last Sunday, Dan Lincoln's men suffered a 60-run defeat in the T20 competition's Super-12 stage, at the same venue.

Dorset, put in to bat, posted a useful 177-6 with Joe Eckland making 51 off 35 balls and Dylan Church 48 off 37, the pair adding 99 in 11 overs for the third wicket. Ben Salter was the pick of the home bowlers with three for 36 from four overs.

Berkshire scored 28 in the first three overs, but then lost three wickets in successive overs, and never recovered. No 9 batter Andy Rishton crashed 25 off nine balls before the team's innings ended at 117 in the 16th over.

The host county bounced back with a 45-run win over Suffolk in a 17/17 overs game, making 169-4 largely due to a sensational knock by Johnny Connell, who raced to 90 off just 44 deliveries, with five sixes and nine fours. The Henley star and Dan Lincoln, with 51 off 31 balls, put on 66 in 5.4 overs for the second wicket.

Suffolk reached 70 in eight overs for the loss of one wicket, but slumped to 124-8, with Samm Daniel taking 4-18. Dorset (133-5) also beat Suffolk (131-7) by five wickets to book their ticket to Wormsley Estate on Sunday, August 25, when the semi-finals and final will be played. Joining them are last weekend's other group winners, Oxfordshire, Norfolk and Northumberland.

Berkshire return to the three-day Championship this coming Sunday (11am) when they host Herefordshire at the Falkland club in their final home fixture. Following two draws in rain-affected fixtures, it is a must-win game if they are to stay in with a chance of retaining the Western Division title.

Oxon currently top the table with 23 points, two more than both Berkshire and Cornwall. All eight Division One fixtures played so far have ended in draws.

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(BEARWOOD ROAD, WINNERSH)
(30 MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Wokingham Borough Council, in exercise of its powers under Sections 81 and 82 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended), and of all other enabling powers, has made the above-named Order.

The **effect of the Order** would be to introduce a 30mph speed limit on part of **Bearwood Road, Winnersh**. This section of Bearwood Road will become a restricted road under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, by virtue of the presence of a system of street lighting, and no further speed limit signage will be required except terminal signs where the restricted road status begins/ends.

The Order will come into effect on **25th August 2025**.

A copy of the Order, relevant plans, and statement of reasons are available for inspection during office hours Monday to Friday at the Wokingham Borough Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BN.

Alternatively, online at:
<https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/traffic-management-and-road-safety/traffic-regulation-orders-tros> If any person wishes to question the validity of the Order or any of its provisions on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 or that any requirement of the Act or any instrument made under it has not been complied with, that person may, within six weeks from the date on which the Order is made, apply to the High Court for this purpose.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Service Director Highways and Transport,
Wokingham Borough Council,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1BN

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(ROWLAND WAY, EARLEY)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that on the 7th August 2025 Wokingham Borough Council as Traffic Authority made an Order under Section 14 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along:

Rowland Way, Earley between its junctions with B3350 Elm Road and Falstaff Avenue.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Falstaff Avenue, Harcourt Drive, Pepper Lane and B3350 Elm Road or by this route in reverse.

Works requiring this restriction are due to take place between 18th August and 21st August 2025.

The reason for these prohibitions is to allow Thames Water contractors to undertake installing valves on the water network to ensure a constant water supply in safety.

Access for residents and businesses within the boundaries of these restrictions will be maintained at all times.

The restriction imposed by the Order shall only apply during those periods when traffic signs complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 are lawfully displayed.

The restrictions contained in the Order shall come into operation on the 18th August 2025 and shall continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING APPEAL - HEARING NOTICE**

Planning Application Number: 242011

Location: Land East of Warren Lodge, Warren Lane, Finchampstead RG40 4HR.

Proposal: Full application for the proposed change of use of land for the siting of 2 no. Gypsy and Traveller pitches with creation of a second access off Finchampstead Road and associated installation of soft and hard landscaping.

Appeal by: Mr Karl Richards

The application is available to view online by scanning the QR code or visiting [wokingham.gov.uk](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk) > Planning > Comment/Search planning applications and typing in the application number above. All libraries in the Borough have internet access in order to view this page. For more information on the planning process, view our frequently asked questions page on the council website.

This is to inform you that the Inspector appointed by the Office of the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will hold a Hearing into this appeal at The Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1BN.

The nominated Inspector for the hearing is **L Cuthbert** and the **Hearing** will open at **10:00 am Tuesday the 30th of September**. The Hearing is due to run for **1 day**.

Documents relating to the appeal are visible on the Council's website by viewing application number **242011**, Wokingham Borough Council Online Planning.

You may attend the Hearing and, at the Inspector's discretion, take part in the discussion. Anyone wishing to speak at the Hearing should make themselves known to the Inspector on the day.

If you wish to participate in the Hearing in person or virtually, please contact the Local Planning Authority for details on planning.appeals@wokingham.gov.uk. The hearing is being live streamed and can be viewed using the Teams links published on the Council's website.

The decision will be published on the Planning Inspectorate website and also on the Council's website. The Planning Inspectorate References is **APP/X0360/W/25/3364902**.

Anyone with a disability, who wishes to attend the inquiry is advised to contact planning.appeals@wokingham.gov.uk to check that suitable provisions are available.

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(HONEY HILL, WOKINGHAM)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that on the 7th August 2025 Wokingham Borough Council as Traffic Authority made an Order under Section 14 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along:

Honey Hill, Wokingham between its junctions with B3430 Nine Mile Ride and Redlake Lane.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via B3430 Nine Mile Ride and Heathlands Road or by this route in reverse.

Works requiring this restriction are expected take place between 18th August and 20th August 2025 between 09.00 and 18.00

The reason for these prohibitions is to allow WBC contractors to undertake drainage works in safety.

Access for residents and businesses within the boundaries of these restrictions will be maintained at all times.

The restriction imposed by the Order shall only apply during those periods when traffic signs complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 are lawfully displayed.

The restrictions contained in the Order shall come into operation on the 18th August 2025 and shall continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL

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PUBLIC NOTICES

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, EARLEY & WOODLEY)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that Wokingham Borough Council as Traffic Authority proposes to make an Order under Section 14 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along:

- Culver Lane, Earley between its junctions with Wokingham Borough Boundary and Sutton Close.

The alternative route for all vehicles (eastbound) affected by this restriction shall be via Palmer Park Avenue, A329 Wokingham Road and B3350 Church Road.

The alternative route for all vehicles (westbound) affected by this restriction shall be via B3350 Church Road, A329 Wokingham Road, St Peters Road, Brighton Road and Wykeham Road.

- Anderson Avenue, Earley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Culver Lane.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Fairview Avenue, Eastcourt Avenue and Culver Lane, or by this route in reverse.

- Blackthorn Close, Earley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Culver Lane.

No diversion route available.

- Eastcourt Avenue, Earley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Culver Lane.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via B3350 Church Road, Palmerstone Road and Culver Lane, or by this route in reverse.

- Milton Road, Earley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Culver Lane.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Byron Road, Whitegates Lane and Culver Lane, or by this route in reverse.

- Palmerstone Road, Earley between its junctions with Culver Lane and B3350 Church Road.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via B3350 Church Road and Culver Lane, or by this route in reverse.

- B3350 Church Road, Earley between its junctions with Eastcourt Avenue and Oldfield Close.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via A329 Wokingham Road, A3290 Loddon Bridge and The Bader Way Interchange, Bader Way, Miles Way, Spitfire Way, Headley Road East, Headley Road, Reading Road, A4 London Road and B3350 Pitts Lane, or by this route in reverse.

- Woodlands Avenue, Woodley between its junctions with B3350 Church Road and Crockhamwell Road.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Crockhamwell Road, Loddon Bridge Road, A329 Wokingham Road and B3350 Church Road, or by this route in reverse.

- Access Road from Woodlands Avenue to the Bulmershe Centre, Woodley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Woodlands Avenue.

No diversion route available.

- Fairwater Drive, Woodley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Woodlands Avenue.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Nightingale Road, Crockhamwell Road and Woodlands Avenue, or by this route in reverse.

- Howth Drive, Woodley between its junctions with Woodlands Avenue and Rushbrook Road.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Beechwood Avenue, Lytham Road and Woodlands Avenue, or by this route in reverse.

- Roslyn Road, Woodley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Woodlands Avenue.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Crockhamwell Road and Woodlands Avenue, or by this route in reverse.

- Lytham Road, Woodley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Woodlands Avenue.

- Crockhamwell Road, Woodley between its junctions with Woodlands Avenue and Silver Fox Crescent.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Loddon Bridge Road, A329 Wokingham Road, B3350 Church Road and Woodlands Avenue, or by this route in reverse.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Beechwood Avenue, Howth Drive and Woodlands Avenue, or by this route in reverse.

- Woodway, Woodley for a total distance of 15 metres from its junction with Woodlands Avenue.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Beechwood Avenue, Howth Drive and Woodlands Avenue, or by this route in reverse.

Works requiring this restriction are due to take place from 1st September 2025.

Please note that the works have not yet been scheduled. Works requiring these restrictions will take place when appropriate permits are in place.

The reason for these prohibitions is to allow Wokingham Borough Council contractors to safely carry out cycle improvement works and associated activities.

Access for residents and businesses within the boundaries of these restrictions will be maintained at all times.

The restriction imposed by the Order shall only apply during those periods when traffic signs complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 are lawfully displayed.

The restrictions contained in the Order shall come into operation on the 1st September 2025 and shall continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Assistant Director – Highways and Transport
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICES

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(WATERLOO ROAD, WOKINGHAM)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF
TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that on the 7th August 2025 Wokingham Borough Council as Traffic Authority made an Order under Section 14 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along:

Waterloo Road, Wokingham between its junctions with William Heelas Way and Borough Boundary

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via Peacock Lane, Vigar Way, A329 Berkshire Way, A329 London Road and William Heelas Way or by this route in reverse.

Works requiring this restriction are expected take place between 18th August and 20th August 2025 between 08.00 and 17.00

The reason for these prohibitions is to allow South East Water contractors to connect a temporary building supply connection to a water main in the carriageway and verge in safety

Access for residents and businesses within the boundaries of these restrictions will be maintained at all times.

The restriction imposed by the Order shall only apply during those periods when traffic signs complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 are lawfully displayed.

The restrictions contained in the Order shall come into operation on the 18th August 2025 and shall continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(B3016 JUBILEE ROAD, FINCHAMPSTEAD)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF
TRAFFIC) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that Wokingham Borough Council as Traffic Authority proposes to make an Order under Section 14 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along:

B3016 Jubilee Road, Finchampstead between its junctions with B3348 The Ridges and Wick Hill Lane.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via B3348 The Ridges, B3348 Wellingtonia Avenue, A321 Lower Wokingham Road and B3430 Nine Mile Ride or this route in reverse.

Works requiring this restriction are expected to take place on 1st September 2025 between 08.00 and 16.00 .

The reason for these prohibitions is to allow Chevron contractors to undertake tree works in safety.

Access for residents and businesses within the boundaries of these restrictions will be maintained at all times.

The restriction imposed by the Order shall only apply during those periods when traffic signs complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 are lawfully displayed.

The restrictions contained in the Order shall come into operation on the 1st September 2025 and shall continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Assistant Director, Highways and Transport
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(A321 LOWER WOKINGHAM ROAD,
CROWTHORNE)
(TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF
DRIVING) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that Wokingham Borough Council as Traffic Authority proposes to make an Order under Section 14 (1) (a) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 the effect of which is to prohibit any vehicle from proceeding along:

A321 Lower Wokingham Road, Crowthorne between its junctions with Priors Wood and B3348 Dukes Ride.

The alternative route for all vehicles affected by this restriction shall be via B3348 Dukes Ride, New Wokingham Road and B3430 Nine Mile Ride, or by this route in reverse.

Works requiring this restriction are due to take place from 1st September 2025.

Please note that the works have not yet been scheduled. Works requiring these restrictions will take place when appropriate permits are in place.

The reason for these prohibitions is to allow SGN contractors to undertake gas mains replacement and associated works in safety.

Access for residents and businesses within the boundaries of these restrictions will be maintained at all times.

The restriction imposed by the Order shall only apply during those periods when traffic signs complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 are lawfully displayed.

The restrictions contained in the Order shall come into operation on the 1st September 2025 and shall continue in force for a period not exceeding 18 months or until the works have been completed, whichever is the earlier.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Assistant Director – Highways and Transport
Wokingham Borough Council
Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1WL

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING
(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)
PROCEDURE (ENGLAND) ORDER 2015
NOTICE UNDER ARTICLES 13 & 36
OF APPEAL**

Proposed development at: **Land North of Reading Road, Arborfield**

Take notice that an appeal to the Secretary of State is being made by: **Dandara Southern Ltd and Elstree Land Ltd, C/O Woolf Bond Planning, The Mitfords, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Reading, RG7 1AT**

Against the decision of **Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1BN** who refused planning permission for:

Outline planning application for the erection of up to 111 dwellings, with associated works, parking, landscaping and publicly accessible open space, with access from Reading Road.

Any owner of the land or tenant who wishes to make representations about this application, should write to the Council within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Signatory: **Woolf Bond Planning (on behalf of appellant)**
Date: **14/08/2025**

Statement of owners’ rights: The grant of planning permission does not affect owners’ rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or lease.

Statement of agricultural tenants’ rights: The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants’ security of tenure.

’Owner’ means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest the unexpired term of which is not less than seven years.

’Tenant’ means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.

PUBLIC NOTICES

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
NOTICE OF PROPOSAL
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(POUND LANE, SONNING)
(20 MPH SPEED LIMIT EXTENSION)
ORDER 2025**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Wokingham Borough Council, in exercise of its powers under Sections 81, 82 and 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended), and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act. The effect of this proposed order is to extend the existing 20 miles per hour speed limit on Pound Lane, Sonning by a further approximately 105 metres south eastwards, thereby reducing the existing 30mph restricted road limit accordingly.

Schedule:

From the current 20mph speed limit terminal point located approximately 15 metres north westwards of Little Glebe, extending southeast-wards for a distance of approximately 105 metres.

Documents giving more detailed particulars of the proposals may be inspected during office hours Monday to Friday at the Wokingham Borough Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BN from 14th August 2025. Alternatively, they can be viewed on the Council’s website at Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) (wokingham.gov.uk)

Any person wishing to object to or support the proposed Order should send their representations in writing, stating the grounds on which they are made, to the Traffic Management Team, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BN or by email to TM.consultations@wokingham.gov.uk. The deadline for the receipt of objections is 23.59 pm on **4th September 2025**.

Date: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton,
Service Director, Highways and Transport,
Wokingham Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1BN

**WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
LICENSING ACT 2003
S17 APPLICATION FOR PREMISES
LICENCE
NEWSPAPER NOTICE**

Mohammad Jamal Hossain of Ranga Lounge at 25 Denmark St, Wokingham, RG40 2AY proposes to carry on the following licensable activities at the above premises.

List of licensable activities	Days	Hours
Supply of Alcohol	Monday - Sunday	12:00 hours to 23:00 hours
Live Music	Monday - Sunday	12:00 hours to 23:00 hours
Recorded Music	Monday - Sunday	12:00 hours to 23:00 hours

Representations may be made in writing by any responsible authority or interested party in the vicinity of the premises to the Licensing Authority – Licensing Service, Wokingham Borough Council, Shute End, Wokingham, RG40 1WW or by email to licensing@wokingham.gov.uk. All representatives made are open to public inspection.

Representations to be made by closing date.

Representations to be made by: **28th August 2025** (28 days from day after day on which application given to the licensing authority)

The application may be viewed during normal office hours at the above address. It is offence under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connect with an application. A person guilty of an offence under this section this liable on summary conviction to an unlimited fine.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Public Notices

- Planning Notices
- Traffic Notices
- Premises Notices
- Probate Notices
- Tenders and Contracts
- Goods Vehicle Operator Licences
- Hearing / Appeals Notices
- Name Change Notices

**ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984
NOTICE OF MAKING
WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL
(PARK AND RIDE PARKING PLACES)
(CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT)
ORDER 2025 NO.2**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Wokingham Borough Council (hereinafter referred to as "the Council"), in exercise of its powers under Sections 1, 2, 4, 32, 33, 35, 37, 38, 39, 46, and 124 and Part III and IV of Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the 1984 Act"), the Traffic Management Act 2004, and all other enabling powers, and in accordance with Section 39(3) of the 1984 Act and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Part III of Schedule 9 to the 1984 Act, proposes to make the above-named order which will come into effect on **25th August 2025**.

The **Effect of the Order** will be to designate Thames Valley Park & Ride (Maiden Erleigh and Whitegates), Winnersh Park & Ride (Winnersh) and Coppid Beech Park & Ride (Wescott) as formal Park and Ride parking places within the borough.

The general effect of the Order will be to:

- Revoke in full the Wokingham Borough Council (Park and Ride Parking Places) (Civil Parking Enforcement) Order 2024.
- Designate the following car parks as Park and Ride parking places within the borough for the purpose of civil parking enforcement:
 - **Thames Valley Park & Ride (Maiden Erleigh and Whitegates)**
 - **Winnersh Park & Ride (Winnersh)**
 - **Coppid Beech Park & Ride (Wescott)**
- Incorporate all parking restrictions, terms, and conditions for these sites into a single, consolidated Traffic Regulation Order to improve clarity and enforcement.
- Introduce a barrier control system at the entrance to Thames Valley Park & Ride (Maiden Erleigh and Whitegates). The barrier will be closed overnight between 10:00pm and 6:00am to prevent access during these hours.
- Introduce a release fee payable for vehicles requiring release from Thames Valley Park & Ride when the barrier is closed during these restricted hours

A copy of the Order, relevant plans, and statement of reasons are available for inspection during office hours Monday to Friday at the Wokingham Borough Council Offices, Shute End, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1BN. Alternatively, online at: **www.wokingham.gov.uk/roads/traffic-management-and-road-safety/trafficregulationorders-tros**

If any person wishes to question the validity of the Order or any provision contained in it on the grounds that it is not within the powers conferred by the Act, or on the grounds that any requirement of the Act or any instrument made under it has not been complied with in relation to the making of the Order, that person may, within 6 weeks of the date of the making of the Order, apply to the High Court for this purpose.

Dated: 14th August 2025

Chris Easton
Service Director Highways and Transport,
Wokingham Borough Council,
Shute End,
Wokingham,
RG40 1BN

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READING & WOKINGHAM

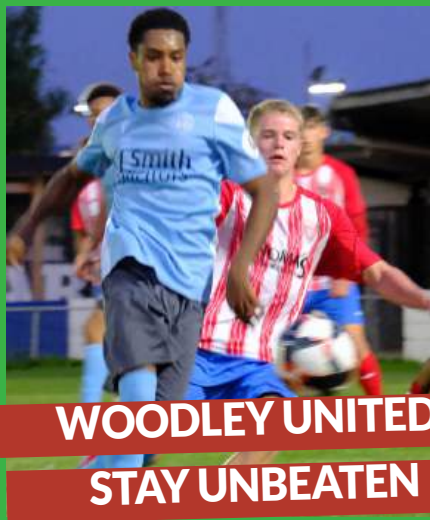
14.08.25



**BERKS
CCC IN
ACTION**



**ASHRIDGE PREPARE
FOR SEASON**



**WOODLEY UNITED
STAY UNBEATEN**



**SUMAS FACE
FINCHAMPSTEAD**

READING EARN FIRST WIN OF THE SEASON

ROYALS DELIVER KNOCKOUT BLOW