



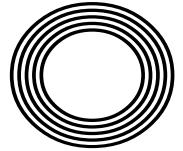
REVEALED
Pantone Colours
of the Year 2021

Most bizarre
excuses
**FOR PULLING
A SICKIE**

Remembering a legend
**DAME BARBARA
WINDSOR DBE**

Lewis
HAMILTON

Sports Personality of the Year racing into the record books



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Editor's notes...

JANUARY 2021



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** BillericayShenfield. Well, let's just say 2020 was quite a year. There is not a single person in the country who hasn't been affected by COVID-19. As a publishing house, over the course of a few months, we sank to some profoundly low depths; our nose was bloodied. It's fair to say I had sleepless nights over what the future might entail, but looking back on it now I'm left with a sense of having gained from the experience. That might seem a strange thing to say, but in a way, coronavirus woke us up to what we needed as a business. I'm talking about boring financial reviews, the drive for greater efficiency, streamlining, a change to work practices.

And what about the positives we as individuals have discovered? Working from home - brilliant; making more contact with relatives - overdue; paying more attention to our health and fitness - great. Of course, we have all lost a lot, but now, on the dawn of a new era - and a vaccine - let's try to gather in all the things we have gained, while being better prepared and stronger for the new year ahead. With that in mind, I'd like to thank all our loyal customers and readers. We are in this together. Wishing you all a very happy and healthy new year.

Nik Allen

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At the time of print all content in **VISION** was relevant and up to date according to COVID-19 government guidelines

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The great Dame BARBARA WINDSOR DBE

CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF THE QUEEN OF TV

In a troublesome, traumatic year, many saw Dame Barbara Windsor's death in early December 2020 as another profound loss.

An only child born in Shoreditch two years before the breakout of World War II, 'Babs' made her West End debut at the age of just 13, in the musical *Love from Judy*.

As the Swinging Sixties swung, so too did Barbara Windsor's buoyant, bubbly, effervescent personality carry forward an industry. From appearances in films *Sparrows Can't Sing* (for which she won a BAFTA), *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* and *The Boy Friend*, to sitcom work with *The Rag Trade* and *Wild, Wild Women*, her acting talent was as admired as it was, at times, underplayed.

Indeed, when the slapstick comedy of the *Carry On* movies came around, while decorated in her roles, Babs became somewhat pigeonholed.

Nonetheless, she re-emerged in the 1970s to return to stage work with *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Twelfth Night*, among others.

From high jinks to heavy drama, Babs was an entertainment icon in her own right. Never clichéd, never disrespected, she came to represent an era of British entertainment in which our output rivalled anyone else the world over.

And in accepting the opportunity to take ownership of the Queen Vic pub in Albert Square in 1994, Babs' career reinvention proved a masterstroke. A boisterous, no-nonsense, independent pub landlady, she kept a lid on Walford's most tempestuous characters, and remains the only person in *EastEnders'* 35-year history to have tempered the problematic Mitchell brothers, Grant and Phil – her sons.

Of course, Windsor's infectious persona,

effortless charm and cheeky sex appeal saw her decorated with no shortage of admirers. From relationships with Ronnie Kray and comedy sidekick Sid James, she enjoyed a lively 21-year marriage with nightclub owner Ronnie Knight. The pair shared a luxury home on Stanmore Hill. She later married chef Stephen Hollings and wed a third time in 2000, to Scott Mitchell, bridging an age gap of 27 years. She didn't have any children.

Following her passing, the tributes came from far and wide for an actress whose time in front of the camera was really only a platform to a breath-taking life in showbusiness.

The sadness of her death was calmed somewhat by the fact Babs had been in unsteady health for a number of years. In 2014 she retired from all acting duties when diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Undeterred by the darker clouds that she sensed were about to gather, and ably assisted by her husband, she leapt into a new role of raising both funds and awareness for the disease, and continued to campaign up until her death.

While still seen out frequently over the past few years, the toils of public engagements eventually proved too much for someone who had previously bathed in the decorative sunlight of press and publicity.

Slipping away quietly, as she did on December 10, was perhaps the most inauspicious of conclusions to a booming, bustling life full of big personality. And yet, while we all take away slightly different memories of Barbara Windsor, our collective recollections will surely always be of an actress who spearheaded a golden era of British entertainment, always accompanied by a warm smile and mischievous laugh.

Photo credit: Shutterstock



THE WORLD AROUND US

Part 3

In the third part of our environmental series, we look at the key driver in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's the air above our heads.

In all the trust we place in environmentalists, activists and those passionate about preserving our planet, perhaps when it comes to air we need to invest the greatest level of trust.

On the ground, the world in which we live seems largely pleasant, and as far as air quality goes, our immediate environment is certainly much cleaner today than at any time since the Industrial Revolution, and noticeably so.

Yet in 2020 we are driven by targets – achieving a net zero greenhouse gas equation and an 80 per cent cut in emissions by 2050 being two of the biggest headline grabbers.

The problem for the preservation of air quality is that industry rolls on. We are a long way from the smoggy days of 1950s London, but air pollution still contributes to almost 10 per cent of premature deaths, while costing around £40 billion each year.

Of course, the enforced lockdown in the spring of 2020 was perhaps the greatest exemplar of

how great our footprint is. Within weeks, scientists reported a 40 per cent drop in air pollutants. It showed that protecting our personal health had a hugely beneficial effect on that of the environment.

And yet, when back at full capacity, even the healthcare systems in England will be responsible for an estimated 4 to 5 per cent of our carbon footprint, with 6.7 billion road miles each year coming from patients and their visitors travelling to NHS hospitals and centres.

Never in starker terms was it clear that the play-off between the health of the planet and the health of the people who inhabit it remains a tug of war we will continue to see.

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BIG ENERGY SAVING WEEK...

- CHECK
- SWITCH
- SAVE

JANUARY 18 - 24

What better time to try to reduce your energy bills than in the week before payday when you are undoubtedly feeling the pinch after Christmas?

Plus, you don't even have to make massive changes to your lifestyle to enjoy significant savings.

Remember, all the little things really do add up.

1. **Use your microwave more:** Using your microwave is one of the most efficient ways to both heat up and cook food.
2. **Be water-conscious:** Whether you are making a cup of tea or boiling food in a pan, only use the amount of water that you need.

3. **Slow cook your family meals:** Cooking in a slow

cooker over a whole day only uses the same amount of energy as a lightbulb.

4. **Don't use metal trays in the oven:** Glass and ceramic dishes retain heat better than metal ones, making them more energy efficient.

5. **Keep heating rings clean:** Any food that has become stuck to your heating rings will absorb heat, making them less efficient.

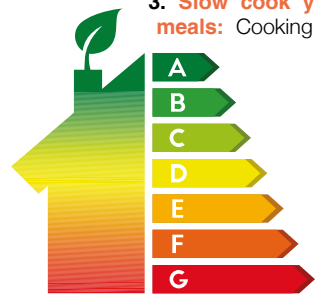
6. **Wash your clothes at 30°C:** 90 per cent of your washing expenditure is spent on heating the water, so by reducing the heat to 30°C when possible, you can save one-third on your washing costs.

7. **Unplug any unused appliances:** Unplug or switch the power off on any appliances that you aren't using. This includes charger cables.

8. **Turn down your thermostat:** By turning down your thermostat by just 1°C, you can save up to £80 per year.

9. **Use halogen lightbulbs outside:** Halogen bulbs use a quarter less electricity than incandescent bulbs without affecting their brightness, so are ideal for exterior lighting.

10. **Defrost food overnight:** Defrosting food typically halves the cooking time, meaning less energy used per meal.





Viva

DRIED FLOWERS

If there is only one interior design trend that you embrace this year, make it the revival of dried flowers. Cost effective, eco-friendly and, most importantly, Pinterest-approved, anyone can dry flowers and arrange a beautiful bouquet to be proudly displayed in their home.

HOW TO DRY FLOWERS

If you want to prolong the life of a bouquet of flowers that has been gifted to you, then drying it out is the perfect solution.

1. Strip off any excess foliage and cut stems to desired length
2. Find a dark and dry area, such as an unused cupboard, and hang your flowers upside down using unflavoured dental floss or string
3. Leave for 2-3 weeks until completely dry
4. Take down and spray with unscented hairspray

WHAT ARE THE BEST FLOWERS FOR DRYING?

If you are new to the flower-drying business, you may want a few ideas to get you started. The below flowers are ideal for drying, although you can dry any varieties: Pansies • Amaranthus • Artemisia • Lavender • Hydrangea • Yarrow • Eucalyptus (although not strictly a flower, this will add lovely greenery to your bouquet)

HOW TO DISPLAY DRIED FLOWERS

Once you have dried your flowers, it is time to carefully arrange them into a delightful display. Below are four different arrangements for you to try out:

- Hanging bunches – tie a few bunches together using twine and hang upside down from a branch or an interior wall
- Wreaths – create a dried flower wreath to hang on your front door
- Mini bouquets – dried posy bouquets look lovely placed in a small vase or as a gift
- Statement displays – if you are looking to create a big and bold display, tie together dried flowers, herbs, leaves and grass. Hang over your dining table for maximum effect.



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HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE PLASTER EFFECT INTERIOR TREND

Lockdown saw a lot of us going back to basics, rediscovering at the same time simpler, less-complicated ways of life.

It seems that in the throes of one of the biggest cultural resets we've ever known, the lure of stripping back has extended right the way through to our interiors, with plaster effect a new design trend that relies very much on the simplicity of old.

The concept is clear – a modern, mottled, moulded, matt-effect plaster wall that looks like, feels like and responds to a stripped-back feeling of style and detail.

It uses, first and foremost, a base of plaster. For the fully organic effect, you can leave it as is, but many are embracing the idea of using chalk paint, old rags and a natural sponge to

treat, detail and add depth-driven colour to the walls.

The intention is to go rustic and to promote that unfinished look, and less is most definitely more where this is concerned, with over-decoration making the look too perfect and too polished.

A certain generation will shudder as they make comparisons to Artex, but this is a whole world away, and treated properly, even the very rawest exposed plaster can thrive as a brilliant feature.

And if paint and sponges aren't your thing, you can purchase plaster-effect wallpaper, to deliver devastating design dynamism to your walls with a simple splash of a bit of paste.

Whichever way you go about it, the end effect is something that's detailed, bright, totally unique and great for promoting space and feelings of clarity. You'll also find your walls are incredible durable, as the look can be maintained simply with the use of warm, soapy water.

Photo credit: Annie Sloan via homesandgardens.com, George Home via goodhomesmagazine.com, Matalan via goodhomesmagazine.com



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If you have a handful of trusty spices that you use regularly, then this is the spice storage solution for you. Simply purchase a set of test tubes, fill with your preferred seasonings and place in a wooden box that you could make yourself or pick up from your nearest craft shop.



STACK IT, STACK IT

For those who want a practical and attractive option, why not store your spices in mini mason jars or tins that have been labelled using chalk paint? Perfect if you love the shabby chic look. These can be stacked on your worktop or stored in a drawer.

MAGNET MAYHEM

If you want your spices within grabbing distance but you don't want them taking up valuable space on your kitchen worktop, try using magnets. You could attach metal spice pots to the inside of your cabinet doors, under your cabinets or in any other convenient location in your kitchen.



TIC TAC ON-THE-GO

Ideal for taking spices outside your home, whether on holiday or into work. Simply pour your favourite spices into old Tic Tac containers, label and you are good to go. Make sure you thoroughly clean the containers first to avoid a minty taste on all your spices.



HANG IN THERE

For another great way to utilise space underneath your kitchen cabinets, simply hang your spice jars directly on the wall using some small hooks and string. Glass storage jars work best for this so that you can easily see what spices are in each container.

Photo credit: littledelico.com, seattlesundress.com, experthomelife.com

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HOME & DIY



SQUEAKY SCREEN

Nobody looks forward to having to clean their screens, and you may leave this frustrating task until you literally can't handle the smudges and streaks any more.

However, screen cleaning doesn't have to be so stressful.

a good idea to polish and wipe down your phone case before reattaching.

COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN

For general cleaning, use a soft, lint-free cloth to remove dust from your computer screen. To remove stains, slightly dampen your cloth or a sponge and softly rub the screen, making sure no excess liquid gets on it. Leave to naturally air dry. Avoid using alcohol or an ammonia-based cleaner on your laptop screen as this can damage it.

What **NOT** to do when cleaning any screen

- > Use aerosol sprays or solvents
- > Spray liquid directly onto the screen
- > Use your fingernail to scratch off stubborn stains

TV SCREENS LCD PLASMA

These delicate screens should never be wet cleaned; instead, you should dust them with a soft, dry microfibre cloth. For stubborn smudges, use a pre-moistened wipe that is specifically designed for use on electronics. Make sure you don't miss the dust caught in the vents at the back of your TV.

MOBILE PHONE SCREENS

The screen of your mobile phone can get very dirty so it is important to clean it regularly. Start by removing your phone from its case, powering it down and then polishing it with a microfibre cloth. Rub gently with a wipe that is safe for use on electronics – for example, Lysol – to remove any germs and leave to air dry. Polish again using your cloth. It can also be

NATURAL CLEANING SOLUTION FOR SCREENS

If you prefer to make your own natural cleaning solutions, this DIY spray is suitable for most screens. Simply mix equal parts vinegar and water, dab your microfibre cloth into the liquid and gently wipe the screen.



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Illuminating
13-0647

Color of the Year
2021
PANTONE

Ultimate
Gray
17-5104

Grey DAY?

Revealing Pantone's Colours of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating

Across a year that offered so much but delivered so little, it's perhaps apt that Pantone has selected not one, but two Colours of the Year. Combined, they reflect the trials and tribulations of 12 months that have seen the very fabric of our lives ripped from under us; and yet we emerge energised, enthused and even perhaps enriched.

Pantone has chosen a combination of shades to represent these feelings. Yes, Ultimate Gray (17-5104), at first glance, appears stern, solemn and even echoes back to the styles and sensibilities of the 1980s. And yet, look closer, and it provides solidity and fortitude.

Now combine those emotions with Pantone's second Colour of the Year for 2021 – Illuminating (13-0647). At first a yellow that resonates with cheerful, sparky, spring-like abandon, it offers light, vivacity and thoughts of energy.

As a single shade, Illuminating works, but combined with Ultimate Gray the end effect is, in Pantone's own words, "A story of colour that encapsulates deeper feelings of thoughtfulness with the promise of something sunny and friendly."

It is indeed a combination that can reignite your interiors – consider a statement piece such as a grey sofa, with yellow scattered cushions. Or what about an existing white or wooden room patterned with a grey rug and yellow feature wall?

Grey and yellow, together or alone, will combine with almost any colours. There is a chic harmony that blends as much as it stands out – even in the bedroom, yellow curtains can offer a feeling of light on the drabest of days; while grey walls, white skirting boards and yellow pictures present a classy combination.

In summing up, expect the Pantone Colour(s) of the Year, Ultimate Gray and Illuminating, to drop into your consciousness, guiding you to happier and more optimistic times in the weeks and months ahead.

Photo credit: designer.com, diegoibanki.com



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Ex-footballer suffers racist abuse ahead of documentary

A former professional footballer and Billericay resident was racially abused on social media after promoting his new anti-racism documentary.

Anton Ferdinand, who played for West Ham United, Queens Park Rangers (QPR) and Sunderland before later going on to captain Southend United, received the abuse on Instagram after he posted about his BBC1 documentary *Anton Ferdinand: Football, Racism and Me*.

Ferdinand, 35, posted: "In the doc, I explore the issue of racial abuse in the game, talking about my own experiences for the first time and what can be done to help players coming through today."

His post received hundreds of replies, but one reply,

which appears to be from an anonymous account, included banana and monkey emojis.

The post has been reported to police.

The documentary, which was broadcast on November 30, 2020, saw Ferdinand open up about his emotions around the infamous clash with John Terry nine years ago at QPR's Loftus Road stadium.

Terry was alleged to have used a racial slur against Ferdinand when Chelsea lost to QPR in October 2011. He was later found not guilty following a court trial, but Ferdinand's big regret rests on not speaking out.

Ferdinand's documentary is available to view on BBC iPlayer.



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Town salon is a cut above after award win

After a difficult 2020 for the hairdressing industry, one salon in Billericay was celebrating after winning a prestigious national award.

Jim Shaw, owner, and Daisy Carter, of TONI&GUY Billericay, took home an award in the Best Photographic Entry at the Modern Barber Awards 2020.

The Awards recognise the very best barbers and men's hairdressers from across the UK, allowing professionals to celebrate their creative and commercial success and support their peers.

For the Best Photographic Entry, Jim and Daisy had to submit a professional image of their work alongside

information on how they created the style, which products were used and their inspiration behind the look.

Jim and Daisy were then announced as finalists before being chosen as the winners of the category at the virtual awards ceremony, held via a live Facebook event for all to attend.

In their winner's acceptance speech on the virtual awards night, Jim and Daisy said they were delighted.

They added: "It's amazing to have such great news. We're delighted – we love our collection and we're so happy the judges love it too."



LOCAL NEWS BILLERICAY

Food bank handed timely funding boost



Billericay Food Bank has been handed a timely boost after the council decided to donate a share of £10,500.

Councillors for Basildon Council voted unanimously to use the remaining funds in the Together for Safer Communities (TSC) 2020/21 budget to help food banks, including the one in Billericay.

The TSC initiative has been suspended since March 2020, so its budget of £12,000 is largely unspent.

Demand for food banks has risen through the coronavirus pandemic, leading to councillors making this decision.

The £10,500 will be shared across six food banks, with the remaining £480 of the budget being spent on face masks.

Councillor Kerry Smith said: "I'm really pleased we could agree to this £10,500 donation to support our borough's food banks. They do such brilliant, selfless work across the whole of Basildon.

"Food banks rely on donations and we know there's a strain on their services at the moment, so hopefully the additional funding will help them to provide resources to local residents in the most need."



NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL POLICE TEAM



In 2020, as a result of the national COVID-19 restrictions and people being advised to stay at home where possible, house burglaries across the county of Essex decreased by 54 per cent since March.

During periods of lesser restrictions, we know you might start venturing out to pubs, restaurants and shops a bit more often. However, this could mean that burglars look to venture in.

The darker nights and worse weather could be good cover for burglars to make their move.

We're aiming to keep the burglaries across Essex low and to keep our communities vigilant and security conscious. Officers from our Community Policing Teams will be responding and remaining active in areas where burglary is most frequently

reported. Remember that you can always talk to us if you have any concerns. You may also receive a leaflet through your door from us with some useful tips for making your home less appealing to burglars.

You'd think that it would be best to make a property less visible from the street, and to keep it hidden from prying eyes behind overgrown bushes, trees, high fences or walls. In reality, all that this serves to do is make it easier for a burglar to get close to a home unnoticed and provide somewhere to hide while carrying out a burglary or theft from the property.

We'd suggest investing in CCTV or alarms, timers for lights, or leave the radio or TV on when you leave the house.



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Sculpture commemorates pilgrims



A sculpture commemorating 400 years since pilgrims left Billericay has been installed in the High Street.

It was installed in the Jim Shields Garden on November 10, to commentate the milestone anniversary of the pilgrims who set sail on the Mayflower.

They arrived at what became the United States of America, landing at Cape Cod 400 years ago in 1620.

The decision to install a sculpture was made by Billericay Town Council (BTC). It appointed sculptor John Doubleday, who previously made the Child in the Park statue in Lake Meadows, to design and create the masterpiece.

Councillor Jim Devlin, chairman of BTC, said: "We wanted to celebrate the 400th anniversary of pilgrims leaving Billericay and heading on the Mayflower.

"The idea was perhaps we should go for a statue to mark it as something permanent. We had a space that we could do it in, so we went out looking for people that could come up with an idea."

Councillor Moira Moore, chairman of the health, wellbeing and environment committee, said: "John did a mock design and brought it to us and everybody on the council absolutely loved it. It was a very simple process."

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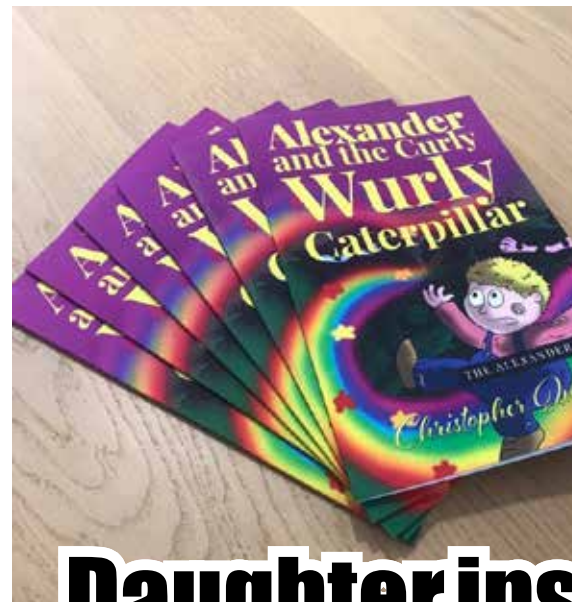
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LOCAL NEWS

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LOCAL NEWS SHENFIELD



Daughter inspires author to release new children's book

A Shenfield man has reworked and released a children's book he had written years earlier.

Chris Quick was reading to his daughter when he remembered a children's story he had written years earlier, before he graduated from university.

He wrote *Alexander and the Curly Wurly Caterpillar* years ago but had not thought about it until he was reading to his daughter during lockdown.

The success of the book means he has now agreed with a publisher to write a whole series.

Chris told **VISION** BillericayShenfield: "I'm a dad, and during lockdown one of the things my daughter and I did together was read books.

"When we were reading one I remembered the book I had written a while back and thought it'd be great if my book was on her bookshelf, so that she could read it with me.

"I initially self-published as I created it in eBook format and that's where it sat. Then when I revisited it

I found out about print on demand.

"It's something that Amazon does where if someone orders your book it prints one copy and sends it to them.

"Once I had the hard copy I then used Instagram to track down a number of publishers and sent them the book.

"A few were interested, and after some back and forth I settled with Libri, who then revamped the book and reissued it.

"The feedback on the book has been overwhelming. Children love it and I'm getting great reviews from parents who also enjoy it.

"I have now written the second book and it is due for release in the summer, and I have agreed to do a series of five books.

"I have also written three books outside the Alexander books that I'm hoping will get picked up - I was quite productive in lockdown."

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LOCAL NEWS SHENFIELD

Campaign group welcomes council's commitment to keep library

A campaign group in Shenfield has welcomed the new library proposals.

Shenfield Library Supporters Group (SLSG) says it welcomes Essex County Council's (ECC) commitment to keep a library in the town, although it has posed some questions to the council.

Its questions are in response to the consultation launched by the council and surround the proposal to replace the current library building with a larger one, to add a commercial unit and to create a community meeting space.

The new-build library would be funded through the development of up to 10 residential apartments above

the ground floor.

SLSG said: "We welcome ECC's commitment to build us a new modern library and at first glance the plan looks good. We raised a few questions and matters for clarification with councillors and head library staff last week."

Those questions included the exact difference in size between the old and the new library, the number of books it can hold compared to 16,000 at the old one, and the life expectancy of the building, among others.

The public had until December 14, 2020, to have their say, and the plans can be viewed at www.shenfieldlibrary.co.uk

Common woodland receives funding boost



A community group that helps maintain and enhance Shenfield Common has received a boost after it was awarded funding.

The Conservators of Shenfield Common (COSC) was awarded a slice of £26,100 from the Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The money will allow COSC to open up the woodland area of Shenfield Common to create a safer and more accessible environment.

Benjamin Sanderson, Land of the Fanns scheme manager, said: "These small grants have enabled local groups to access funds and deliver some great environmental and heritage projects right across the landscape.

"This ensures the scheme has a legacy beyond its own time which really benefits the area."

The other groups that were successful in applying for funds included Weald Country Park, the Essex Gardens Trust, the Essex Rock and Mineral Society, Thurrock Museum and Friends of Bedfords Park.

BURGHART for BRENTWOOD



Alex Burghart MP for Brentwood and Ongar



LOCAL NEWS SHENFIELD

As we enter 2021, the first swathe of COVID-19 vaccines is being administered to those most vulnerable to coronavirus – the older members of our community, care home staff and health care workers. It's the beginning of the way out of the pandemic restrictions which have caused so much disruption, distress and difficulties in the last year.



leaving is what the people of Brentwood and Ongar wanted and expected when the 2016 referendum was held.

In the four years since the referendum, we have had two general elections, extensive Brexit debates and negotiations and a global pandemic. I am sure I am not the only person in this constituency to hope for a period of calm in 2021 as we process all that has gone on and build our economy and self-esteem as a United Kingdom back to be even better than before.

Sadly, coronavirus cases were on the rise in Brentwood before Christmas among school-aged children and the over-60s. We still have many more weeks of handwashing, mask-wearing and social distancing ahead, but the spectacularly hard work put into developing and administering vaccines in the UK and far beyond in the last nine months will be worth it to stop the terrible effects of this global pandemic.

The new year also brings the UK out of the European Union and we walk alone for the first time since 1973. It's going to be a time of change and will take some getting used to, but I have every confidence our

Crossrail funding gap plugged

The new Crossrail service which will connect Shenfield with direct services to central London and the west is back on track.

Fears were raised that a funding shortage may lead to the scheme being "mothballed", with Transport for London commissioner Andy Byford writing to officials at the Department for Transport to ask for £80million.

That was followed by a commitment from government that the scheme will continue.

On December 1, 2020, the Secretary of State for transport, Grant Shapps MP, backed up that commitment.

He said: "We are announcing that £825million of additional borrowing will be made available to the Greater London Authority (GLA) for the purposes of Crossrail."

"This agreement will ensure that the project continues to be funded. "The government remains committed to the rapid completion of the project in a way that is fair to UK taxpayers, and has committed to financing the completion of Crossrail."

Crossrail is set to fully open in 2022. It will provide direct services from Shenfield to Canary Wharf in 42 minutes, Heathrow in 78 minutes and Reading in 102 minutes.



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SPORT

Remembering

DIEGO



A hero of the game, a villain to himself

The gap between hero and villain has perhaps never been better exemplified – in sporting terms, at least – than through the life of Diego Maradona.

When the Argentine departed us on November 25, football, sport and the world as a cultural sponge lost someone whose notoriety was as decorated as his talent.

In the space of four short minutes in the Estadio Azteca, in Mexico City, on June 22, 1986, Maradona showed the two sides of his character in the sort of perfect juxtaposition usually reserved for a Shakespeare play. The tragedy came first – that ‘hand of God’ moment that we all know, even if few of us, now, here in 2021, actually saw it happen live.

And then, the comedy, even if it was again England’s footballers being derided, as a dancing, pirouetting, sauntering, bulldozing run through the Three Lions’ defence rubbed salt in our wounds,

while offering up a perfect apology to that same deity for the forward’s earlier misdemeanour.

When that higher force claimed the 60-year-old in November, football fans the world over began to ponder again the best ever – Puskás, Pelé, Ronaldo, Messi. Of course, Maradona would never enter into such debate.

He may have led an average Argentina side to World Cup glory in 1986, and an even flatter version of themselves to the final four years later. He may have performed miracles in guiding unfancied, unfashionable Napoli to Serie A success in Italy. And in later life as drugs, gangs, sex workers and other lurid temptations possessed a man whose only passion, really and truly, was to kick a ball, he may have lost sight entirely of those dusty, poverty-stricken streets in Buenos Aires where he grew up.

And yet, through it all he stayed true to himself: “I am black and white... I’ll never be grey.”

Photo credit: Carlo Fumagalli/AP/Shutterstock

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TURNER AND HOOCH

Clumsy, slobbering and probably quite smelly too, it's no wonder that Tom Hanks' detective character, Scott Turner, is reluctant to take on a canine as a companion. Played by Beasley the French Mastiff, Hooch becomes an integral part of Turner's criminal-catching team, winning over the cynical cop's heart in the process.

BABE

The eponymous piglet in one of the most beloved children's tales, Babe single-trotteredly transformed our perception of the humble hog. Proving to be as useful as his best friend Fly, the sheepherding collie, the sweet little piglet proves to have more heart, courage and kindness than any of his human counterparts. Oink oink.

SHADOWFAX

Though there were many weird and wondrous creatures in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, it is surely Shadowfax, Gandalf's trusty steed, who is the most desirable. A majestic and wild white beauty, Tolkien's creation refuses to be bridled, carrying only the wise old wizard on his back. He is surely the bravest bronco we would all love to have in our lives.

UGGIE

If silent French comedy *The Artist* was the unexpected hit of the 2011 film season, then surely Uggie, the flick's beloved Jack Russell, was its star. Rescued from a dog pound by animal trainer Omar Von Muller, the adorable and highly intelligent Uggie became an overnight sensation, winning the Palm Dog Award at the Cannes Film Festival. Though Uggie retired the following year and sadly passed away in 2015, his legacy will forever live on in this Oscar-winning masterpiece.



Photo credit: narsaraybeyond.com, imdb.com, youtube.com, canyon-news.com



PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers: see end of The VISION Listings

- ▶ AKBASH
- ▶ ATHLETICS
- ▶ BEAGLE
- ▶ BULLDOG
- ▶ CHIHUAHUA
- ▶ CHINOOK
- ▶ DALMATIAN
- ▶ GREAT DANE
- ▶ GREYHOUND
- ▶ HOKKAIDO
- ▶ HUSKY
- ▶ JONANGI
- ▶ KING SHEPHERD
- ▶ MUDI
- ▶ POINTER
- ▶ POODLE
- ▶ ROTTWEILER
- ▶ SAPSALI
- ▶ SCHAPENDOES
- ▶ SPANIEL
- ▶ ST BERNARD

K	Y	K	S	U	H	C	H	I	H	U	A	H	U	A
M	I	S	A	P	S	A	L	I	T	P	T	K	L	E
U	P	N	C	S	S	H	E	G	D	U	O	J	E	U
D	O	R	G	X	P	R	S	R	S	O	U	K	I	V
I	I	E	A	S	D	O	A	A	D	T	S	D	N	E
R	N	L	G	T	H	N	O	I	B	G	C	A	A	C
G	T	I	L	R	R	E	A	D	J	K	H	L	P	H
R	E	E	L	E	E	K	P	D	L	X	A	M	S	I
E	R	W	B	R	K	A	C	H	V	E	P	A	U	N
Y	P	T	L	O	E	I	T	H	E	A	E	T	I	O
H	S	T	H	T	N	B	P	D	H	R	N	I	Y	O
O	G	O	D	L	L	U	B	G	A	J	D	A	U	K
U	S	R	E	O	S	R	R	R	M	N	O	N	S	W
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D	U	S	J	O	N	A	N	G	I	G	S	E	B	N

DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Nepal's flag is the only flag in the world that doesn't have four sides
- ▶ Purple is the most uncommon colour to be used on flags
- ▶ The flag of Belize uses more colours than any other flag
- ▶ Hawaii's state flag contains the Union Jack. It is the only US state flag to include a foreign country's national flag
- ▶ There are 12 stars on the flag of Europe
- ▶ When the Queen goes to Parliament, the Royal Standard is flown from Victoria Tower
- ▶ Denmark has the oldest flag in the world, designed in 1219 and unchanged since
- ▶ South Sudan has the newest flag in the world
- ▶ The study of flags is called vexillology

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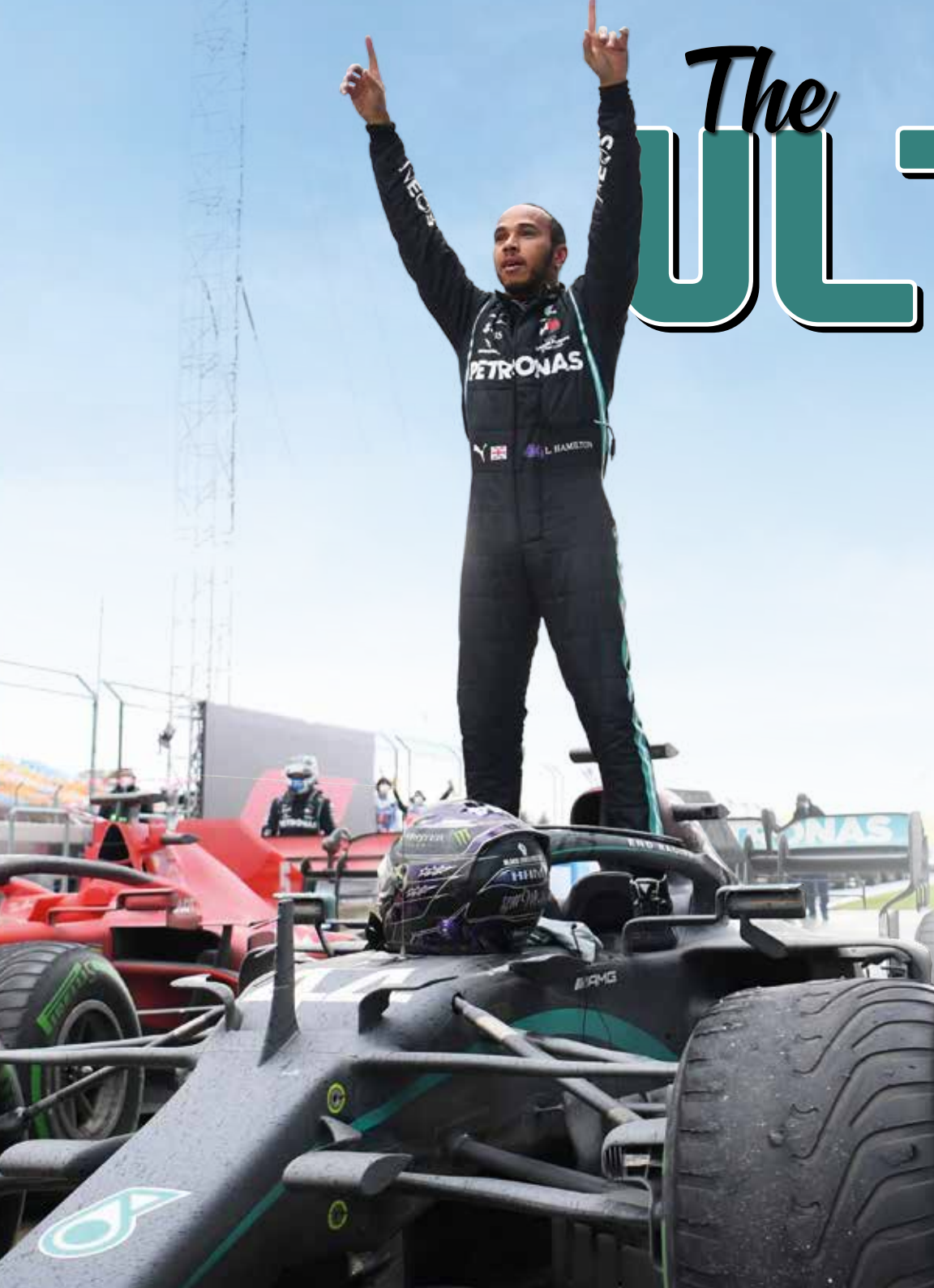
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The ULTIMATE formula

Lewis Hamilton's ascent to being the greatest F1 driver of all time

It's fair to speculate that Lewis Hamilton polarises opinion, even in the midst of being unveiled as the greatest ever Formula One racer.

His victory at the Turkish Grand Prix in the middle of November ensured the Stevenage-born speedster equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven Drivers' Championships, having already surpassed the German's race victory total in October, in another season of unparalleled dominance. By the close of the campaign in Abu Dhabi on December 13, 2020, Hamilton's points tally was 347, a colossal 123 ahead of closest rival Valtteri Bottas.

The champ said: "To all the kids out there, dream the impossible. Seven is just unimaginable, but when you work with such a great group of people and you really trust each other, there is just no end to what you can do together. I feel like I'm only just getting started; it's really weird."

He may just be correct in that statement. At 35, the Mercedes driver has time on his side – the great Luigi Fagioli was 53 when he scored his final race win at the 1951 French Grand Prix.

Certainly, it's becoming difficult to remember a time when Hamilton's grit, speed and desire wasn't present in the sport. Many believe he truly announced himself at the British Grand Prix in 2008, driving for McLaren. Although he'd already clocked up six victories, dating back to Canada a year previously, his mastery of brutally wet driving conditions to win by more than a minute after starting fourth on the grid set a precedent where he was regarded as the driver to beat.

The world title duly arrived later that year in spectacular fashion, as on the final corner of the final lap in the final race, in Brazil, he overtook Timo Glock to snatch victory from the gearbox of defeat.

After switching to Mercedes in 2014, following a fallow period, Hamilton's synchronicity with the technicians and mechanics accelerated success beyond all expectations, failing just once, in 2016, as Nico Rosberg pipped him to title glory by just five points. The German realised he would most likely never repeat that feat, and promptly retired from the sport, never to be seen again.

Wind forward, and even finding himself struck down with COVID-19 at the start of December was not to dampen the determination and drive of Hamilton, a man who now looks towards new heights, the first of which will be making up the handful of race wins required to get to that magic total of 100.

As far as being the sport's 'Marmite man', perhaps it's Hamilton's £40million annual salary; perhaps it's envy at the showbiz lifestyle he has garnered for himself from somewhat simple beginnings; perhaps it's a generic perception across the sport that racers are only as good as the cars they ride in.

In reality, Hamilton gives short shrift to the detractors. He will discuss his knighthood, announced as part of the New Year Honours; he'll reference all those times he's arrowed across the finish line in first position; he'll note the 84 occasions he's started on the front of the grid; and, of course those seven titles. And he'll point to the fact that he is, truly, the greatest ever.

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To explain, Ray was the man behind the first ever email. It was sent by the computer engineer from a machine at BBN Technologies in Massachusetts, to a different computer positioned less than 10 feet away.

While the distance covered may have been small, the action was mindbogglingly big. The then-30-year-old, through the simple action of putting a message in a file directory on a different computer, accessible when the user logged in, had provided the catalyst for connecting the whole world in a way never thought imaginable.

In the split second it took the email to arrive at its new location, the manual, functional, time-consuming and expensive way in which we conducted our business and personal lives had changed forever.

While we consider email a modern tool, it's startling to think this all happened 50 years ago. Indeed, one of the first people to send an email in the UK was the Queen, way back in 1976. It was only through the embracing of home computing in the 1980s and 1990s, and the adaption of technology that went with that, did email messaging come into the mainstream. As soon as it did, we were hooked, for life.

No more letters sluggishly sent through the post or sports journalists having to file match reports in a phone box; to fully appreciate what this technology has done for us, just consider the world without email.

These days there are almost four billion email accounts, with 300 billion messages sent every day. Ray passed away five years ago, but his legacy – and his emails – live on.



HISTORY

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PRISMA: Prisma is the photo-editing app on steroids... a lot of them. It will convert the very simplest and most banal picture into all manner of artistic modes and styles, offering high-quality downloads so you can transform your creative endeavours into print.



VOICE CHANGER: It does what it says on the tin – in one instance you're an alien, the next a robot, or a bee, or a ghost. Amaze your mates with the sort of vocal dexterity previously only seen on a Sam Smith album track.



BUBBLE WRAP: Let's be honest, there are very few things those tech bods haven't tried to replicate in phone form, and the satisfaction of bubble wrap is the latest to come to the fore, with an effortless, screen-tappingly satisfying few minutes to be had by all.



UGLY CAMERA: As we're all so charismatic, intelligent, funny and, most importantly, good looking, it's good to see things from the other side from time to time, so why not install the Ugly Camera to layer a selection of slightly unusual filters over your otherwise gorgeous demeanour.



GOOGLE OPINION REWARDS: Another cool product from that little silicon valley start-up – this Android app periodically asks you questions regarding research projects, the answers to which earn you credits that can be redeemed in the Google Play Store. A decent way to increase your phone's capabilities without spending a penny.



LAUGH MY APP OFF (LMAO): We all need cheering up at least once a day, and with the LMAO app the job is done for us. Select one gag each day, or indulge in a pool of almost endless chuckle-worthy one-liners; you'll be 'appy before you know it.

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JANUARY BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH:

Carnation

If you were born in January, then your birth flower is the delicately scented and long-lasting carnation. Commonly gifted on Mother's Day, carnations are one of the easiest flower varieties to care for.

WHAT DOES A CARNATION SYMBOLISE?

Carnations come in many shades, and each colour has a different meaning:

- > **LIGHT RED** carnations symbolise admiration
- > **DARK RED** carnations represent deep love and affection
- > **WHITE** carnations are used to convey purity and luck
- > **PINK** carnations are used to show gratitude as well as to remember the deceased
- > **YELLOW** carnations convey disappointment and rejection
- > **PURPLE** carnations stand for unpredictability

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?

If your birth flower is the carnation, you are said to be fiercely loyal and have unrivalled love for your family and friends. You are also strongly motivated and will work hard to gain a position of power in your career.

HOW CAN I GROW CARNATIONS?

Carnations are relatively easy to grow, although they do need between four and six hours of direct sunlight a day. For best results, plant in drained soil that is slightly alkaline and fertilise regularly. Tall varieties may need support to hold up their stems as they grow. You can grow carnations in flower beds or in containers such as pots.

DO CARNATIONS COME BACK YEAR AFTER YEAR?

Carnations come in annual, biennial and perennial types, so depending on the amount of space you have, you are guaranteed to be able to find a variety to fit your garden. Perennial carnation seeds should be planted in late autumn to early spring and annual carnation seeds can be sown directly in the ground from April to May or in shelter from as early as March.



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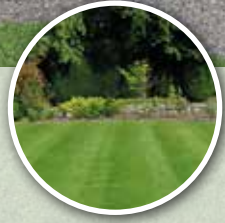
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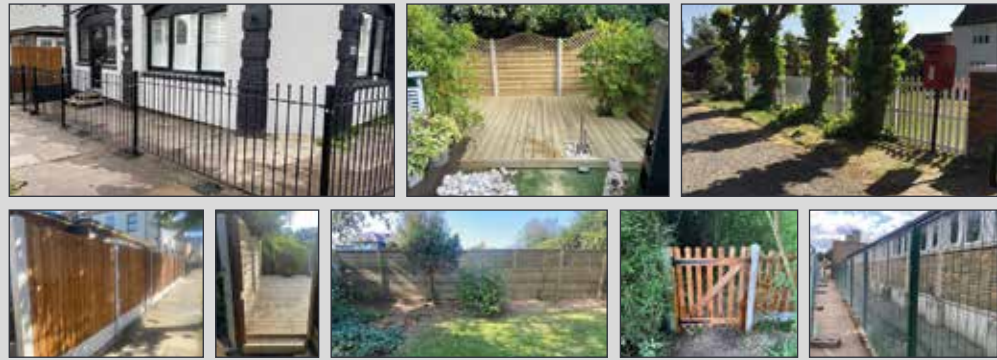
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Horticulture Heroes:

There's nothing quite like learning building knowledge from the ground up, and for a young Ellie Harrison, the wildlife, ecology and wide-open spaces of Zimbabwe provided a fertile and expansive canvas on which to construct her career.

From kids' TV to wildlife programming and on to the BBC, stopping off along the way at the Chelsea Flower Show, the now-43-year-old's focus has always been in the embracing of the natural world, even in home surroundings.

"I'm not sure where the phrase 'wildlife gardening' came from, but it requires little explanation," says the presenter and broadcaster. "As much as I admire the ingenuity and craft so many of us invest in our green spaces at home, I sometimes feel it is a look that can be a bit too contrived and planned.

"Wildlife gardening is really about embracing living landscapes. It doesn't matter if you're talking about

a 100ft lawn or something as simple as a flower bed, the point is that our spaces have all the life and variety that nature and the countryside provide."

At the heart of it is having the right platforms for birds, bees and insects. That will stimulate the impact of genuine wildlife in an area that might be bereft of anything noticeable.

"It's a case of making natural and organic decisions to decorate your space. Instead of using a dull wooden fence, invest in a living boundary that can feature bamboo, twine, flowers, scent and berries."

Similarly, a pond can be used to harvest natural life such as newts, tadpoles, frogs, toads and insects, rather than fish imported in from the local pet shop.

"The exciting thing about wildlife gardening is the creation of a world that grows and evolves in front of you, and all by itself. The phrase 'how nature intended' never seemed so pertinent."

Photo credit: bbc.co.uk

ELLIE HARRISON



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GUARD YOUR garden

Just as people need a helping hand to combat the seasonal selections of health afflictions, so too should we be aware of the pests and disease that threaten the green goodies in our gardens.

CABBAGE KILLERS
You wouldn't think the humble caterpillar would rate high in the list of garden gremlins, but the larvae of cabbage moth caterpillars can reap havoc in a bed of well-tended crops. A simple insect-proof mesh covering should keep most of them away.

THE SLUG BUG
Your average garden slug will happily eat away at any type of vegetable it finds, and whether leaves, shoots, fruits or stems, he's happy as long as he's feeding. Encouraging hedgehogs into your garden is a great way to get a classic slug predator to help you out.

THE CUCUMBER SLUMBER
Blossom end rot sounds a lot worse than it is... in fact, it's not even rot. More precisely, the blossom end of anything from aubergines to chillis, cucumbers to squash and melons, develops into a sunken rotten area. It comes as a result of irregular water supply, so is easily fixed.

FEAR THE APHID
A sticky residue that gradually turns into a sooty mould is a sure-fire sign that your plant has an aphid problem. Sometimes barely visible to the naked eye, aphids can cause stunted plant growth and curled-up leaves, but can be warded off by good garden hygiene and natural predators, such as ladybirds.

BLIGHT
A fungus that causes leaves to shrivel and brown patches to appear on fruits, this fungus-like organism loves damp environments, and there's little you can do to halt its rapid spread, other than remove affected plants and start again. Once more, maintaining good hygiene in your plot is the best way to ensure you don't have to deal with the problem in the first place.

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HEALTH & FITNESS

Are you **READY** TO GO **SOBER**?

Although January may feel like the worst possible time to try to give up your favourite tippie (isn't this month depressing enough?), you may be surprised at how great you feel after cutting out alcohol for just one month.

What to expect when you give up alcohol...

WEEK ONE

Undeniably the most challenging week in your booze-free month, you may experience some unwanted side effects in the first seven days, such as headaches and intense sugar cravings, especially if you are a heavy drinker. That being said, you will also start to see the positive effects of giving up alcohol, including: Better decision-making | More energy | An improved sleeping pattern

WEEK TWO

After two weeks without alcohol, you will continue to enjoy the health benefits listed above, as well as a few new ones, such as: Reduction in acid reflux as your stomach lining becomes normalised | Weight loss | Better mental health

WEEK THREE

As you are now past the halfway

mark, the effects of not drinking will start to contribute to your long-term health, with benefits including: Improved vision | Better kidney health | A reduction in blood pressure, which can lessen your risk of future health problems, such as heart disease

WEEK FOUR

The final week of your no-booze challenge and the effects on your health will be apparent for everyone to see and will include: Better-looking skin | Reduced dandruff and eczema | Up to 15 per cent less fat in your liver

IS DRY JANUARY WORTH IT?

Although Dry January has become increasingly popular in recent years, is it really worth it in terms of your long-term health if you continue to drink for the other 11 months of the year?

According to Alcohol Change UK, yes it is, with this challenge forcing you to confront how much you drink and to take notice of the harm it can cause.





MIDDLE OF THE LOAD

Fight the flab after 40 with these steps to prevent midlife weight gain

Cut the calories: Though you may feel as active as ever, your metabolism unfortunately is not as efficient as it once was. However, cutting between 250 and 300 calories per day is enough to keep your weight where you want it to be.

Walk it off: Burning fat only requires a slightly elevated heart rate, which means exercising for a longish period while being slightly out of breath is what you need to aim for. So ditch the gruelling runs and aim instead for a brisk walk or swim.

Use your gut instinct: Beat the bloat with healthy bacteria, best found in natural yogurts and fermented foods such as sauerkraut, kimchi and kefir.

Exercise before your eggs: Studies have shown that working out before breakfast can burn up to double the calories – ideal for those who prefer to do their sun salutations as it rises at dawn.

Go nuts: We all know that fruit and vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet, but to maintain blood sugar and control weight you need to be getting plenty of protein too. From a handful of almonds to a bowlful of lentils, or even just a glass of milk, this is one healthy habit you'd be nuts not to try.

Consider HRT: In addition to easing the side effects of the menopause, there is evidence to suggest that hormone replacement therapy can help with weight distribution, which means less fat around the dreaded middle.

Join the resistance: You might balk at the suggestion of using weights in your workouts, yet resistance training is the best way to replace muscle lost through ageing. Pilates, yoga, squats and exercises using small dumbbells are all excellent and enjoyable ways to achieve that toned look.



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WHAT IS BODY SCULPTING?

Body sculpting is a non surgical and non invasive, pain free and completely relaxing treatment. It is a revolutionary procedure which combines cavitation and radio frequency for a sculpted result on desired body areas.



WHAT IS CAVITATION?

Cavitation is a revolutionary procedure that uses ultrasound technology to, in simple terms, 'melt' fat. During a cavitation procedure the machine targets specific and desired body areas, then comfortably heats the skin sending shock waves that penetrate through the derma layer.

This causes a micro bubbling in the liquid surrounding the adipocytes (fat cells). Under pressure the adipocytes rupture and release glycerol (fatty acid) 40% safely goes into your blood stream to be used or stored as energy. The other 60% goes to your liver to be metabolised and then finally your body is able to process these glycerol through its proverbial waste-disposal plant: the lymphatic system.

WHAT IS RADIO FREQUENCY

Radio frequency is used to improve skin elasticity, remove cellulite, renew muscles and enhance skin rejuvenation by applying electromagnetic high frequency waves.

The goal of radio frequency treatment is to tighten the skin of the body and dilated pores, smooth fine lines and wrinkles. Collagen and elastin are boosted, cellulite is removed.

Loose skin, wrinkles and fine lines may give away one's age or make them appear older than they are. Fortunately, skin elasticity can be restored using radio frequency therapy. Collagen takes 14-21 days to synthesise, therefore you may see the best results in the 3rd/4th treatment.



Men's skin toning & tightening after one treatment

Men's stomach after one treatment

Clients can see improvements after three sessions. The recommended course is six treatments, however some clients may need additional sessions depending on the individual.

RADIO FREQUENCY / CAVITATION BENEFITS

- ✦ Fat Reduction ✦ Cellulite Removal
- ✦ Boosts Collagen & Elastin Process
- ✦ Skin Tightening & Toning ✦ Skin Rejuvenation
- ✦ Improves Skin Texture
- ✦ Smooths Fine Lines & Wrinkles

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The Secret to Hair Transplant Success



Lawrence Austin,
Managing Director,
The Regrow Hair
Centre

So, you've lost hair. You've tried all the lotions and potions available but none of them have worked.

You then stumble across something on Facebook (that's right, social media knows what your problem is as they follow you around your internet browsing history) and you see adverts for transplants starting from a reasonable enough £1,000, with pictures of great looking hair – most

of them are from turkey, the capital of transplants in the world. It's certainly a tempting deal...

This is where I would urge you to stop and consider the following:

- Yes, it's a good price – but how much do you know about this company?
- Is it a professional clinic with a good reputation?
- What happens if it goes wrong – do I need to go back to Turkey to get it fixed?
- What about aftercare?

What a lot of companies (UK ones included) aren't clear about is what you should do after the transplant to give it the best possible chance to flourish, grow quicker and make the hair thick, strong and look as natural as your existing hair.

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) is key. A lot of clinics in Turkey will give one PRP shot after your transplant, but this is purely to help the scalp heal quicker – it's the PRP's after one month that give you the growth factors you need for your hair. There are some companies in the UK who will insist that you need PRP directly after a transplant and scare people into buying their overpriced version through fear.

I want to give you an alternative. I have created a successful company here in the UK that looks to tackle all of the uncertainties associated with hair transplants.

- You want your hair transplant to look natural, giving you the maximum grafts available to give you the best results.
- You want to have it done at a professional clinic, where they have a reputation for excellent work and have a lot of experience.
- You want aftercare that looks after you until you are happy with the result (includes four PRP sessions, and home products to help your hair flourish).

- You want guarantees on your transplant so you know if anything goes wrong, you are covered (we offer either money back or another transplant for free).

- You want NO HIDDEN COSTS.

Look no further. Here at the Regrow Centre, we give you all of the above.

Our clinic is in Istanbul – we have teamed up with a fantastic transplant company who have carried out over 40,000 transplants, have a very experienced team and pride themselves on offering natural looking transplants using the latest techniques.

Our team will give you the maximum number of grafts to make your hair look as natural as it did when you were 18!

We pay for your hotels, your transfers from the airport and back, and we have an English speaking representative who is with you for your entire stay and will sit with you for the entire length of the transplant.

Once you are back from Turkey, we then take over here in the UK. After one week, we get you in to assess your hair and give you some treatments to take home with you to speed up recovery. We then start the course of PRP treatments after one month and carry this on for four months – your hair will swiftly start to flourish.

All of our work is carried out by registered nurses who have specialist training in PRP and have been performing the treatments for over three years.

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The best skincare ingredients for your skin

With so many lotions, potions, serums and supposed skin saviours, it can be a nightmare trying to decide what ingredients you should be looking for in your skincare products.

Luckily for you, we have rounded up the best skincare ingredients for 2021 based on the most common skincare problems.

1. Cica Cream – Best for sensitive skin

Cica cream, also known as centella asiatica, was traditionally used to heal wounds, but can now be found in moisturisers and serums owing to its ability to restore skin that is affected by redness and sensitivity. Rich in anti-inflammatories, antioxidants and antibacterial properties, this cream can also help prevent future damage from external environmental stressors.



2. Salicylic Acid – Best for acne sufferers

Salicylic acid is known for its ability to deeply exfoliate the skin and keep your pores clear, so using skincare products that contain salicylic acid can dramatically help reduce breakouts. This acid is also used in higher concentrations to treat acne scars, sun damage and age spots.

3. Retinol – Best for ageing skin

Who doesn't want to wake up with younger-looking skin? Hailed by skin experts as the anti-ageing miracle worker, retinol works by increasing collagen production, as well as increasing the rate of skin cell turnover. Added to face creams, eye creams and serums, retinol can improve your skin's texture, minimise fine lines and even out skin tone.



4. Glycerine – Best for dry skin

Glycerine, sometimes referred to as glycerin or glycerol, is a naturally occurring substance that acts as a humectant to draw moisture to the skin. This skin-saving ingredient is also a great cleanser, helping to remove dirt and oil without stripping your skin.

5. Hyaluronic Acid – Best for dull or damaged skin

Becoming increasingly popular as an ingredient in face-care products, hyaluronic acid is a gel-like substance that has the unique ability to retain moisture. Skin benefits include enhanced hydration, the prevention of wrinkles and healing properties that can reduce the appearance of scars.

NB: Most active ingredients take at least two months to show results, so be patient.



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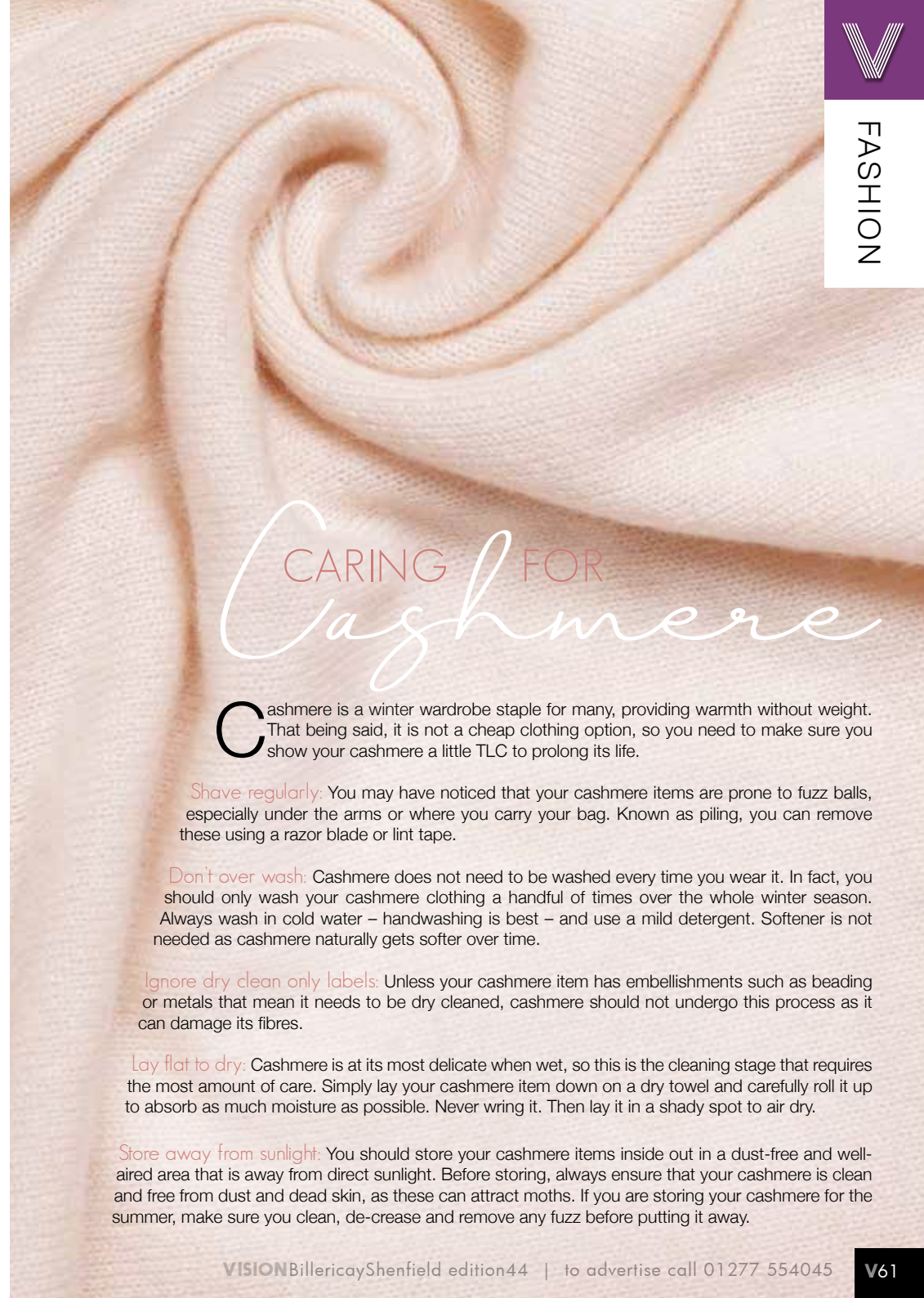
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CARING FOR Cashmere

Cashmere is a winter wardrobe staple for many, providing warmth without weight. That being said, it is not a cheap clothing option, so you need to make sure you show your cashmere a little TLC to prolong its life.

Shave regularly: You may have noticed that your cashmere items are prone to fuzz balls, especially under the arms or where you carry your bag. Known as piling, you can remove these using a razor blade or lint tape.

Don't over wash: Cashmere does not need to be washed every time you wear it. In fact, you should only wash your cashmere clothing a handful of times over the whole winter season. Always wash in cold water – handwashing is best – and use a mild detergent. Softener is not needed as cashmere naturally gets softer over time.

Ignore dry clean only labels: Unless your cashmere item has embellishments such as beading or metals that mean it needs to be dry cleaned, cashmere should not undergo this process as it can damage its fibres.

Lay flat to dry: Cashmere is at its most delicate when wet, so this is the cleaning stage that requires the most amount of care. Simply lay your cashmere item down on a dry towel and carefully roll it up to absorb as much moisture as possible. Never wring it. Then lay it in a shady spot to air dry.

Store away from sunlight: You should store your cashmere items inside out in a dust-free and well-aired area that is away from direct sunlight. Before storing, always ensure that your cashmere is clean and free from dust and dead skin, as these can attract moths. If you are storing your cashmere for the summer, make sure you clean, de-crease and remove any fuzz before putting it away.

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Are you addicted to

SUGARS?

Did you know that adults are advised to have no more than 30g of free sugars per day (the equivalent of seven cubes)? To put that into perspective, a single can of Coca-Cola has 35g of sugar, 5g more than your total allowance for the day. So, are you addicted to sugar? Let's find out.

AM I ADDICTED TO SUGAR?

If you are worried about your sugar consumption or you think you may be addicted to the white stuff, then you should look out for the following most common sugar addiction symptoms:

- Headaches
- Feeling tired or lethargic
- Intense sugar cravings
- Muscle pain
- Nausea
- Bloating

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO BREAK A SUGAR ADDICTION?

You will be pleased to hear that you can break a sugar addiction in as little as 10 days. This is because the more sugar you eat, the more you crave it. However, once you stop, or cut back, you will find you want it less and less each day.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF GIVING UP SUGAR?

There are many health benefits to giving up sugar, including:

- Increased energy levels
- Better ability to focus
- Enhanced mood
- Decreased inflammation
- Less stomach fat
- Better-looking skin
- Less risk of tooth decay
- Weight loss

TOP TIPS TO HELP STOP CRAVINGS AND SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH...

Going cold turkey when trying to give up free sugars (sugars that are added to food, rather than naturally occurring) can be a challenge.

Fortunately, there are ways to make the process easier:

- Eat three meals and two healthy snacks a day
- Go for a run or a brisk walk
- Eat fruit in the morning on an empty stomach
- Focus on protein at every meal
- Try a fibre- and protein-rich chia seed pudding
- Chew sugar-free gum



FOOD & DRINK



GO NUTS!

With Shrove Tuesday fast approaching, what better time to discover a new tasty topping for your pancakes?

Check out our own version of a well-known hazelnut cocoa spread which is half the calories, vegan and packed full of healthy fats and vitamins.

Super Healthy Homemade Hazelnut Spread

WHAT YOU NEED:

240g raw hazelnuts | 1½ tbsp pure vanilla extract | ¼ cup cocoa powder | ¼ cup pure maple syrup or unrefined sugar | ¼ tsp salt | ½ cup vegan milk (or normal milk if you do not need a vegan recipe) | 2 tsp oil

HOW TO MAKE:

- > Set oven to 200°C/Gas Mark 6
- > Roast hazelnuts for 6–8 minutes
- > Leave to cool slightly and then rub off skins
- > Blend the nuts in a food processor until they are the consistency of butter
- > Add all the other ingredients and blend until smooth

Not just for pancakes, try using your homemade hazelnut spread in these yummy

recipes that the whole family will love.

Hazelnut Hot Chocolate

All you need to create this dangerously addictive hot chocolate is cocoa powder, milk and some hazelnut spread. Simply mix all the ingredients together and pop in the microwave for 2 minutes.

Caramel Cream Nutty Chocolate Lollies

The perfect little treat for tiny hands, simply dissolve 70g of hazelnut spread in a pan over boiling water and set aside half. Pour a thin layer into small, round silicone moulds and refrigerate for 30 minutes. Take out and place a hazelnut-sized piece of salted caramel cream in each mould and cover with remaining spread. Place a lolly stick in each and refrigerate for a further 5 hours.

Nutty Iced Biscuits or Cake

If you are bored with your usual icing, why not use some hazelnut spread instead? Just warm some of the nutty mixture in the microwave for 10–20 seconds and then gently spread over biscuits or cakes. It makes a great cake filler too.



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QUIRKY OVERNIGHT STAYS TO ENJOY IN THE UK

BOATHOUSES

Not quite boasting the seclusion of a desert island, a number of former boathouses and pumping rooms have, however, been converted into cool little overnight abodes. The Whitby Boathouse, sleeping two, features a narrow bridge separating guests from the not-so-distant 'mainland'.

BUSES

With original features such as iconic winding stairs, original seats and even the steering wheel handily in place in what is now a downstairs bathroom, converted double-decker buses give travel fanatics the ultimate experience... just don't expect it to stick to the timetable (not that it ever did).

PLANES

Fancy the thrill of flight without the faff of the airport? Look no further than The Jet Star. Tucked away in Redberth, Pembrokeshire, this little-known Welsh wonder was originally a first-class private plane from the 1970s. Grounded, it now sleeps up to four people – you don't even need to remember your passport.

FIELDS

Wherever you wish to roam in the British countryside, you are sure to be within reach of a traditional shepherd's hut. Originally an essential place for farmhands to seek refuge from inclement weather, the advent of the Airbnb revolution has seen them transformed into cosy and sometimes luxurious boltholes – the ideal way to bask in the beauty of nature without having to pitch a tent.

TRAINS

Finally, for train fanatics, how about staying in a converted restaurant carriage? Rather than slumming it on bumpy rails, this static wagon, positioned overlooking the Rother Valley Railway in Kent, provides more room than you'd expect, and dates right the way back to use during the Second World War.

Photo credit: we love whitby.com, coolstays.com, applecampin.co.uk, coolcamping.com, railwayretreats.co.uk

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Isn't it funny,
how a bear
likes honey?



On January 18, 1882, A. A. Milne, the creator of Winnie the Pooh, a character cherished by children and adults alike, was born. To celebrate this skilled storyteller, January 18 has become known as National Winnie the Pooh Day.

As well as being fun to read, these iconic stories offer some important life lessons that resonate just as well today as they did back then.

"What day is it?" said Pooh. "It's today," said Piglet. "My favourite day", responded Pooh.

As well as teaching the importance of seizing the day, this sweet correspondence between Pooh and Piglet helps to promote resilience and encourages children to put aside their fears and do things anyway.



"Hallo!" said Tigger. "I've found somebody just like me. I thought I was the only one of them."

When children are as young as two, they start to notice that people are different, so it is important that they learn to recognise and celebrate these differences, both in themselves and in others.

"A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference." (Eeyore)

Although known for being gloomy and depressed, Eeyore does sometimes give out little nuggets of wisdom, such as the advice above. Emotional literacy is crucial in your child's development and this life lesson teaches them the importance of being kind to others.



"Pooh!" whispered Piglet. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet. "I just wanted to be sure of you."

A life lesson that most adults today could benefit from, the act of being present in your children's lives, away from the distraction of work and technology, is sometimes all they need to feel loved and connected to you.



KIDS

Photo credit: carwalker/Shutterstock.com

GETTING FINANCIALLY FIT FOR A NEW WAY OF LIFE

With millions of people affected financially by the pandemic, it's possible that your finances no longer match your lifestyle and needs, so take some time to review your situation to keep on track.

BUDGET AND DEBT PLANNING

Regularly review your income and outgoings, particularly if your circumstances have changed. Also make sure you prioritise clearing any debt you have, including credit card balances.

BUILD A FINANCIAL SAFETY NET

Start saving asap. If you have been fortunate enough to save during lockdown, channel some into a savings account, considerable peace of mind can be gained from having a minimum of three to six months' income as a buffer.

STRENGTHEN YOUR SAFETY NET

For you and your family, protection policies

such as income protection and life insurance should be considered. If you already have policies in place, review them to ensure they still offer the most suitable cover.

LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Don't let short-term events divert you from plans for the future. Investing into a pension, no matter what age you are, is imperative.

If you have any questions, talk to us. We can help you see the bigger picture, weigh up all your options and make a balanced plan for your individual needs.

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HOW COVID-19 HAS TRANSFORMED NOT JUST OUR LIVES, BUT THE PROPERTY MARKET TOO



While so much of our COVID-19 focus in 2020 was on health, employment and income, the pandemic's impact on the property market has been extreme, with further fluctuations due over the next few months as the industry reflects the variable conditions we find ourselves living under.

Certainly in the initial phase of lockdown, the immediate effect on our bricks and mortar was a rush of

home improvements akin to watching a series of *DIY SOS* back to back.

Sure enough, the Land Registry – generally considered the best guide to house prices in the UK – published September figures that indicated a 1.7 per cent month-on-month rise and a 4.7 per cent increase year on year.

For many, then, it's been reassuring that, through a time of great social insecurity, homeowners can at least take comfort from the increasing value of where they reside, with the stamp duty break offering a further incentive for prospective buyers to go in with higher bids.

And at the same time, renters have enjoyed increased protection as far as tenancy conditions go, although the market finds itself diverging between an increase in rentals in affluent areas and fewer new instructions in the bottom portion of the market. Research also shows that city centre lets are down as much as 15

per cent as some urban business areas become ghost towns.

It all leaves us speculating whether or not the effects of COVID-19 on the sales and lettings market are here to stay. Certainly, experts believe the recession the economy is suffering can only have one effect on the housing market, and that's for it to follow suit into decline. And yet, effects should be lessened given that a lack of overseas travel means the pound continues to be invested close to home.

THE RISE OF VOICE SEARCH

Did you know that 60 per cent of smartphone users have tried voice search at least once in the last 12 months, and 55 per cent of teenagers use this technology on a daily basis?

WHAT IS VOICE SEARCH?

Voice search is an innovative technology that allows internet users to perform a web search by verbally asking a question on their smartphone or smart device, rather than by typing it in to a search box.

HOW CAN I GET MY BUSINESS FOUND ON VOICE SEARCH?

1. BECOME THE FEATURED SNIPPET
Featured snippets are small sections of text that appear at the top of Google's search results and are designed to answer a searcher's query. If your business is the featured snippet, this is the response that will be read aloud by the voice assistant. Both blogging and detailed FAQ pages can help you get featured in the snippet.

2. UPDATE YOUR GOOGLE MY BUSINESS LISTING

Most voice searches are local ones, so you need to make sure all your company contact information is up to date on both your website and your Google My Business listing.

3. OPTIMISE YOUR WEBSITE WITH LONG-TAIL KEYWORDS

When using a voice assistant, people talk as if they're speaking to a real person. This means asking full questions and using longer phrases than they would if they were typing a search into Google. Therefore, your website needs to be optimised with longer phrases, also known as long-tail keywords.

4. IMPROVE YOUR PAGE SPEED

A simple tip, the faster your webpage loading speed, the more likely you are to appear in voice search results. You can use Google PageSpeed Insights to check the speed of your site or you can do it manually. Google recommends a page loading time of less than two seconds.



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Remembering RAY

Bidding farewell to former Liverpool, Spurs and England keeper Ray Clemence

There's something unique about goalkeepers – they have spirit, longevity and a sense of bravery that far outweighs any other player on the pitch. It's also commonly known that they're rather daft... how else can you explain wanting to have footballs fired your way at more than 100mph?

And yet, Ray Clemence was as close to normal as you could get. The former England stopper, who passed away on November 15 at the age of 72, was a scholar of the game – his MBE for services to football bore evidence to that. In more than 1,000 career appearances, more than half of which were for Liverpool in a golden era for the club, he clinched five league titles, three European Cups, three UEFA Cups, two FA Cups and a host of other trophies.

He took his knowledge, guile, influence and experience to the next level with management and coaching projects – he oversaw Barnet as joint manager and tutored the keepers at Tottenham as part of the club's coaching staff.

Yet it was as the national team's goalkeeping coach under Glenn Hoddle, Kevin Keegan, Sven-Göran Eriksson, Steve McClaren and Roy Hodgson that he truly excelled, with multiple World Cup and European Championship campaigns.

Also employed as the FA's Head of Development, Clemence's involvement with the game continued right the way through to his death, and most recently he had been back working with Spurs.

An initial prostate cancer diagnosis arrived in 2005. He lived with that for 15 years, but finally succumbed to the illness in November. His passing was marked by a flood of tributes, as one of the greatest-ever England goalkeepers hung up his gloves for the final time.



Photo credit: Colorsport/Shutterstock



SPORT

NATIONAL PULL A SICKIE DAY ON



According to UK statistics, the first Monday of February is the day when employees are most likely to pull a sickie. Although excuses may be limited this time round, that doesn't mean we can't take a look at some of the more inventive reasons that people have come up with over the years. You can't make this stuff up!

“My only pair of work trousers is in the wash”

Not the best excuse, as what would you do if your employer simply told you to come in your casual clothes?

“It’s my dog’s birthday and I need to arrange a party for him”

Even though we are a nation of pet lovers, we can't see too many bosses accepting this far-fetched fabrication.

“My grandmother poisoned me with her ham”

Yes, somebody really did use this as a reason why they hadn't turned up for work. Although, to be honest, this might just be crazy enough to actually work.

“I’m too drunk to drive”

Although this may actually be true, we are not sure that this reason would go down too well with HR.

“I can’t come in today, the show I’ve been watching just released a new series”

Another truthful explanation, and to be fair, we've all been there. Damn you, Netflix!

How you should call in sick to work

- > Contact your employer as soon as possible
- > Keep your reason brief
- > Be as helpful as possible
- > Make sure you speak to the right person
- > If you are struggling with your mental health, be honest and say so, but you are not required to go into details
- > Only text if your employer has previously okayed this method of calling in sick
- > Consider remote working if you feel able to



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