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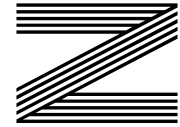
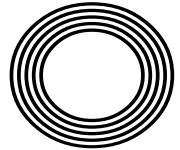
Do you need a
TV LICENCE?

Chrysanthemum
November's birth flower

SIR CLIFF RICHARD OBE
A look back at his career as he turns 80

Kirsty
GALLACHER

Presenter celebrates her return to the limelight



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PROMOTION

HOME

- TRUTHS -

Property market: cooling down fast!

Over the last few months I reflected upon the fact that the property market has been very active in Essex over the summer, we have witnessed an exodus of buyers moving in all directions from London. The end of the furlough scheme, the visible worsening of economical conditions and the constant Covid19 restrictions are now affecting agreed transactions during the summer and will likely cool down the current level of interest. Conveyancing solicitors do not need much excuse to slow down the entire process while lenders are once again restricting overall criteria for accessing mortgages. A behavioural economist commissioned by a major high end estate agent did forecast a V shape recovery of the property market but I fear that we are witnessing the absolute exact opposite; the spending spree will be likely followed by strong negative fundamentals.

What does it mean for the property market in Essex?

I believe that the UK average property price might be under pressure but I do see signs that the life quality and location will be key supportive factors for the more expensive properties as the exodus from London should benefit or at the very least shield the property market in Essex.

What should you do now?

Have you been on the market this summer? Why has your property not sold? Have you been over-priced and under-marketed? These two mistakes often work together. The Stamp study holiday ends after March 31st and realistically, you will need to find a buyer and a property to purchase before Christmas. You will need a good estate

agent to maximise the progression, a good solicitor to pro-actively act in your interest and the trust that the rest of the chain will move on at your desired speed. I think that November and December will witness a lot of price reductions in order to catch the last "head wind".

My own Home Truth

For over 26 years I had been a trader in the City of London and specialised in managing complexed derivatives. When I decided to set up my own estate agency nearly 3 years ago, I came from both the viewpoint of a normal home buyer/seller as I have always been fairly unimpressed by the whole industry and the desire to reflect transparently my selling performance. I also believe in treating people the way I wished to be treated when I was myself a home buyer or a home seller. After nearly 3 years in this business, I am pleased that my home sellers have benefited from an amazing selling performance and a very unique personal service. We have often helped struggling sellers finally achieve their expectations and delivered selling prices consistently over the original marketing price. This very fact is neutrally reflected on getagent.co.uk where we may well be the only agent in Essex reaching on average a selling price over the original marketing price. A result that we have multiplied all across Essex and for all type or prices of properties.

The market is about to get tougher but it underlines the need to seek the very best marketing!

You and your home deserve it!

Florent Lambert

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Editor's notes...



Sean Purcell, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Frinton-on-Sea. We continue to ride the choppy waves of 2020. We know things are still far from normal, so it's never been a better time to check in with our friends and family.

My father passed away earlier this year after contracting COVID-19, and while we were not close, it was a tough experience for me to go through. My father and I had been estranged for many years but we were able to exchange a couple of texts shortly before he went in to intensive care, which ensured that what needed to be said was said in time.

I wrote about the fact that sometimes tragic situations can act as a reminder to us about the importance of letting go of grudges. I spoke to a friend shortly after my dad's death, who told me that they reached out to their father, from whom they had recently become estranged, and began the process of reconciling. I am comforted by the fact that some good has come from my story.

Now more than ever is the time to pick up the phone or fire off an email or text and say, "How are you?", as that could be the contact today that makes someone's difficulties more bearable.

Thanks for reading, and I hope you enjoy this edition. Until next month, take care, stay safe and keep positive.

Sean



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YOU'RE THE VOICE

AS SIR CLIFF RICHARD OBE PASSES 80, HIS STAR IS STILL CHARTING HIGH

Let's begin with a stat: for a long while, Sir Cliff held the record for scoring number one songs in consecutive decades in the UK. He'd hit the top spot twice in the 1950s and on seven occasions in the 1960s. The following decade he left it late, with *We Don't Talk Anymore* his solitary chart-topper in the summer of 1979.

Reinventing himself for the 1980s, spoof track *Living Doll* hit the heights in 1985, followed by *Mistletoe and Wine* in 1988; before *Saviour's Day* in 1990 and *The Millennium Prayer* in 1999 ensured he preserved a most unique chart first.

"I became aware of the run back in the 1970s but it was never an intention to churn out tracks just to keep it going," he says. "I think if you focus too much on that it becomes a bit of a vanity project and you're losing sight of the music itself; but while it went on, it was fun."

These days, the charts aren't for the likes of Sir Cliff. In 2020, they are almost solely the domain of youngsters, both in terms of the record-buying public and the artists themselves.

"Obviously the internet has created major change in the record industry and revised entirely how everything operates.

"It's a shame the charts don't represent the excitement of old when new releases would move around and we'd all follow their progress at home on our radios. I know a lot of people are sentimental about the change that's happened, but as long as people are out there making good music, that should be enough."

'YOU WORK HARD. YOU DO YOUR BEST. AND YOU JUST WANT SOME PEACE: AND THAT'S ALL I WANTED'

For Sir Cliff these days, new music often takes the form of festive tracks.

"I have inadvertently built a reputation for putting Christmas music out there," he admits. "It really all started with *Mistletoe and Wine*."

"Do I mind the association? Of course not – it's such a magical time of the year."

Of course, recognition solely as a musician does a disservice to so many other things Sir Cliff has become renowned for in a celebrated career that began way back in 1958 as lead singer of British group The Drifters. As his pop career exploded, film roles also came his way (famously in *Summer Holiday*) and, beyond that, a passion for wider showbiz projects, faith, philanthropy and a clean-living bachelor lifestyle, even though he came close to marrying on more than one occasion (notably to former British tennis number one Sue Barker).

A proud, kind-hearted and sincere exemplar of a golden age of British entertainment, Sir Cliff found himself in the news for the wrong reasons in 2014 when the darkness surrounding Operation Yewtree began enveloping a number of well-known names.

Almost immediately it became clear that there was no story to be had, and he successfully went on to sue South Yorkshire Police and the BBC for their parts in the media pursuit that followed.

"You know, you get to the point, especially after all these years, where you just want a quiet life," he says. "You work hard, you do your best, and you just want some peace; and that's all I wanted."

Whether Sir Cliff gets peace as he passes 80 is unclear. In socially distancing terms, he will, but as a worldwide base of adoring fans continues to follow his every move, it's clear this is someone who will stay in our admiring consciousness for quite some time yet.

THE WORLD AROUND US *Part 1*

In the first of a new four-part environmental series, we look at the key drivers in the health and well-being of the planet. In this issue, it's animal life, and in particular, the humble cow.

It's not easy being a cow. While farmers are eyeing you up for a trip to the abattoir, those on both sides of the eco debate are ready to slap the blame tag on a little embarrassing flatulence.

Scientists believe the average cow releases between 70kg and 120kg of methane per year. A greenhouse gas, like carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, methane forms a dangerous blanket around the planet.

A molecule that lasts a decade, in real terms what it contributes to the atmosphere can be equated to little more than two cups of water inside a swimming pool, yet its chemical shape is remarkably effective at trapping heat, thus it has a big impact on how much, and how quickly, the planet warms.

And with 1.5 billion cows on the planet, it's clear there's real environmental interest in reducing the emissions of these animals, who can also lay claim to being the source of two-thirds of all

ammonia in the atmosphere.

In 2019, an experiment in New Zealand saw cows given a vaccine to rid them of certain gut microbes responsible for producing methane. Further development of this could drastically reduce cows' impact on the planet, while still allowing our ravenous consumption of meat and dairy foods.

In the UK, farmers mainly use grass-based silage. By changing to a maize compound, a one-tenth drop in methane production could be achieved.

As ever, environmental aims must be balanced with commercial sense. The UK agricultural industry is worth £25billion per year, yet it's clear less-fibrous diets, further vaccine research and other subtle changes – such as introducing seaweed and higher-quality constituents into the food mix – can lead to more refined systems... and less windy livestock!



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PLASTIC BAGS

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Even though you know you should take them with you when you go shopping, somehow you always seems to forget and come back with even more plastic bags.

Fortunately, there are several other uses for these non-biodegradable land fillers.

Protect your plants

If you worry about your delicate plants over winter, you can easily protect them from frost by gently tying a plastic bag around them. The bag will not only safeguard them from the wind, but will also trap warm air inside, ensuring their roots stay insulated. Plastic bags can also be used to protect your outdoor taps and your car's wing mirrors.



Make a skipping rope

Yes, this can be done. Simply cut off the handles so you are left with just rectangles and cut 12 long strips. Take six strips and tape them together, then tape to the back of a chair and start braiding. Repeat with the second strip of six and then twist the two braids together to create your



skipping rope. Use duct tape to add handles.

Create a textured paint surface

If you are wanting to create a textured effect on your walls, there is no need to buy any special paint. All you need to do is cover a clean paint roller with a plastic bag, roll it in your chosen colour and apply it to the walls.

Stuff cushions

Instead of buying traditional stuffing when your cushions start to look a little flat, simply fill them with plastic bags for a similar effect. This money-saving trick can also work wonders for pet beds.



Other quick uses

- > Line your bathroom bin
- > Car sickness bags (check the bag doesn't have air holes)
- > Parcel padding
- > To prevent paintbrushes from drying out

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Staycate in style with these hip UK hotels that offer inspiring interiors and decadent designs. Choose from chic and contemporary, rustic and rugged or something a little bit quirky. Whatever your preference, you are guaranteed to come away with your creative juices flowing.

ARTIST RESIDENCE, LONDON

Based in the diverse Pimlico area, this unconventional hotel mixes vintage chic with a modern twist. Ideal for those who want a bit of luxury, enjoy its stunning roll-top baths and tin ceiling tiles. It is owned by stylish couple Charlotte and Justin Salisbury, who also have three other hotels which can be found in Cornwall, Brighton and the Cotswolds, with another in Bristol opening in November.



THE PIG-IN THE WALL, SOUTHAMPTON

With 12 unique bedrooms, deli-style dining and plenty of cosy corners to relax and unwind in, THE PIG-in the wall is quite unlike any hotel you have been to before. In terms of interior design, enter with an open mind and take in the eclectic range of rooms that boast original wooden beams, slanted ceilings and walk-in monsoon showers.



STRATTONS, NORFOLK

If you hate generic hotels, you will love Strattons. Located in a quiet lane in a conservation area within the town, this family-friendly hotel prides itself on offering luxury, comfort and inspiring interior design. With 14 individual rooms, expect open fires, original period features, a free-standing bath at the foot of the bed and even mermaid mosaic.



CRAZY BEAR, BEACONSFIELD

Flamboyant and luxurious, Crazy Bear combines dramatic architecture with never before seen features such as the copper bath that is filled directly from the ceiling. Perfect for leather lovers, more than 50 different types were used to create its unique atmosphere, with leather featuring on the upholstery, walls, ceiling and even the doors.

Photo credits: artistresidence.co.uk, thepiginhotel.com, strattonshotel.com, crazybeargroup.co.uk



CANCEL CULTURE

The BBC TV licence – do you need to pay?



Photo credit: Willy Barton/shutterstock.com

The BBC has never felt pressure like it: a new director general looking to shake things up, accusations of political and social bias, and the move to begin charging over-75s for TV licences – it has left 'Auntie' scratching about for relevance in a changing world where digital and premium channels are taking our attention... and our money.

While the BBC remains one of our country's finest institutions, and excellent value for those who regularly enjoy its diverse range of programming, there have been recent moves to defund the organisation – a Twitter campaign rapidly gained 100,000 followers and continues to apply pressure across social media.

This has led to many looking at the criteria for paying the licence; namely, whether you do indeed need to pay the £157.50 annual charge (£53 for a black and white TV). The answer is yes, if...

> ... you watch or record live TV as it is being transmitted, on any channel

> ... you watch or stream programmes live on an online service (such as ITV Hub, All 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Sky Go, etc)

> ... you download or watch programmes on iPlayer And the above applies to use on any device, from television to computer to games console.

The good news is that the BBC's brilliant range of national and regional radio is exempt.

If you believe you don't need a licence, the process for opting out is simple – simply declare to TV Licensing via its website and cancel any direct debits. That will stop what many describe as a barrage of threatening letters. However, the onus is, of course, on you to reapply for a licence if your watching habits change.

What's clear is that in a changing world the BBC's stranglehold on compulsory payment may well be coming to an end – even more so if Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to decriminalise non-payment continues to gather pace.



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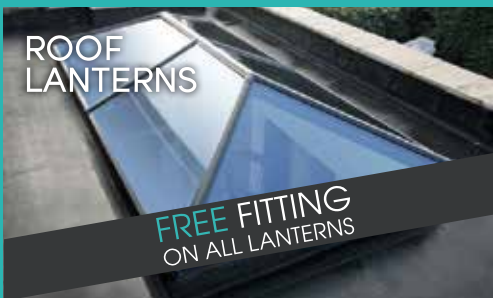
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FEATHER DUSTERS

Commonly associated with maids in stately homes, feather dusters are best for cleaning delicate or expensive objects such as artwork, figurines or jewellery.

Pros of feather dusters: Will not scratch surfaces, objects or furniture | Offer non-invasive contact

Cons of feather dusters: Not the best at collecting dust | Unethical as feathers are plucked from live animals

MICROFIBRE DUSTERS

Becoming increasingly popular in recent years, microfibre dusters are great for general cleaning and dusting wooden furniture, tile counters and any other hard surfaces.

Pros of microfibre dusters: Excellent at picking up dust and dirt | Hypoallergenic | Environmentally friendly and sustainable

Cons of microfibre dusters: We couldn't find any!

VACUUM DUSTERS

By attaching the dusting piece to your vacuum cleaner, you can enjoy fast and effective cleaning of larger surface areas in your home or to clean up after building work.

Pros of vacuum dusters: Ideal for concentrated areas of dust and areas that are hard to reach | Dust can be disposed of easily

Cons of vacuum dusters: Handheld vacuum dusters are not very powerful | Can be expensive

COMPRESSED AIR DUSTERS

This type of duster is used to remove dust from electronics, plug holes and other small, inaccessible areas. Perfect for dusting your keyboard if you are working from home.

Pros of compressed air dusters: The best option for all computer accessories, electronics and office equipment

Cons of compressed air dusters: Can be expensive



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The right headboard has the power to transform a boring bed into a thing of beauty, but with many shop-bought varieties costing hundreds of pounds, surely there must be a cheaper alternative?

Fortunately, there is. Simply check out these DIY designs that will help you create a stylish sanctuary without busting your budget.

DIY Pillow Headboard

To create this super simple and soft headboard in less than an hour, all you need is a copper pipe, some leather or faux leather and two floor cushions or several smaller cushions.

Simply use the leather to create two straps for each of your chosen cushions, thread them along your copper pipe and attach above your bed.

DIY Woven Headboard

To make this rustic, home-made headboard, you need six woven placemats, two jute table runners or small rugs, a hammer and some small finish nails. Once you have your supplies, all you need to do is secure the

two runners directly above your bed, one on top of another, and then attach a placemat next to each end of the runners and you are done.

DIY Lego-inspired Headboard

Create this cool kid's headboard using just four 3D wall panels, some plywood, caulk, paint and four pieces of decorative wood trim. Start by gluing your 3D panels to a 40x40-inch piece of plywood. Once dry, glue your chosen trim around your plywood and seal with caulk. Paint your panels in your preferred colour. Hang using a French cleat.

DIY Plywood Headboard

Natural wood is the ideal material for those wanting to create a minimalist vibe in their bedroom. Simply purchase a pre-cut sheet of plywood for the headboard and then add three shelves for additional functionality.

Other DIY Headboard Ideas

Jute headboard | Pallet headboard | Pegboard headboard | Woven vertical blinds headboard

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LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



LOCAL NEWS



Photo credit: Zamanur Quadir



Sunlight captures beach proposal... and she said yes

Frinton-on-Sea beach played host to a heart-warming scene last month as Jamie Burge popped the question to his girlfriend.

Jamie, 25, has visited Frinton-on-Sea over the years and thought it would be the perfect location to ask Taylor, 20, the big question.

His mum Julie couldn't wait to share the news.

Julie said: "He mentioned it to us a few weeks ago but said he wanted to wait until they had been together for three years. But I told him, if he knows

she's the one, he shouldn't wait any longer. They're saving for a house and have made a commitment to each other. After they were apart in lockdown, he bought her a promise ring."

Julie and her husband David have lived in Frinton-on-Sea for years and said, in the light of everything that's going on at the moment, they are delighted.

She added: "They are a lovely couple, and we couldn't wish for anything better. We can't believe how many likes and comments it received."

Special visitor is the centre of attention



Photo credit: Brenda Kock

It's only the bravest souls who decide to go swimming in the icy waters around Frinton-on-Sea at this time of the year, but one intrepid swimmer drew the crowds when he arrived on the beach recently.

This seal was found on the sand before members of the coastguard carefully returned it to the sea, but, playing to the crowd, it swam back to shore a second time. Volunteer vets then arrived and put the seal in a cage before taking it to a treatment centre.

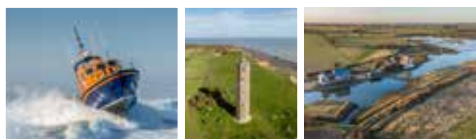
Anyone who finds a seal on the beach is advised to stay with the mammal and call for help. Call British Diver's Marine Life Rescue on 01825 765546.



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Green Flag flying high over town gardens



An open space in Frinton-on-Sea has kept its prestigious Green Flag award.

Crescent Gardens has held on to the quality mark, awarded by Keep Britain Tidy, along with Cliff Park in Dovercourt, Weeley Crematorium Gardens and Clacton's Seafront Gardens.

Michael Talbot, cabinet member for environment at Tendring District Council (TDC), said community support was at the heart of the open spaces' success.

He added: "This year, perhaps more than any other, we have as a community enjoyed our parks and open spaces as they have become a place to take our daily exercise at the height of lockdown and to meet friends in a safer, outdoor setting.

"Our open spaces team works incredibly hard, hand in hand with local volunteers, to keep our green spaces so vibrant for residents and visitors alike to enjoy.

"With the limits placed upon us by COVID-19, and our particularly hot weather this year, that is no easy job, and I applaud their dedication which is recognised by the retaining of these four Green Flags."

Disappointment as popular village pub suddenly closes

People in Kirby expressed their disappointment last month after The Red Lion on The Street in Frinton-on-Sea closed its doors despite having reopened a few months earlier.

A member of staff at the 14th-century public house took to social media to break the shock news.

The post on Facebook read: "It is with great regret

that I have to inform you that The Red Lion has ceased trading this morning until further notice. Obviously, this is a sad time for all of us.

"We would like to thank you all for your continued support, cheeky banter and storytelling. From ALL the staff."

Busy month for local PCSOs

PCSOs in Frinton-on-Sea and Walton had a busy month in October.

They started the month by receiving their Dementia Friend badges after a Dementia Friend training session by Age Concern Colchester & NE Essex.

They have now joined the Tendring Dementia Action Alliance (TDAA), which allows them a better understanding of the challenges faced with dementia-related conditions.

The TDAA input will continue with officers across Tendring over the coming weeks. The TDAA brings together organisations across England committed to transforming health and social care outcomes for people affected by dementia.

Later in the month, the PCSOs held a Community Street Meet at the Triangle Shopping Centre, Frinton-on-Sea.

These events are held in local areas to allow residents to come along and speak to officers; no appointment is needed.

All engagement events are advertised on the events tab on the Essex Police Tendring Facebook page at www.facebook.com/EPTendring

Members of the public with issues or concerns they would like to speak to officers about are invited to attend.



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LOCAL NEWS

Financial boost for Summer Theatre

LOCAL NEWS



Frinton Summer Theatre has been awarded nearly £70,000 in funding from the government's £1.57billion Cultural Recovery Fund set up to ensure that performing arts venues, heritage sites, independent cinemas, music venues and museums can withstand the impact of coronavirus.

In total, 1,385 cultural and creative organisations benefited, and £257million was invested across the country. In the Clacton constituency, which includes Frinton-on-Sea, the Westcliff Theatre in Clacton received £110,000.

Giles Watling MP said: "These attractions are a major part of our heritage within the Clacton constituency, and indeed the country as a whole. Having lobbied the government for the creation of the Cultural Recovery Fund, I am thrilled that this money is now being delivered locally to help our heritage sites and cultural attractions weather the storm and be there for future generations to enjoy. Additional funding will be distributed in the coming months.

"As we get through this unprecedented pandemic, these local assets, and the tremendous work done there, can undoubtedly play a part in our recovery. They are a key part of our tourism offer in Tendring, and I thank the government for this financial support, which will ensure that the jobs and economic contribution they provide will be protected."

Frinton Summer Theatre tweeted: "We're thrilled to learn we have received funding thanks to the government's #CultureRecoveryFund, We're not open just yet, but we are now able to plan to bring live theatre back to Frinton again, so that we can be #HereForCulture."

Students sent home as outbreak hits college

Students at a school that has a campus in Frinton-on-Sea were told to self-isolate last month after a fellow student tested positive for coronavirus.

Following guidance from the Department for Education, Public Health England and the National Health, staff at Tendring Technology College performed a Test and Trace and all pupils and staff who had come into close contact with the victim were told to self-isolate until October 28. They were allowed to return to school on November 2.

It's understood that the classrooms and buildings the group used were deep cleaned, and affected pupils were provided with virtual learning.

The school also has a campus in Thorpe-Le-Soken, and it's not clear which campus the students went to.

Meanwhile, as **VISION**Frinton-on-Sea went to press, the latest statistics from UK public health bodies showed that in Frinton-on-Sea and across the Tendring district as a whole, the number of COVID-19 cases had risen sharply but was still below the national average.

Between October 10 and 16, there were 88 cases per 100,000 people. There were 1,028 total coronavirus cases in Tendring up to October 19, while the number of deaths remained at 172.

Lifeboat crews star on prime-time TV

The brave souls of Walton and Frinton-on-Sea RNLI became household names last month when they starred in *Saving Lives at Sea* on BBC Two.

The programme followed the crew on a trip to rescue a ship called HMS Pickle. Arriving on scene, they discovered it was is not the modern naval vessel they were expecting but a replica of a ship that once served in Nelson's fleet, and though the original survived the battle of Trafalgar, this one was shipping water and sinking fast.

Crew members Dale and Rick boarded the 100ft-long stricken wooden sailing vessel and set up the salvage pump, successfully tackling the flood.

HMS Pickle owner and skipper Mal Nicholson said: "You're very much aware in that situation others are putting themselves at risk to try to help you."



Photo credit: BBC

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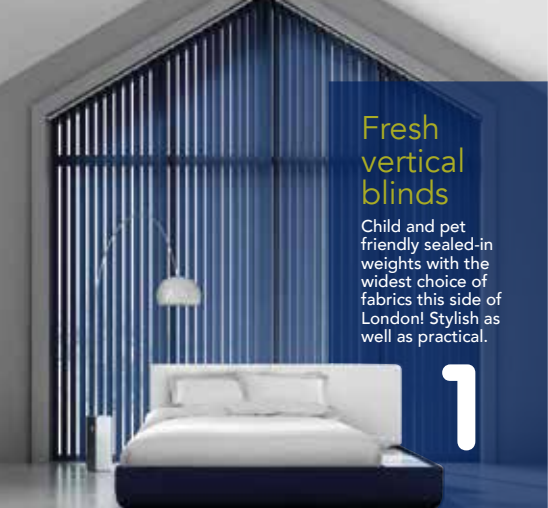
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Potential adopters are urged to come forward

People in Frinton-on-Sea who are considering adopting a child are being urged to come forward.

The call comes from Essex County Council, which says it is particularly keen to hear from people from diverse backgrounds.

Statistics show that black and mixed-heritage children often wait the longest to find an adoptive family. There is also a particular need for adopters for older children, sibling groups and children with disabilities.

Last year, Essex Adoption Service approved 66 families for adoption and matched 60 children with their adoptive families. Of the 66 families approved, 17 adopters were from black, Asian or minority

ethnic backgrounds and 13 adopters came from the LGBTQ+ community.

Councillor Louise McKinlay, Essex County Council's cabinet member for children and families, said: "People from all types of backgrounds can and do adopt. What is important is that you have the time, personal skills and commitment to adopt a child who will have experienced a difficult start in life. Please get in touch and find out if adoption could be for you."

Anyone interested in adoption can find out more at essexadoptionandfostering.co.uk/adoption or call 0800 801 530.

There's advice for black adopters at youcanadopt.co.uk/blackadopters

Self-isolation funding scheme launched

There's support for people in Frinton-on-Sea who have been told to self-isolate and cannot work from home after Tendring District Council (TDC) launched its scheme for Test and Trace Support Payments.

The government announced last month that people told to self-isolate who are unable to work from home, and who are on benefits, will be entitled to a payment of £500 to support them financially.

To be eligible, residents must provide proof that they have been told to stay at home and self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace. They must also provide proof that they are employed or self-employed, are unable

to work from home and will lose income as a result; and that they receive Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit and/or Pension Credit.

TDC has also introduced a discretionary element of the scheme for those who meet the eligibility criteria other than receiving a qualifying benefit.

Eligible Tendring residents can apply at tendringdc.gov.uk/coronavirus, or for those without internet access by calling the council on 01255 686811.

Kirsty Gallacher



...A GOOD SPORT

From fashion undergraduate to Sky Sports presenter, it was a curious career trajectory for Kirsty Gallacher, who seemingly had the world of light entertainment at her feet.

That was, until a series of events knocked the Edinburgh-born beauty off track.

Her recent return to the limelight is tribute to the strength and perseverance of the 44-year-old, but also a marker for us all in these difficult times.

The die was cast relatively early for Kirsty, as the daughter of Scottish Ryder Cup champion Bernard Gallacher, with a career in sport seeming the obvious choice. In reality, however, the presenter endeavoured for the cut and thrust of fashion, even when, still a youngster, the family upped sticks and moved to Wentworth to help her father's golfing ambitions.

Swapping Scotland for Surrey, Kirsty came to count Bruce Forsyth as a neighbour when growing up. And with a golf star for a dad, she was hardly unfamiliar with larger-than-life personalities popping in for coffee.

"I think maybe there was a pressure for me to do something grand," she begins, "but for many years that wasn't really me. I guess in the end I fell into it, but there was no nepotism going on – I was just lucky."

Kirsty recalls the time as a broadcaster with BSkyB when, having climbed to the position of editorial assistant, there came the opportunity to do a screen test.

"I was horribly nervous, but I've always been of the mind that once you are offered something you should always give it a try. Plus, back then, there was still a sense of adversity from traditionalists who didn't believe in women fronting sport, although that has clearly changed now."

Her time on *Sky Sports News* led to onward recognition as she went on to front shows including *Kirsty's Home Videos*, *Kirsty and Phil* and *Soccer Extra*.

So for someone so happy, it was perhaps surprising to see Kirsty's light fade in the midst of her father's poor health, and a painful divorce to ex-rugby pro Paul Sampson, her partner of 13 years, of which they were married for five.

"There were some tough things to process, though rather than take some time off to regroup and look after my boys, I threw myself into work, into new ideas and new projects."

A stint doing *Strictly Come Dancing* saw Gallacher looking desperately thin, and when a drink-driving incident saw her lose her driver's licence for 18 months, the star had hit a new low.

"It's actually really interesting how just when you think you are calm and settled, the carpet can be swept from beneath you," she admits. "It was horrific at the time, truly horrific – but at least now I can see that it was just a few life events colliding together. We are human beings for our ability to ride the rough waves and emerge out the other side stronger, and that's what I've done."

Her focus these days is on celebrating a return to the front line of presenting duties. Her successful podcast, *Stripped Back Sport*, is back on our screens at prime time, and even in a few short years she has witnessed a real evolution in television.

"As far as gender goes, it's definitely played out on more of an equal footing now," she says. "Broadcasting has really undergone a fantastic change over the past 20 years and British television remains the very best in the world. From a purely selfish perspective, it's so great to be back."



Dögggy TECH

From basic microchipping to gadgets that can detect your dog's moods, pet ownership has never been more advanced.

It's fair to say that man now has two best friends: the beloved pooch and the trusted smartphone. It makes sense, then, that our canine companions ought to have their own line of gadgetry to keep them on trend.

For many mutts, the tech adventure begins when they are just a few weeks old when they are implanted with a microchip. Now a legal requirement in the UK, these grain-of-rice-sized tags will save you much heartache should you ever lose your beloved pet. Better still, they are inexpensive and will last a lifetime, enabling you to update your personal information through the microchip database.

For dog owners seeking a more comprehensive device, there is a variety of activity trackers on the market that can be attached to your pup's collar. Fully waterproof, these 'Fitbits for Fido' not only boast advanced location services, but they can also give you an idea of how much exercise your dog is getting each day, as well as logging sleep patterns.

Many of us have one-sided chats with our dogs, and while the dream of reciprocal conversation is yet to be realised, we are now one step closer to at least understanding how they feel, thanks to Japanese company Langualess that has developed the Inupathy harness. Using data based on heart-rate patterns, this snazzy wearable changes colour to interpret your dog's moods.

Finally, there is a piece of kit designed purely for the owner's amusement – the dog harness that mounts an active camera. Retrace your pet's paws as they trample through the undergrowth and excitedly chase balls. Beware they don't catch you in an uncompromising position, though, or you just might end up being the star of your dog's very own YouTube channel.

Photo credit: wearable.com, kron4.com, thegadgetflow.com



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NOVEMBER BIRTH FLOWER OF THE MONTH

Chrysanthemum

For those born in November, your birth flower is the cheerful chrysanthemum. Often referred to as just "mums", these beautiful blooms have a long and rich history. One of the most popular autumn garden flowers, chrysanthemums are easy to grow and will come back year after year.

WHAT DOES THE CHRYSANTHEMUM SYMBOLISE?
 Native to Asia, the chrysanthemum is considered by both Japan and China to be an emblem of youth. The flower is also said to help prevent grey hairs, and a single petal placed at the bottom of a wine glass is believed to aid longevity.

- When presenting the chrysanthemum as a gift, the colour you choose conveys a particular meaning:
- A red or pink chrysanthemum means "I love you"
 - A white chrysanthemum symbolises innocence and purity
 - A yellow chrysanthemum represents unrequited love

WHAT DOES THIS BIRTH FLOWER SAY ABOUT YOUR PERSONALITY?
 If your birth flower is the chrysanthemum, you are said to be friendly, cheerful and loyal. Although at times you may appear tough on the outside, you are a compassionate person who is fiercely protective of your loved ones.

HOW CAN I GROW CHRYSANTHEMUMS?
 If you love these vibrant flowers, you will be pleased to hear that they are relatively easy to grow. They thrive in moist but well-drained soil, so choose a sheltered and sunny spot and add plenty of compost or well-rotted manure. However, chrysanthemums do tend to break at the base, so they will need staking. Once they finish blooming in autumn, mulch them with straw to protect them from frost.

ARE CHRYSANTHEMUMS POISONOUS TO PETS?
 Unfortunately, chrysanthemums are toxic to pets, and to cats, dogs and horses in particular. If your animal does ingest the flower, they may experience vomiting, skin inflammation and hyper-salivation.



Nasty Niffs

HOW TO KEEP CATS (AND WHAT THEY LEAVE BEHIND) OUT OF YOUR GARDEN

For those of us lucky enough to have an English country garden, the greatest joy is being surrounded by the many delights of nature. However, some of the guests that wander through our outdoor spaces are prone to leaving smelly little surprises in their wake. While there are chemical aids that can be used to deter these funky felines, these natural alternatives are equally effective...

SHARP OBJECTS: No one likes finding poo in their flower beds, which is why you need to make these secluded, cosy spots a little less appealing to Felix. Egg shells, branches and holly cuttings are a simple way to deter the defecator, without disrupting your plants.

MOTION-ACTIVATED SPRINKLERS: Cats hate getting wet. Fact. And while this may not be the cheapest option, it is incredibly effective and a sure-fire way to protect your wildflowers from being watered by other people's pets.

CERTAIN SCENTS: Cats have keen noses and a natural dislike for some smells. Lavender, citrus and mint are among these, which is ideal as lavender and mint plants make glorious additions to your herb garden. Alternatively, you could try simply spritzing these particular fragrances about the place, though this requires constant maintenance.

ULTRASONIC SOUNDS: Like a feline burglar alarm, these motion-activated devices emit a high-pitched sound when disrupted, which is very unpleasant to cats.

LION POO: Want to keep away the small cats? Then why not use the mighty power of the big cats? Fortunately, this organic and efficient method of repellent doesn't require you to trek around the Savannah with a pooper scooper as it's available as a natural fertiliser. And yes, it contains authentic lion whoopsies.




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Return

TO YOUR ROOTS *part 2*

Last month we celebrated the carrot, praised the parsnip and tackled the turnip. Now it's time to explore the culinary delights of three more tasty and nutritious root vegetables.

BEETROOT

Instantly recognisable by its bright purple hue, the beetroot often gets a bad rap as some believe that it tastes a little too much like the soil in which it is grown. However, it is worth sampling for its health benefits alone, with this root vegetable being rich in antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

HOW TO STORE: Place beetroots in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable drawer of your fridge. Lifespan: 3 weeks.

HOW TO COOK: The most famous beetroot dish is borscht, an eastern European winter warmer. Alternatively, roast in olive oil and cumin seeds.



JERUSALEM ARTICHOKE

Full of iron, potassium and vitamin B1, the Jerusalem artichoke is reported to be both an aphrodisiac and a natural digestive. In season from November to March, choose artichokes that are firm to touch and pale brown in colour.

HOW TO STORE: Keep in the fridge or in a cool, dark place. Lifespan: 1-2 weeks.

HOW TO COOK: Cook Jerusalem artichokes in the same way that you would a potato or parsnip: roasted, sautéed, dipped in batter and fried or puréed into a soup.



SWEET POTATO

Seen as a healthier alternative to potatoes, this root vegetable contains iron, calcium, selenium, vitamin A and C, plus it's full of fibre.

HOW TO STORE: Avoid storing in the fridge as this will result in an unpleasant taste; instead, place in a dry, well-ventilated container away from heat. Lifespan: 3-4 weeks.

HOW TO COOK: Although baking sweet potatoes will result in a richer taste, when boiled they have a low glycaemic index (GI).



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Are you getting enough VITAMIN D?

After enjoying an unseasonably warm and sunny spring and a pretty typical British summer, people's thoughts are now turning to the cold, and probably wet, winter ahead. Yet have you thought about how you are going to get sufficient vitamin D into your body during the months when sunlight is sparse?

Why is vitamin D important?

Vitamin D helps to regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body, both of which are needed for maintaining healthy teeth, bones and muscles. It is also known for improving brain development and reducing inflammation.

A vitamin D deficiency can lead to a loss of bone density which makes you more prone to fractures and osteoporosis. In children, it can cause rickets.

How much sunlight do I need to get sufficient vitamin D?

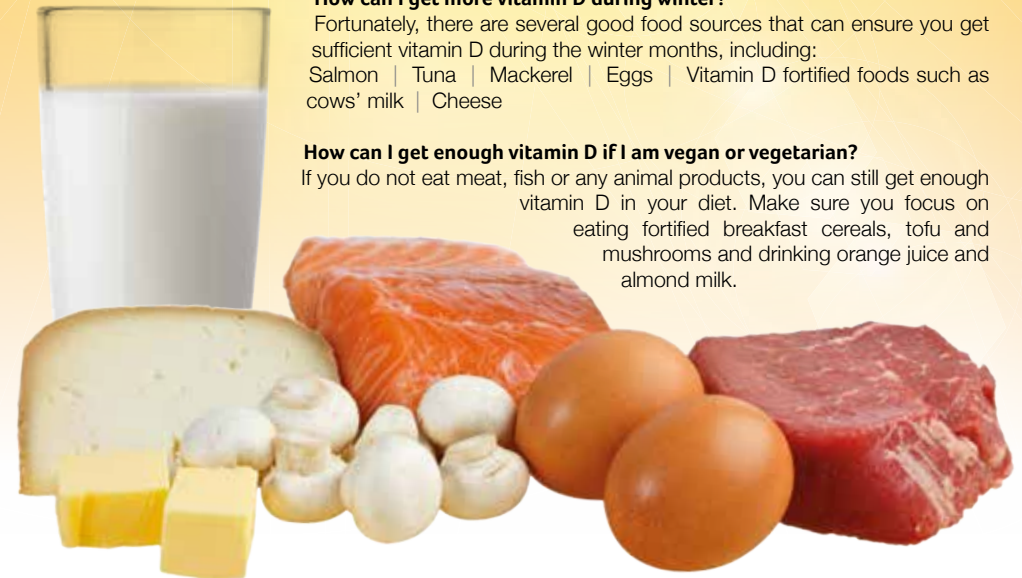
The main source of vitamin D for our bodies is the sun, yet in winter in the UK we do not get sufficient sunlight to meet our daily requirement of this vital vitamin. In the summer months, a mere 15 minutes of sun at midday is enough exposure, although people with darker skin, such as those of African or South Asian origin, may require a little longer.

How can I get more vitamin D during winter?

Fortunately, there are several good food sources that can ensure you get sufficient vitamin D during the winter months, including: Salmon | Tuna | Mackerel | Eggs | Vitamin D fortified foods such as cows' milk | Cheese

How can I get enough vitamin D if I am vegan or vegetarian?

If you do not eat meat, fish or any animal products, you can still get enough vitamin D in your diet. Make sure you focus on eating fortified breakfast cereals, tofu and mushrooms and drinking orange juice and almond milk.





5 natural BATH SOAKS



Is there anything more relaxing than soaking in a warm bubble bath during the winter months? Arguably not, but have you ever stopped to think about all the harsh chemicals that you are exposing your skin to each time you reach for your preferred products? Here are five natural alternatives to try.

1. Honey

Honey is an antibacterial substance that can help prevent infections and heal minor skin abrasions. It is also full of natural antioxidants that can help boost your immune system and help combat the signs of ageing.

Simply add two tablespoons of raw honey to a running bath and then soak for a minimum of 15 minutes.

2. Green tea

A popular choice for a bath soak, green tea can help to reduce muscle pain, soften skin and reduce any redness. Loaded with antioxidants, it also has anti-ageing benefits. Just fill your bath as normal, pop in six green tea bags, leave to steep for 15–20 minutes and remove.

3. Lavender

You may already be using a lavender-scented bath product owing to this herb's ability to instantly soothe and relax. However, why not cut out the chemicals and use pure lavender essential oil instead? All you need to do is add between six and eight drops to running water.

4. Baking soda

A store cupboard essential, also known as sodium bicarbonate, this natural ingredient is found in most bath products owing to its exfoliating properties.

Simply mix five tablespoons of baking soda into a warm bath and allow to dissolve.

5. Epsom salt

Not actually a salt but a naturally occurring mineral, Epsom salt is made up of magnesium and sulphate. Ideal for counteracting stress, Epsom salt can also help to ease pain and alleviate sore muscles. Add one or two cups to your bath five minutes before you plan to get in.



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Getting back to

BUSINESS

The unexpected upturns coronavirus brought about for small businesses

One has to be careful with any mention of a global pandemic in some way being good for business. Clearly what enveloped the world over the course of 2020 was a set of circumstances and outcomes we would never want repeated, and they carry on today. Yet while COVID-19 called time on the legacy of thousands of businesses, for others it has provided new vision, renewed focus and a world of opportunity.

Most of these have come in the form of directors, managers, sole traders and other decision-makers having a rare opportunity to step back and reassess.

In the early days of the lockdown, so profound were the circumstances around us and so urgent was the need to strip back, downgrade and economise, that businesses reverted to skeletal structures just to survive.

So when the UK began to emerge out of the famine of lockdown, many owners realised they could survive on these new,

low levels of efficiency. From reverting to four-day weeks to cancelling direct debits for subscriptions, software and other resources we actually didn't use; from encouraging working from home, embracing tech such as video conferencing, right through to enriching staff by asking them to adopt fresh ideas, tackle wider tasks or embrace new skills in order to get additional jobs done, there was a new take on what we needed.

In total, we found that COVID-19 brought about a need for transparency none of us could pull a curtain across. Unequivocally, it changed our attitudes towards everything from money to socialising to personal space, but also altered our perception of business – what it is, how we utilise it and, in some cases, how little we need the bells, whistles and fanfare. We are a simpler, more efficient nation because of coronavirus, and once we're out of the woods that will surely help us to flourish again.



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SEO 101

A beginner's guide

To the uninitiated, SEO, or search engine optimisation, can seem like a daunting task, and enlisting the services of a professional can be expensive. However, there is no reason why you can't learn to master the art of SEO yourself.

SEARCH FOR KEYWORDS

The foundation of any SEO campaign, keywords are ideas and terms that describe what your content is about and they are designed to help increase your visibility online. You can come up with the right keywords for your business by:

- > Brainstorming with your team
- > Checking out your competitors' sites
- > Using Google Ads Keyword Planner

OPTIMISE YOUR TITLES AND META DESCRIPTIONS

This is where it gets a little bit more technical. Once you have your list of keywords, you need to optimise your page titles using these keywords in as natural a way as possible. Page titles and meta descriptions are shown in search engine results and therefore these need to clearly convey what each page is about. You can optimise these via your content management system or in your SEO plug-in.

OPTIMISE YOUR PAGE CONTENT

Your next step is to add your keywords to your website text. These include your header tags (your headings and subheadings) and the rest of the text on the page. Again, try to do this in as natural a way as possible and don't overstuff your content with keywords as both Google and searchers are put off by this technique.

BUILD LINKS

If you want your site to get on that much-coveted first page of Google, you need to focus on getting high-quality backlinks, i.e. hyperlinks from other websites to your own. There are several techniques that you can use to build backlinks, including:

- > Be active on social media
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- > Create an infographic
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Microsoft
celebrates 25
 years of Windows

Microsoft's launch of Windows back in 1995 marked a true turning point in personal computing. Not only was it fresh, accessible and affordable, but as something called 'the World Wide Web' gradually came into focus, it connected us with the rest of planet Earth in a way we'd never before thought possible.

In many ways, Bill Gates and his team of boffins simply took a customer-focused approach to software, where previously it had been the domain of tech nerds and those who loved the intricacies of computing. A start button, a menu, a task bar and better naming and labelling systems for files do not today seem like revolutionary steps, but as the Millennium approached, our reliance on computers increased, and with that, a need to make them as user-friendly as possible.

Perhaps the most defining feature of Windows, however, was MSN. Offering chat rooms, email, newsgroups and, crucially, the ability to type those holy characters 'www' into a URL box, we were truly the masters of our own tech destiny.

Windows' popularity also saw use of the Internet Explorer browser exceed anything else out there, and by 2003 a whopping 95 per cent of consumers were using it to access the web. While its decline since owes much to rivals Mozilla and Google Chrome upping their game, Windows itself has stuck.

Yes, Mac and Linux have mixed things up in a market that is distinguishable by its refusal to sit still, but what is certain is that Windows 95 (and its various updates over the years... 7, 8, 10, XP, Vista and 2000 to name a few) is regarded as being as innovative and revolutionary today as it was then.



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PUZZLES & TRIVIA

PUZZLES

Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

- ▶ ARCHERY
- ▶ ATHLETICS
- ▶ BADMINTON
- ▶ BOXING
- ▶ DIVING
- ▶ EQUESTRIAN
- ▶ FENCING
- ▶ FOOTBALL
- ▶ GYMNASTICS
- ▶ HANDBALL
- ▶ HOCKEY
- ▶ JUDO
- ▶ ROWING
- ▶ SAILING
- ▶ SHOOTING
- ▶ SWIMMING
- ▶ TENNIS
- ▶ VOLLEYBALL
- ▶ WATER
- ▶ POLO
- ▶ WEIGHTLIFTING

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DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Vatican City is the smallest country in the world
- ▶ The Gotthard Base Tunnel in Switzerland is the longest rail tunnel in the world
- ▶ E is the only vowel not used as the first letter in a US state name
- ▶ Russia is the largest country in the world
- ▶ The African continent has three deserts: Sahara, Kalahari and Namib
- ▶ Peninsulas are surrounded by water on three sides, for example Spain and Portugal
- ▶ Angel Falls in Venezuela is the world's largest uninterrupted waterfall
- ▶ Canberra is the capital city of Australia
- ▶ The Trafalgar Square Christmas tree is donated by Norway every year

WORD LADDER

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BALL

THE AIM: Change the word at the top of the ladder one letter at a time to make the word at the bottom.

HOW TO: Change one letter on each step to make a new word. By the time you reach the end, you should have created the new word.

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TIP: There is usually more than one way to solve this puzzle.

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The PARTEY IS OVER



Arsenal's decision to lay off club mascot Gunnersaurus on the day they splashed £45million on midfielder Thomas Partey has furthered the debate of just how connected our Premier League sides are to the real world.

The decision to release the Gunners' iconic mascot, who has been parading around home games for 27 years, was announced at the start of October. That meant lifelong fan Jerry Quy would have to find something else to do on matchdays.

In the club's defence, it was accepted that dressing as a dinosaur and parading around the pitch in front of empty stands was probably a waste of time; but Arsenal, just like so many other clubs who have cut back in the wake of coronavirus, have scored a spectacular own goal in their failure to see the bigger picture.

From north London neighbours Tottenham Hotspur to Premier League champions Liverpool, an insistence on micromanaging rarely ends well when we are, as a nation, looking for togetherness and unity as we are during the time of this pandemic.

When players' astronomical wages are paid in full yet staff on the minimum wage are furloughed and, in some cases, made redundant, you wonder if the disconnect can ever be bridged.

When a 126-year-old club such as Macclesfield Town, who played in the Football League last season, are allowed to be wound up for the sake of less than two weeks of Arsenal midfielder Mesut Özil's wages, surely we've lost sight of the game.

Speaking of Özil, who hasn't played competitive football for the club in seven months but continues to pick up his full wage, the German did at least begin to repair his reputation with Gunners fans perennially underwhelmed by his energy and application, by offering to front up Gunnersaurus's wage himself.

It's troubling that a player has to make that move, and that his employers cannot see that abandoning the little man – or in this case, dinosaur – is a PR faux pas that becomes far more costly.



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