

2020
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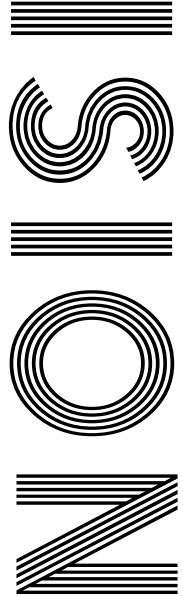
UK'S
NOT SO
SMART
MOTORWAYS

LOVE IS IN
THE AIR

Online dating tips

CHOCAHOLIC

Ways to use leftover Easter eggs



FREE

Photo credit: Ken McKay/ITV/Shutterstock

MARY BERRY

Celebrating the cook's career as she turns 85

Questions about LOCKDOWN?

LEAVING YOUR HOME

Q: Will I need ID or proof of what I'm doing outside of my home?

A: At the moment the government are not asking for any ID or documents if you are leaving home. They trust that you're leaving for essential purposes. But this could change.

Q: Can the police arrest me or fine me?

A: From Thursday, March 26, police will have the power to fine you and even force you into self-isolation if they suspect you of being ill. On-the-spot fines will start at around £30 but go up to £1,000.

HOME AND FAMILY

Q: I need emergency work done to my home - can I call out a plumber/builder/electrician?

A: Builders, electricians and plumbers can carry on working but are reminded to stay at least two metres away from other people.

Q: I'm divorced and have a custody arrangement with my ex - can I still see my kids?

A: Parents who have split are allowed to see their kids but are advised to move between the different locations as little as possible.

Q: I'm selling my house, can it still go ahead?

A: If you haven't already exchanged the government is recommending you pause the sale and restart it when the crisis is over.

LEISURE

Q: Can I have a picnic?

A: No. Gatherings of more than two people outside a household have been banned. You will be able to run, walk or cycle in a park once a day.

Q: Can I go to the shops?

A: You will be allowed out once a day to get "basic necessities" like food and medicine.

Q: Can I go to church, mosque, synagogue, or other places of worship?

A: No. All religious gatherings, including weddings have been banned. Only funerals will take place.

WORK

Q: Can I still go to work?

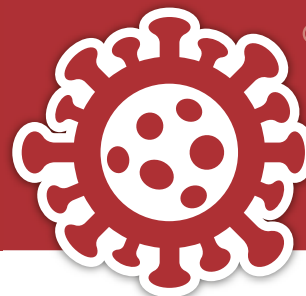
A: Yes but only if it is absolutely essential and the work cannot be done from home.

Q: I work construction, can I still work?

A: At the moment, construction workers are still able to work on site, but are reminded about social distancing.

Q: The trains and buses are still running. Can I use them?

A: Yes but only for essential journeys and if you're a key worker. Please avoid using them in peak hours.



CORONAVIRUS

Advice on how to combat Coronavirus
(COVID-19) Supplied by GOV.UK

THE ADVICE FOR ANYONE IN ANY SETTING IS TO FOLLOW THESE MAIN GUIDELINES.

The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are recent onset of a new continuous cough and/or high temperature. If you have these symptoms, however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started. You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact NHS 111 online. If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.

Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and hot water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, or after being in public areas where other people are doing so. Use hand sanitiser if that's all you have access to.

To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue away immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel.

Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

At the current time and based on our understanding of what is known of COVID-19 and other similar respiratory viruses, it is likely that older people and those with chronic medical conditions may be vulnerable to severe disease. As more information emerges, recommendations may change.

PREVENTION:



wash hands
often with soap



avoid touching
your face



disinfect objects
and surfaces



avoid close contact
with people



stay home



Avoid contact
with sick people

TREATMENT:



no vaccine
to prevent
2019-nCoV



no specific
treatment
for 2019-nCoV



drink plenty
of liquids



take
pain and fever
medications



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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

Editor's notes...



Nik Allen, Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's edition of **VISION** Leigh-on-Sea.

As you will know, we're all about keeping the local - that's Andy the architect, Bev the beautician, Claire the, err, clairvoyant! The point is, whatever the product, service or craft, we make a point of supporting local trade over the big brands and multinational conglomerates. Why? Well, for trust, for expertise, for local knowledge and for the familiarity of a personal touch that can only come from small businesses, independent experts.

There's a wonderful contrast between the pandemic that's sweeping the globe and the idea of going right back to the smallest tradespeople in the heart of our communities, but it's one we have to throw all our weight behind now. Why? Because those who suffer from a commercial downturn as a result of coronavirus won't be the big chains - they've got resources aplenty and can take the strain.

It's Andy, Bev, Claire and others - their partners and their dependants - who will rely on 'business as usual'. Once these small businesses are gone, there's little chance of them coming back.

Some of us may be spending time away from the office over the coming weeks, so let's make the most of it. If you are in good health, support the local businesses by getting some of those outdoor jobs done - they need us now more than ever before.

Remember to keep your distance and keep washing your hands.

Nik

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(not so) SMART MOTORWAYS

ARE SMART MOTORWAYS ONE OF THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY'S LEAST CLEVER IDEAS?

The concept of the smart motorway is, on initial inspection, a good one... a smart one, in fact. It uses active traffic management to increase the capacity of a motorway, with the main premise being to free up the hard shoulder for regular traffic use.

Also factoring in variable speed limits, the aim is smoother flow of traffic, quicker journey times, a reduction in both noise and air pollution, and fewer road traffic collisions.

On that basis, the concept, first introduced back in 2006 on the M42 in the West Midlands, is a sound one. The vast majority of us will have been in a situation where overhead information boards divert, guide and advise us in smart motorway settings, and we'll have experienced the benefits.

Sure enough, more than £2billion of contracts

have so far been issued in order to extend, renovate and convert existing routes into smart motorways, with the M1, M4, M5, M6, M60 and M62 all actioned. In addition, other variations, such as controlled motorways, dynamic hard shoulders, all lane running and through junction running routes – which use the same concept but cannot be fully utilised for hard shoulder use, for instance, because of bridges – have come into effect.

However, in recent years, the effectiveness and safety levels of this traffic management solution have been called into question. Despite a conversion cost of between £5million and £15million per mile, the Campaign for Better Transport has consistently claimed no positive impact on CO₂ emissions.

Most alarmingly, though, is a swell of evidence suggesting that rather than reducing collisions and

accidents, smart motorways are actually causing them.

This point was first raised by the RAC, who discovered that motorists' confusion over whether a smart motorway was, effectively, 'in use', led to many driving on the hard shoulder when they were not permitted to.

Then, in January of this year, a Freedom of Information Act revealed a 20-fold increase in near misses on smart motorways, caused when a motorist has broken down and has with no hard shoulder or safe space to retreat to.

The original M42 pilot scheme offered emergency refuge areas (ERAs) 500m apart – that's less than a third of a mile. The logic therefore is that anyone sensing they are breaking down can 'limp' to the next safe space.

However, some stretches of the M25 have these spaces up to 1.6 miles apart, leaving motorists in real danger in the event of mechanical failure or a collision, with no means of removal. In real terms, this has led to 38 deaths on smart motorways across the UK.

To that end, Police Federation of England and Wales chief John Apter said, "I do not like the term 'smart motorways' because it infers they're a good idea. They're anything but, and a recipe for disaster. It's a death trap. It's inherently dangerous and putting lives at risk."

It seems a full-scale review of smart motorways is imminent, and this apparently innovative measure to alleviate the ever-increasing demands we have on our roads could find itself consigned to the annals of road traffic experimentation.



It's a date...

TOP TIPS TO GET YOU BACK IN THE GAME

Are you single, spent too long huddled around your radiator and run out of shows to binge on Netflix? Now's the time to revamp your online dating profile, ready for when you can start getting out there again – hopefully in time for a summer romance...

NAIL THE PROFILE

- ♥ Use recent and unfiltered pictures. Most people who are serious about dating prefer to see the real you as opposed to manipulated images. Don't just post selfies – include pictures with friends too.
- ♥ Be honest. Don't lie about your age or your past, and if you're between jobs, that's fine too.

- ♥ Be open, but don't give it all away – mention that you like travel, for example, but leave it to them to find out what your top five destinations are.

FIRST DATE TIPS

- ♥ Activities such as minigolf or bowling are low-pressure ways of getting to know someone.
- ♥ Avoid the conventional cinema, but an open-air cinema is a fun alternative. And a great excuse to cuddle if the weather turns chilly.
- ♥ Go to a comedy club to see if you share the same sense of humour.
- ♥ If you both listed a love of food on your profiles, then dinner should definitely be on the cards.
- ♥ Stay safe. Let someone know where you are going, and share your location via WhatsApp once you get there. Have someone nearby so they can come to the rescue, if needed.

RED FLAGS

- ♥ Run away if they're a sore loser or an ungracious winner on your activity date.
- ♥ If they spend longer staring at their phone than into your eyes, hit the road.
- ♥ Beware if they have absolutely everything in common with you – they might have stalked your social media.
- ♥ Everyone has a past, but constantly mentioning their ex is not okay.
- ♥ Neither are any of these things: ordering for you, being overly critical of everything, and arriving late with no excuse or apology.



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Dishwasher

NO-NOS



A dishwasher is designed to make your life easier. That being said, there is nothing easy about trying to salvage your kitchen treasures.

Therefore, it is a good idea to know exactly what you can and can't put in your dishwasher.

1 SHARP KNIVES: If you have invested in a set of self-sharpening knives or the one that claims to be the sharpest knife in the world, don't go and ruin its reputation by putting it in the dishwasher, as the cycle can warp the metal and cause the blade to become dull.

2 CAST IRON PANS: Although cast iron is known for its durability, put it in the dishwasher and all that changes, causing rust and stripping its non-stick properties.

3 CRYSTAL: If you have a set of expensive crystal glasses, you will want to avoid cleaning them in the dishwasher as the high temperatures can cause them to chip and become cloudy.

4 ALUMINIUM PANS: Even if you have old aluminium pans that you are not worried about staining or damaging, putting these pans in the dishwasher can lead to other items becoming marked. Always check to see if your pans are dishwasher safe before adding them to the cycle because harsh dishwasher detergents can dull the finish.

5 WOODEN UTENSILS OR KITCHENWARE: Your wooden spoons or bowls, should never be put in the dishwasher as the very hot water can cause the wood to crack or become warped.



HOME & DIY



HOME & DIY

WILD LIFE



biophilic design

BIOPHILIC DESIGN CAN BRIGHTEN YOUR MOOD, YOUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE AND YOUR HOME

For many years, people have been saying that feeling glum can be countered by getting outside and being at one with nature. But with wet, long winters, and given that many of us live in concrete jungles, spending time outdoors is neither practical nor desirable. The solution is to bring the outside in... biophilic design.

Of course, no one is suggesting you start knocking down any of the walls of your home or take inspiration from the set of the film *Jumanji* as far as interiors go; this is a subtle trend in which nature leads the way. And the best part? You get all the benefits of the great outdoors – calm, clarity, peace of mind – without having to go near a campsite.

HOW TO CREATE YOUR BIOPHILIC HAVEN...

Let the light in

Pull back the curtains, wash the windows and let the natural light flood in. If your home is naturally gloomy, use large mirrors to create the illusion of space and brightness, and don't forget to fill the place with fresh air too.

Go green

Not only does the colour green bring life and vigour to your home décor, it also possesses meditative qualities which quieten and soothe the mind.

Plant life

Possibly the most obvious way to bring nature into your home: is to buy a plant. Hanging baskets with vines that adorn your walls, potted herbs on your windowsill and a gorgeous succulent on your coffee table. Beautiful, oxygen-giving and living works of art.

Texturise

Reclaimed wood is very popular in interior design right now, and this characterful, evolving material also adds an earthy warmth to your home. Any natural material, in fact, is ideal for the biophilic trend, from wool blankets to granite countertops and stone ornaments – just be ambitious, and let the outdoors flow in.



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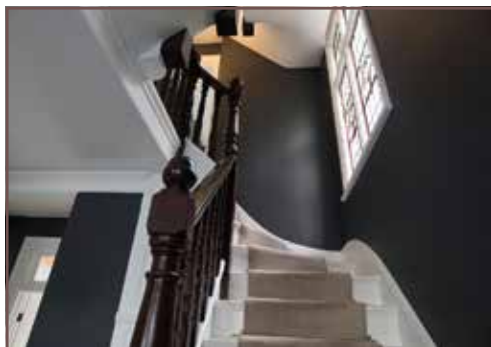


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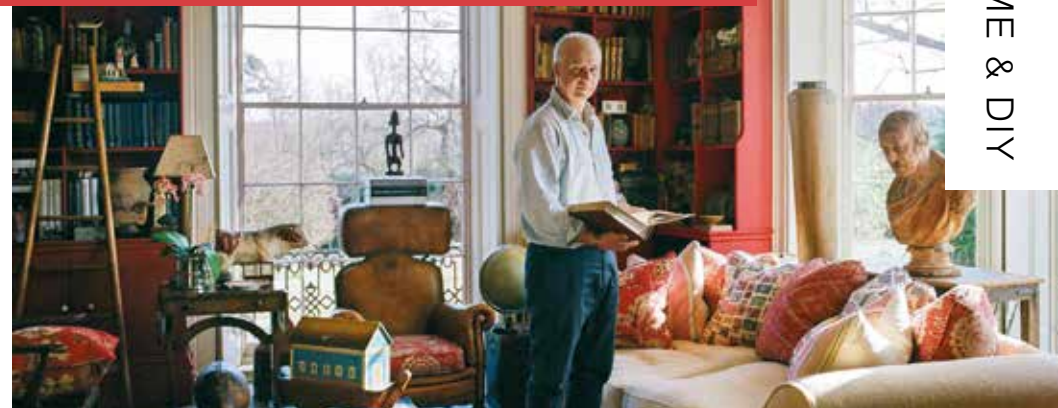


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THE WORLD IN YOUR LIVING ROOM



HOME & DIY



Recreating the idea of interior discovery from one of the UK's most dynamic brands

The fact that interior designer Andrew Martin delivers his brand of playful, adventurous, multifaceted design from a showroom in Chelsea is perhaps at odds with the area's formal, stuffy, rather bland feel.

Sure, SW3 presents arguably London's finest exemplar of pouting, polished, Victorian and Georgian wealth, but its look jars slightly with the bright, breathless brilliance of a designer who recently celebrated 40 years at the front of a mode that celebrates intrepid spirit, hidden cultures and the world's kaleidoscope of customs and crafts.

Consider wallpaper that displays excerpts from *Pride and Prejudice*, or takes the form of old maps or sheets of stamps; think of stools, coffee tables, seats and sofas inspired by 1960s and 1970s looks, but that retain a cheeky modern-day irreverence; or what about Muhammad Ali, Kate Moss or Britain-themed cushions...?

From statement pieces to one-offs, Andrew Martin's position as an interiors visionary is exemplified in the sense that its flagship store in London has the feel of a mid-level nightclub. There is warmth, variety, detail and depth at every turn, but even the most playful of items has quality at its heart.

Founded by Martin Waller in 1978, the brand trod carefully through the somewhat cheap sheen of the 1980s, then flourished in the decade that followed as multiculturalism became a buzzword for style. Bolstered by the exposure of more than 20 books on the subject and a celebration of travel, in 2020 the Andrew Martin brand is now a platform for discovery in our own homes. And whether you've got a stool made to look like a petrified log is irrelevant.

"What we are about is detail, culture and the ability to have fun," says the founder. "It is about turning away from the formal and having fun – it is about injecting humour and philosophy into our surroundings, and this is something anyone is capable of."

Photo credit: andrewmartin.co.uk, Joomey Woodward via howtoperfect.com



LOCAL NEWS

from your neighbourhood



Community raises funds to support sports club after attack

The Leigh-on-Sea community has rallied around a sports club after yobs broke into a clubhouse and caused significant damage.

Vandals broke into the Belfairs Sports and Social Club in Eastwood Road North on March 11.

The club is home to Leigh Ramblers FC, Southend Hockey Club and Eastwood Cricket Club.

Since the attack, a fundraising page has been set up, with more than £1,000 pledged within days to repair the damage.

However, images show the extent of the carnage caused by the yobs as a large television was ripped off the wall, the bar area was trashed and fire extinguishers were thrown.

Richard Ackery, secretary at Leigh Ramblers, said: "The clubhouse has a great family spirit, an amazing

amount of great people, players, coaches, staff and volunteers.

"A lot of time, money and effort has recently gone into modernising this environment and making it a place for all members to congregate, watch games and even share stories of times gone by.

"Unfortunately, the cost of the damage caused runs into the thousands, and while the support and help we have received so far from the local community has been truly first class, there are lots of things that require funds that we simply do not have.

"We would be extremely grateful for anything you could contribute to help us get the clubhouse back to its former glory."

To donate, visit www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/BelfairsSportsAndSocialClub

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Town doctor thought to be first GP to die from COVID-19



Photo credit: NHS Southend CCG

A doctor from Leigh-on-Sea became the first GP in the UK to die of suspected coronavirus, according to the BBC.

Habib Zaidi, who was 76, died in intensive care at Southend Hospital 24 hours after he was taken ill. He had been a GP in Leigh for more than 45 years.

His daughter Sarah Zaidi, who is also a GP, told the BBC her father showed textbook symptoms of the virus. As **VISION** Leigh-on-Sea went to press, tests for COVID-19 were still to confirm that he died of the disease.

Sarah Zaidi paid tribute to her father and told the BBC that he had sacrificed his life for his job.

She commented: "For that to be the thing that took him is too much to bear. It is reflective of his sacrifice. He had a vocational attitude to service. He was treated as a definitive case. There is little clinical doubt it is coronavirus; the test result is academic.

"We can't mourn in the normal way. We can't have a normal funeral. He left a gaping hole in our hearts, but a loss that is also felt within the community that he devoted almost his entire life to."

Relief for residents as airport changes night flight paths

Residents have welcomed a decision by Southend Airport to no longer let night-time cargo flights fly over Leigh-on-Sea.

The decision was confirmed on March 12 by airport bosses, who have told pilots not to fly over Leigh unless the wind speed and direction make it unsafe not to do so.

The airport has also agreed to stop the use of reverse thrust overnight, which can cause significant noise.

The night-time cargo flight path over Leigh has caused significant unrest since it was introduced last year.

Residents have claimed that there are as many as seven flights in a single night, and a petition was launched with almost 3,000 signatures.

The U-turn on the night-time flights comes after a meeting between councillors and Southend Airport.

A Southend Airport spokesperson said: "We have been engaging with councillors to understand the concerns of their residents.

"Following a constructive meeting we agreed an action plan that we are currently working through.

"We confirmed that we have made progress in terms of agreeing with the airline of our global logistics customer that it is now compulsory to avoid flying over Leigh unless the wind speed will not allow them to do so.

"In addition, we have agreed that the use of reverse thrust at night will be limited to times when it is unavoidable for safety reasons."

Brawl breaks out as pubgoers ignore advice

A mass brawl broke out outside a Leigh-on-Sea pub, leaving a woman injured and two men arrested.

The fight took place outside The Elms, on London Road, on March 20 in the early hours.

The incident happened during a time when the public had been asked by the government to limit social interaction.

Later the same day, all pubs were told to close as the country tackles the coronavirus pandemic.

Essex Police are investigating the incident after a woman in her 20s was assaulted.

The incident was condemned by local people, including a nearby resident who wished to remain anonymous.

She said: "It's not unusual to have brawls outside pubs but it is completely unacceptable at a time when we are being asked to socially distance ourselves.

"On top of that it puts extra pressure on police and the NHS. I'm pleased now pubs are closed."

A spokesman from Essex Police said: "It was reported a woman in her 20s had been assaulted.

"A 22-year-old man from Benfleet and an 18-year-old from Southend were arrested on suspicion of common assault."



SIR DAVID AMESS MP

Member of Parliament for Southend West



Since my last article, our country and indeed the world is now facing a crisis caused by a health pandemic.

I very much understand the anxiety that each and every person will be feeling at the moment.

I and my team in Westminster are endeavouring to get the answers to residents' issues as quickly as we possibly can. I have written to businesses, schools, charities and care homes, offering my support, and I am holding meetings with health service providers and the police.

At this time of national crisis, I have no doubt that we, of all nations, will work together to overcome and defeat this new type of invisible enemy. Locally, I

appreciate that businesses will be worried about their viability, parents will be anxious about their children and others will be concerned about the vulnerability of older people. I stand ready to help in whatever way I can.

If you believe I can be of any assistance, you can contact me at amessd@parliament.uk or on 020 7219 3452. The government has also provided the following hotlines to help answer people's concerns:

- > Business support and ventilators: 0300 456 3565
- > HMRC: 0800 015 9559
- > Universal Credit: 0800 328 5644
- > School closures: 0800 046 8687
- > NHS: Only call 111 if you cannot get help online at 111.nhs.uk

Library Gardens plans begin to blossom

The Friends of Leigh Library Gardens (FOLLG) have been hard at work recently.

On February 27, the regular quiz night hosted by Valerie Bates at the Constitutional Club on Elm Road made FOLLG its charity for the night. The event raised £516 for the charity.

Following a public consultation on what Leigh residents would like to see happen in the gardens, FOLLG arranged for the parks team to cut back trees to create a more open vista to the south of the library, enhancing the view across the estuary.

Owing to recent success in securing funding from London Southend Airport and support from the Southend Council Parks Team, works to develop the mini fruit orchard in the lower gardens are due to commence over the next few months.

Russell Hallmark, chairman of FOLLG, said: "Volunteers from FOLLG had a great night at the quiz and we are extremely grateful to Valerie and the club for welcoming us and raising such a fantastic amount.

"It has been really rewarding to see substantial work in the gardens taking place and to see that our plans and the needs and wishes of Leigh residents are being listened to by our partners in the parks department.

"We are looking forward to working hard to make



Photo credit: Friends of Leigh Library Gardens

the gardens a vibrant community asset where all are welcome and can benefit from the space and peace they offer."

Subject to government advice, the Friends meet in the gardens, near the library building, from 10am to 11.30am on the first and third Wednesday and second and fourth Saturday of each month.

Tools are provided but you are advised to wear suitable clothing for outdoor work. No gardening experience is needed and no special skills are required.

For more information about the Friends, including volunteer opportunities, email follg2018@gmail.com

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Leigh-on-Sea TOWN COUNCIL

What is the Town Council doing to support residents in regard to the coronavirus?

- > Regularly keeping in touch with the elderly members of our over-60's social club and community transport scheme
- > Posting regular updates on our website and social media channels
- > Building up a directory of street groups, volunteers and traders available on our website who are able to offer help and support to vulnerable people or those self-isolating
- > Holding weekly group communications to discuss the situation and come up with solutions

Watch out for coronavirus scams

According to Online Watch Link, fraudsters are exploiting the spread of coronavirus to facilitate various types of fraud. Watch out for scam messages, do not reply to or click on any links in text messages or emails and never give away financial information.

To report a fraud or a scam, contact ActionFraud. police.uk / 0300 123 2040.

Keep in touch

If you are feeling lonely, vulnerable or isolated and would like to have regular contact with us, then phone us on 01702 716288 and we can add you to our list.

If you are a business or trader in the area and are promoting any special offers or new initiatives to help people in the area, we would be happy to list these on our website. Email: council@leighonseatowncouncil.gov.uk with the details.

If you or any of your neighbours have set up a street group on Facebook (or other site), please email us with the details and we can add these to a directory on our website.

If you would like to volunteer to help vulnerable people in the area, please get in contact as we are setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme.

Our phone line will be manned 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. For out-of-hours calls please contact 07902 078123.

We are continuing to work on initiatives as the situation develops, so please check our website for updates.

Driver leaves girl with a broken foot

Police are hunting for a driver who fled from the scene of a crash which left a 12-year-old girl with a broken foot.

The collision in Leigh-on-Sea happened where Flemming Crescent meets Blenheim Chase on March 10.

The driver initially stopped and spoke with the girl before driving off.

It is believed the driver was in a dark-coloured Hyundai or another 4x4 SUV-style vehicle.

A spokesman for Essex Police said: "We understand that the male driver got out and spoke to the victim at the scene to check she was okay, but did not leave details. We are keen to speak to him."

"Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call the Chigwell Road Policing Unit on 101.

"The incident number to quote is 1017 of March 10.

"If you would prefer to remain anonymous, you can speak to Crimestoppers online or by calling 0800 555 111."

Photo credit: Nicky Hayes Photography



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showroom with your plans.



Dick Davies MONTHLY ROUND UP

SPORTS
CORRESPONDENT
BBC ESSEX

LOCAL NEWS

Photo credit: Southend United FC



Somewhat appropriately, on Friday, March 13 the Football Association decided that the Football League should be suspended with immediate effect until at least April 8. Less than a week later, this suspension was extended until the end of April.

Even before the extension had been announced, the Southend United chairman Ron Martin wanted the season to be declared null and void.

He said: "It makes good sense to draw a line under it now and say it's the end before starting the new season afresh in August." That was a perfectly understandable reaction given the parlous state of state of things at Roots Hall.

The "Blues" have nine matches to be played. They are still a minimum of 16 points adrift of safety, and even that assumes those teams immediately above them lose all their games.

A total abandonment of the 2019/20 season would, at first sight, save the immediate future of Southend

United by preventing their almost inevitable relegation from League One back to League Two, from which they were promoted five years ago.

However, this apparent salvation could actually prove to be the last nail in the metaphorical coffin.

Sports fans are tribal folk who share each others' joys and woes through many years and up and down numerous motorways to bear witness to their idols, yet they do have their breaking points.

To a certain extent, for many supporters the level of the game at which their team plays is of lesser concern than that they prosper from week to week, and they would far prefer to watch their side win regularly than routinely lose heavily.

In their most recent season in League Two, Southend's home attendances averaged 7,500, but after the resultant promotion they dipped to 6,800. The missing fans could make a significant difference in the longer term.

www.southendunited.co.uk



AGED TO *perfection*

AT 85 YEARS YOUNG, MARY BERRY IS STILL
AT THE PEAK OF HER POWERS

For so long one half of *The Great British Bake Off*'s dynamic judging duo alongside Paul Hollywood, Mary Berry coached amateur bakers through years of soggy bottoms and wheat-free triumphs. Yet in the context of her wider career, the baking doyenne's stint on the hit BBC reality show – which ended when Channel 4 swiped the contract, leaving Mary to mark her loyalty by refusing to move with it – accounts for only a very small part of a baking success story that has seen her rise to prominence with every bit the beauty of a loaf of bread.

In more than 50 years delighting on screen, at cookery demonstrations and in the pages of countless cookery books, Mary Berry's culinary career has taken her far and wide. Ever since discovering a passion for cooking in her domestic science classes at school in Bath ("the first thing I made was a treacle sponge and everybody seemed to enjoy it"), Berry's career has always revolved around the kitchen in some way, shape or form.

There were home visits to show people how to use their electric ovens in the early days, studies abroad at France's prestigious Le Cordon Bleu, plus cooking for the Egg Council and the Flour Advisory Bureau. She even worked as a magazine food editor while raising her family – it's been a varied but produce-led career.

Berry penned her first culinary tome, *The Hamlyn All Colour Cookbook*, back in 1970, and since then she's overseen a further 75 tomes of kitchen cleverness.

Like many chefs, her preference for fresh, locally sourced produce shines through. A Royal Horticultural Society Ambassador who proudly tends her own vegetable garden at home in Buckinghamshire, Mary places great importance on the idea of home-grown, seasonal produce. "I think people more and more are wanting to know where their food comes from," she says. "If it comes from your own garden or your allotment, you know all about it, don't you?"

When it comes to home cooking, Mary follows the traditional route, favouring what is available rather than sugar-free or pesticide-ridden fodder. "We grow what we eat," she says.

Famous for her bakes, Mary likes to use "all the natural ingredients", and you won't catch her shaping her recipes to fad diet requirements. "I don't do low fat," she says firmly. "I'd rather have a smaller portion." Perhaps these calorific but micro portions are the answer to Mary's trim figure. "I don't have a slimming secret; I believe in everything in moderation," she says.

That moderation now sees her 85 years young, fit as a fiddle and, inevitably, eyeing up the next project. This year she is fronting BBC show *Best Home Cook*, and as the weather warms up, she will be seen around the country at a number of food events.

"The great thing about food is it keeps on evolving," she says. "It's so rich, so diverse and, more than anything else, so tasty. It keeps us all coming back for more and I'll never tire of sharing my passion with other people."

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WHAT DOES YOUR

birth flower

SAY ABOUT YOU?

Everyone knows what star sign they are, and most know their birthstone, yet not very many are aware of what their birth flower is.

Starting in our next issue, we will be running a regular feature on each month's birth flower, revealing what your birth flower says about your personality, plus tips on how to grow your flower in your own garden.

WHAT IS A BIRTH FLOWER?

Every month has a flower that symbolises that month, and it is said that the characteristics of this flower may be inherited or passed on to the people who are born during that month. These flowers are known as birth flowers.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE BIRTH FLOWER?

It was the Romans who first started the concept of flowers as gifts rather than just as decorations, by giving flowers to

people on the day of their birth becoming commonplace. It was this act that led to the creation of the birth flower.

WHY DO WE GIVE FLOWERS AS GIFTS?

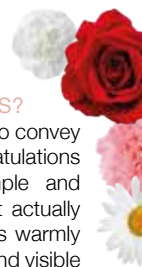
Today, people tend to give flowers as gifts to convey a certain message, normally of love, congratulations or commiserations. Flowers are a simple and effective way to express emotions without actually saying a word. As gifts, flowers are always warmly welcomed owing to their sweet fragrance and visible beauty, but they are actually so much more than that, with each flower symbolising something different.

WHAT IS THIS MONTH'S BIRTH FLOWER?

Just to give you a little taster of what is to come in next month's first birth flower feature, the birth flower of April is the daisy. This flower is known for conveying innocence, love and purity, with people born in this month being playful and loyal.



GARDENING





USE YOUR noodle in the Garden

FIVE WAYS TO USE A POOL NOODLE IN YOUR GARDEN

If you think the only purpose of a pool noodle is to keep your child afloat, then think again. There are many ingenious and innovative ways that you can use these naturally buoyant and highly water-resistant swimming aids in your garden.

Home-made sprinkler system

Whether you want to regularly water your grass or your flower bed, a sprinkler system is a handy tool to have. However, you don't need to go out and buy one. Simply puncture holes in your noodle, stuff one end with foam and secure with duct tape and then insert your hose into the other end. Place vertically for a kids' fun water toy.

Trampoline springs cover

Improve the safety of your trampoline by using pool noodles. Simply cut a slit down one side and slot over the springs and metal edges.

Plant protector

It wouldn't be spring without the arrival of sunflowers and other big, beautiful blossoms. Unfortunately, the more towering the plant, the more likely they are to bend and snap. However, if you surround each stem with a pool noodle, they will stand tall and proud throughout the summer.

Drinks holder

If you find your cans of fizzy drinks often get knocked over in the garden, then a pool noodle drinks holder is exactly what you need. Glue two pieces of noodle together, then simply cut out a small circle, insert your drink and you can sip safely in the knowledge that your beverage will not be split.

Floating mood lights

Lighting is a key component in creating a relaxing and inviting summer garden vibe, but you don't need to spend a fortune on outside lights. Just take a selection of different coloured noodles, cut into rings and insert LED tea lights (don't use real tea lights).



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THE BENEFITS OF HAVING A PET FISH FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

You'd need to have a heart of stone to not feel a sense of joy when watching a fish perform its underwater ballet. Graceful, quiet and strangely hypnotic, the simple, soothing sight is one of life's simple pleasures, and one that can be appreciated in your very own home.

It makes perfect sense, then, that fish make ideal pets for autistic children. Studies have shown that gazing at aquariums, whether small or large, can lower blood pressure and heart rate. This also makes our marine life an effective antidote to highly emotional outbursts, which can be so severe in some with autism that they can physically endanger the child. Better still, an aquarium in the home can prevent fits of rage by offering a soothing constant for the highly sensitive.

Pets in general have been found to benefit those with autism, and while cats and dogs have many wonderful attributes, they aren't quite as easily attainable or maintainable as our finned friends. For starters, fish are low maintenance, requiring very little from their owner other than a daily sprinkle of food and the occasional tank clean. They are also very unlikely to respond when a child is emotionally charged, unlike their four-legged counterparts who are armed with claws and teeth.

Another benefit of investing in an aquarium is that it helps development and social skills. Fish don't judge; they are patient listeners and offer unconditional love. They also teach empathy and a sense of responsibility for your child. A fish cannot feed itself; it has

needs that must be met by its caregiver, and such obligations can lay the foundation for helping your little one lead an independent life in the future.

And finally, there is that bond, for there is very little that can come between a child and their fish.

Happy Fish



I'M HERE TO HELP

I am sure you are all well aware of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) by now and it may have sparked concern when it comes to your holiday plans. I wanted to reassure you, however, that I am here to help, and how it is proving to be another example of why it pays to book through a trusted agent.

Being in constant contact with the Foreign Office and working closely with my trusted suppliers, our priority is your health and safety, and if it is advised against travel to where you may be going, then we will amend your holiday by cancelling or amending. For those not directly impacted by the Foreign Office travel advice, then we will go beyond to explore options to you and be as flexible as possible, using our relationships with key people in resorts who are empowered to make the decisions. We are not a company to hide behind terms and conditions, nor drop the ball on our service levels.

Rather than going through the stress of dealing with changes to your own travel plans, and possibly losing out on your hard earned money, book your holiday with us so that we can do the hard work for you should any unforeseen circumstances arise and guarantee that you are also financially protected.

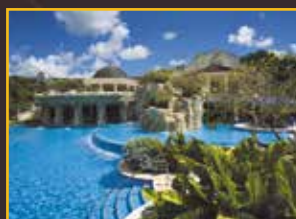
If you have any questions then please do feel free to get in touch.

Stay safe and keep well.

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TRAIN TRIPS

To remember

If you're dreaming of a holiday with a difference when the coronavirus epidemic has been brought under control, check out some of these truly memorable train trips.

KOBLENZ TO MAINZ

For so long, the prospect of the Rhine Valley would bring about notions of wartime in arrowing a route through West Germany. These days, however, there is nothing but houses, vineyards, castles and a stunning river to transport passengers into a slightly grand, slightly gothic adventure.

THE ROCKY MOUNTAINEER

Often the go-to train ride in the world, the excursions up through the Canadian Rockies are the stuff of adventurer folklore. From glacier-fed lakes to green forests, rivers, snow and an incredible array of wildlife, the Rocky Mountaineer is one of many trains transporting passengers into an icy wonderland straight out of Narnia.

THE DANUBE EXPRESS

If you want to splash out and spend a few days in absolute luxury, the Danube Express – with its stops at Prague, Vienna, Berlin, Sarajevo and more

– is a five-star step back in time to a glorious age of European opulence; and given there are only 65 passengers on board, you'll most likely make some friends too.

THE GHAN

One for those with the stamina of a camel, the Ghan route extends almost 1,900 miles across Australia, offering an awe-inspiring if, at times, somewhat monotonous trek through the outback wilderness of deserts, wide-open spaces and solitude.

FORT WILLIAM TO MALLAIG

Finally, if you're looking for something a little closer to home, consider this spectacular 42-mile trip that features, among other stunning sights, the long viaduct seen in the *Harry Potter* films. Mixing mountains, glens, slopes and lochs, Scotland provides quite the most stunning panoramas on this memorable journey.





THE SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN BEST MUSIC FOR YOUR GYM ROUTINE

From stretches to dips, lifts to sprints, turns to curls, our time in the gym is a very personal, private affair.

With that in mind, there's nothing more satisfying or motivating than the feeling of working out. But across warm-ups, nutrition and body conditioning, what if the thing that is stopping us from achieving our full potential in the gym is something as simple as the music being piped out of those little buds that rest in our ears?

Scientists now believe that what we listen to, if anything, when working out can have a dramatic effect on performance. There have been countless studies over the years that all point to the reality that the brain is stimulated by music and converts that motivation into physical energy.

There are other strands. Listening to music can also act as a distraction technique from the pain of exercise, as well as fending off boredom. Indeed, a study in 2018 conducted



by the University of Maryland found that having a soundtrack to your workout meant a 28 per cent increase in enjoyment compared with no auditory stimulus.

But what about the genre of music? Typically, we would expect high-energy styles to engage and motivate us most. Dance music, tracks with strong percussion, heavy riffs and even the rather cliched genre of 'driving music' can all work well. Certainly, regular and repetitive rhythm is a big driver to adopting a 'trance-like' state for exercising, taking a level of consciousness out of what we do and ensuring we can compete harder and for longer.

Ultimately, though, scientists found that the music we respond to best is a matter of personal taste. Our own music preferences dictate the positive effects, but those effects are real, given that listening to music we like can expand blood vessels by up to 26 per cent, helping the flow of oxygen-rich blood to improve performance and, with it, PBs.

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ELEMIS



Anti cosmetic surgery fixes

Following the news that former *TOWIE* star Amy Childs was among a long list of celebs who openly admitted to having cosmetic surgery regrets, we're going to explore some quick beauty fixes that don't involve going under the knife...

The Quick Nose Job

- > Contouring the side of your nose will instantly make it appear smaller.
- > The first step is to use concealer to highlight the middle of your nose.
- > Then, using a bronzer a few shades darker than your foundation, paint a line on each side of your nose, and blend, blend, blend.

Kylie Jenner Lips

- > The tools to faking big lips without fillers are all in your make-up bag.
- > Using a lip liner just one shade darker than your lipstick, over-outline your lips.
 - > Draw an 'X' just above the Cupid's bow, and then complete the lip outline from that point. This creates an exaggerated outline, while still sticking to the natural shape of your lips.
- > After you've applied your lipstick, add a hint of concealer or highlighter to the centre of the lips. This will create an ombré effect, which makes the lips look even bigger. This can also be achieved by using a lipstick in a slightly lighter colour in the centre, for a more subtle and natural effect.
- > Go one step further with ombré lips by playing with more than one shade of liner and lipstick. The internet is filled with helpful tutorials to nail this trick.

Bigger Chest

- > A push-up bra is a girl's best friend if you want that extra lift. However if that still doesn't cut it, a silicone insert can also be used inside each cup.
- > Contour. Contouring isn't just for your face – you can fake a rounder and bigger bust by contouring the top of your chest and creating a fuller, more voluptuous shape.

Building a CAPSULE WARDROBE

With the rise of sustainable fashion and consumers beginning to understand the need for having a conscience in their fashion and style decision making, building a capsule wardrobe makes more sense than ever before. We live in a world where convenience is key, and fast fashion retailers have made it all too easy to buy into new trends every season. Yet so many women still find themselves standing in front of their bulging wardrobes at a loss, with nothing to wear. A capsule wardrobe saves you time and money in the long term, and means less of a headache.

You can build a capsule wardrobe from 20 key items. From these 20 items it is possible to create 30 different outfits (and more) – you just need the know-how to pull the pieces together. All of these pieces will last a lifetime in your wardrobe and are worth investing in. Once you are happy with your reduced wardrobe, you can still add some fresh new pieces in each season, but in a more considered way, knowing what else you already have to work with. Accessories can be a great way to do this, and they are the best way to add some print and colour into your wardrobe.

TOP 20 KEY ITEMS

1. The Leather Biker Jacket
2. The Pleated Midi Skirt
3. The Basic T-shirt with a Twist
4. The Slogan Sweatshirt
5. The Cashmere Sweater
6. The Block Heel Boot
7. The Slip Dress
8. The White Shirt
9. The Buffet Dress
10. The Coated Jeggings or Leather Leggings
11. The Straight-leg Jeans in a mid-blue wash
12. The Lace-up Boot
13. The Blazer
14. The Trainers
15. The Loafers
16. The Breton T-shirt
17. The Denim Shirt
18. The Aviator Jacket
19. The Statement Bag
20. The Jumpsuit

Alex Standley is a personal stylist with 15 years' experience in the fashion industry. If you would like to find out more, please visit www.luxeopardlifestyle.co.uk or get in touch at alex@luxeopardlifestyle.co.uk



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KIDS

LOVE YOUR LEFTOVERS:

Easter Eggs

With the average child set to receive eight Easter eggs over the Easter weekend, worth a whopping £56, it can be a good idea to find out some interesting and fun ways to use up any leftover chocolate to avoid unnecessary waste.

CREATE A CHOCOLATE FONDUE

What could be more fun than making your own chocolate fondue? You could even ask your little ones to make a selection of tasty and nutritious fruit kebabs to dip in the decadent dish. Simply melt your leftover chocolate in a bowl and then get dipping.

MAKE A CHOCOLATE FACE MASK

If you have girls who love a pampering session, why not make your own chocolate face masks? They can even lick them off after. All you need to do is melt a quarter of a cup of chocolate (preferably dark), add one tablespoon of cream and a few drops of honey, and then apply to the face.

CONCOCT A CHOCOLATEY DRINK

Everyone loves hot chocolate with a few marshmallows thrown in for good measure, and thankfully, now you have all this leftover chocolate, you can make your very own version. Simply heat 150ml milk and 50ml double cream in a pan and then add 50g chocolate. Optional: add the zest of half an orange.

CHOCOLATE MUG CAKE

If your kids love baking but you hate the mess, then this is the perfect idea for you. Start by cracking an egg into a cup, then mix in 4 tablespoons of flour and 2 tablespoons of cocoa. Finally add 3 tablespoons of milk, 3 tablespoons of oil, ¼ teaspoon of vanilla extract and a tablespoon of broken-up chocolate Easter egg. Mix well and pop in the microwave for 3 minutes.

Still got some chocolate left? Why not donate it to your nearest food bank or homeless shelter?





FULL OF THE joys OF spring

Fancy putting a spring back into your step this season? Why not try one of these nourishing and nutritious, not to mention tasty, spring vegetables that are in season this month?

SPRING GREENS

You may not know this, but spring greens are actually the first cabbages of the year, although they do not have a hard core but instead can be recognised by their thick, green leaves. Part of the brassica family, spring greens contain a whole host of essential minerals and vitamins, including vitamins A, C, K and iron.

Spring greens peak from April to June and are best served in a stir-fry or added to a stew or soup.

SPRING ONIONS

Spring onions are incredibly versatile vegetables as they have a milder taste than most other onions, meaning they can be eaten raw or cooked. Often used in Asian cooking, spring onions, or scallions as they are also known, are an excellent source of vitamin

C and calcium.

Add to a spring vegetable omelette, make a pea, mint and spring onion soup, or simply chop up and scatter over a salad.

SPRING PEAS

The spring pea season is short but is definitely worth taking advantage of as fresh spring peas are sweet and delicious. You have two options when it comes to spring peas – garden or sugar snap. Both can be eaten raw or cooked and they have identical nutritional profiles; however, sugar snap peas can be more flavourful.

Peas are surprisingly high in protein compared to other vegetables and are a great source of dietary fibre.

Make a pea pesto with rocket and parmesan, add to a kedgeree or create your own homemade mushy peas.

OTHER VEG IN SEASON IN APRIL INCLUDE:

- Asparagus
- Kale
- Chard
- Spinach

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Changes to the driving
THEORY TEST



MOTORING

OUTLINING RECENT CHANGES MADE TO THE DRIVING THEORY TEST

The safety of drivers and pedestrians on our roads has rarely been a hotter topic, particularly with car ownership now at a record high in the UK.

And with the ongoing evolution of the motorcar, so too has the driving theory test developed to suit the times, as well as to keep prospective drivers on their toes... or is that pedals?

What is changing?

The theory test is moving with the times and will now be using video clips instead of written case studies. It follows that visualisation is a common-sense route to take, given the nature of driving itself, and the government expects this linear delivery – whereby the user will then have to answer multiple-choice questions on what they see – to be a more realistic representation of our roads.

The new format also compensates

for reading, learning and developmental difficulties that, while disadvantaging someone on a written theory test, wouldn't necessarily have any adverse effect on their ability to drive a car or 'read' the road.

What's not changing?

Remaining the same is the process by which those taking their theory test will revise: they will use the same books and software as before. In addition, users will still have to answer 50 multiple-choice questions in 57 minutes, with a requirement to answer at least 43 correctly.

The hazard perception part of the test also remains the same as before.

These changes to the driving theory test will not apply to those looking to qualify for motorcycle, lorry, bus or coach licences.

The changes come into effect from April 14.



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4. SURFING

SPORT

In the latest instalment showcasing sports set to debut or return at the Olympics in Tokyo, which has been postponed until 2021 due to coronavirus, we take a look at surfing.

The sport of surfing has had a choppy ride with Olympic chiefs over the years. It was more than half a century ago that the pioneer wave rider Duke Kahanamoku encouraged the IOC to make it an official Olympic sport.

He passed away in 1968 at the age of 77, and it has taken until now for the decision-makers to agree to the Hawaiian's proposal. His name will no doubt be mentioned this summer.

Shida Beach, around 40 miles from the Japanese capital, will be the venue for the surfing event, which begins on July 24.

Ocean-based, rather than in a wave pool, heats will be 20-25 minutes long, with four people going at a time. The best two from each will advance.

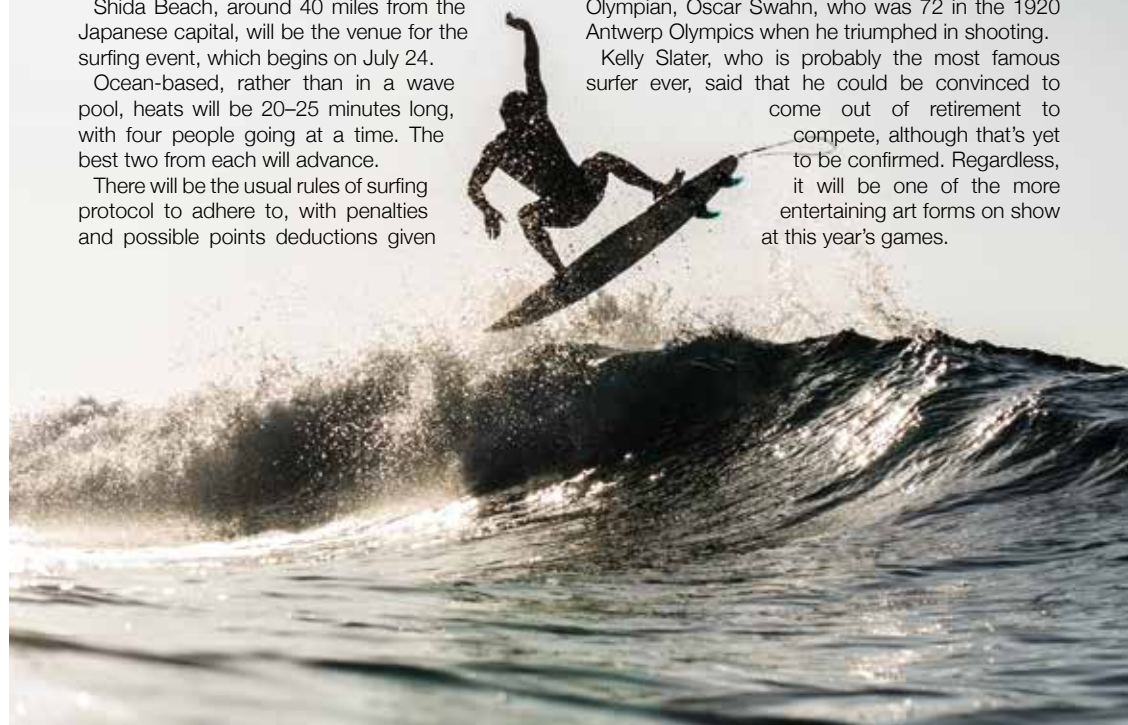
There will be the usual rules of surfing protocol to adhere to, with penalties and possible points deductions given

to those who infringe, such as interfering with the competitor closest to the wave.

Speed and power, plus the difficulty of each manoeuvre attempted and completed, will impact the judges' scores.

As a sport, surfing pays less attention than most to age. It is possible that an athlete approaching their fifties could compete in the event, but that would still be some distance short of the age of the oldest Olympian, Oscar Swahn, who was 72 in the 1920 Antwerp Olympics when he triumphed in shooting.

Kelly Slater, who is probably the most famous surfer ever, said that he could be convinced to come out of retirement to compete, although that's yet to be confirmed. Regardless, it will be one of the more entertaining art forms on show at this year's games.



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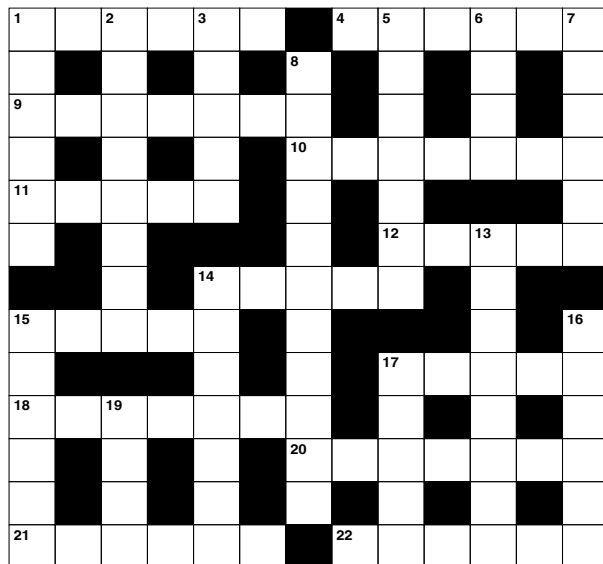
Answers can be found on the Contents Page 4

ACROSS

1. Rhesus (anag) (6)
4. Less attractive (6)
9. Slope (7)
10. Freshness (7)
11. Female relation (5)
12. Words that identify things (5)
14. Mistaken (5)
15. Covered with water (5)
17. Breed of dog (5)
18. Have a moderating effect on (7)
20. Strong desire for a thing (7)
21. Votes into office (6)
22. Unkempt (of hair) (6)

DOWN

1. Workers' groups (6)
2. Large Spanish estate (8)
3. Lift up (5)
5. Incandescent (7)
6. Indolent (4)
7. Cooks in the oven (6)
8. Goodwill (11)
13. Infallible (8)
14. Stand for small objects (7)
15. Assent or agree to (6)
16. Regal (6)
17. Smash into another vehicle (5)
19. A fever or shivering fit (4)



DID YOU KNOW?

- ▶ Newborn puppies are born with their eyes and ears sealed shut. It takes around a fortnight for their sight and hearing to develop
- ▶ The dog Laika is thought to have been the first animal to go into space and orbit the Earth
- ▶ Dalmatians are all white when they're born. Their spots start to appear when they're around two weeks old
- ▶ A dog's sense of smell is much more sensitive than a human's. Dogs are often used by the police to search for missing people
- ▶ Wild dogs evolved over several hundred years to become the domestic dogs of today
- ▶ There are more than 400 different breeds of dog

SUDOKU

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