

CityLife

Issue 31 Spring 2015

The magazine for Worcester residents

Worcester's Freedom Fighters: Magna Carta's legacy today





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Front cover image courtesy of Chris Dobbs.
Worcester's Discover History team present
Magna Carta to King John's tomb.

“Welcome”

By the time this issue of City Life hits your doorstep, let's hope that Spring is well and truly with us, and that some warmer weather is on the way. So much is going on in Worcester over the next few months to tempt you out and about, and to attract many other newcomers to the city.

Following on from the success of the newly revamped Angel Place market, Worcester will see new 'Upmarket Sundays' taking place in the High Street from Easter onwards - full details on p.9. To mark the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta, a whole host of events are planned in the county in 2015 (p.19). This will be a great opportunity to reflect on the benefits which freedom and democracy have brought to our society - and to remember those who have fought hard throughout history to defend these values.

The City Council is, with partners, looking at new ways of raising the profile of our city. Last month we joined a lively debate on whether Worcester should bid to be City of Culture 2021 (p.18), and we are the first organisation in the city to pledge money towards the development of a potential bid. We are also supporting a number of major sporting events later in the year, including Steve Cram's hugely popular Worcester 10K and the European Wheelchair Basketball Championships (p.20 - 22).

All of these initiatives need to be carefully costed and planned for - and above all, our priority is to ensure residents continue to receive the quality services they want and expect. On p.13 you can find out more about the City Council's budget for 2015/16, and how your money is being spent in the year ahead.

Last, but certainly not least, I'm sure I don't need to remind you that there are local and general elections on Thursday 7 May! Now is the time to check if you are registered to vote (find out how on p.5) - if you're not, you have until Monday 20 April to do so! And if you want to stand as a candidate, your nomination papers need to be in on 9 April.



D Sharkey

Duncan Sharkey
Managing Director

This magazine is available in large print on request. Call **01905 722363** or TypeTalk: **1800 11905 722233** or email: worcestershirehub@worcester.gov.uk for your copy. We also have an eBook version available on our website which can be enlarged for easy reading. Please go to www.worcester.gov.uk/citylife

If you need help communicating in English please contact the Customer Service Centre on **01905 722 233** or at: customerservicecentre@worcester.gov.uk

Bengali

যদি ইংরেজীতে কথা আদানপ্রদানের জন্য আপনার সাহায্যের প্রয়োজন হয় তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 01905 722 233 এই নম্বরে অথবা customerservicecentre@worcester.gov.uk এখানে গ্রাহক পরিষেবা কেন্দ্রের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন

Chinese

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Polish

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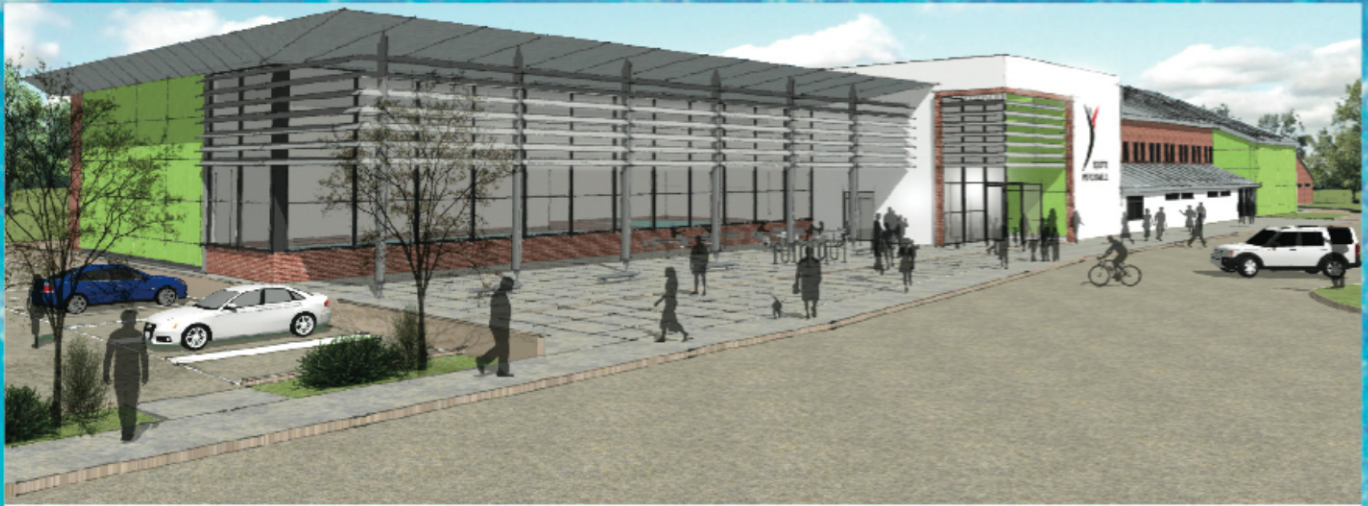
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Portuguese

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Urdu

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Perdiswell Swimming Pool & Leisure Centre
Sketch View from Access Road

ARCHIAL | NORR

Turner & Townsend



What will Worcester's new swimming pool look like?

An artist's impression of what the exterior of Worcester's swimming pool is likely to look like has been revealed, as work on the design and financing of the pool continues.

Worcester City Council has backed the building of a new eight-lane swimming pool, to be constructed as an extension to the existing Perdiswell Leisure Centre.

The pool is budgeted at £10.45m and is due to be completed in 2016. The pool will be funded through a combination of borrowing and grants from external sports bodies - and is expected to appoint a construction contractor in July 2015.

Eight lane ambition fulfilled

The new complex will host an eight-lane 25-metre main pool with seating for 250 spectators. Built to Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Sport England's standards, the main pool will be able to host regional competitions as well as being suitable for swimmers of all abilities, with a depth ranging from 1m to 2m.

The development will also include an 18m x 10m learner pool with a moveable floor to allow a variety of uses, including providing confidence water for toddlers.

It's very exciting to see this first design for the new pool. I'm sure people across the city will be as excited as I will be to see the final designs when they are ready in a few months. The new pool will appeal to our city's learners, families and dedicated swimmers alike and will also host national and regional competitions, turning Worcester into a top swimming destination.

Councillor David Wilkinson, Cabinet member for Safer & Stronger Communities

Other facilities will include 120 gym stations and a café. The existing sport hall at Perdiswell Leisure Centre will be refurbished once the new pool is completed.

Work is currently underway to finalise the design, apply for planning permission and recruit a leisure partner to operate the new facility - and other sport and leisure centres - on the council's behalf.

The existing swimming pool at Sansome Walk will continue to operate until the new Perdiswell facility is completed.



Time to make sure you are registered to vote!

In order to vote in local and general elections on Thursday 7 May 2015, Worcester residents must have registered as an elector by Monday 20 April 2015.

Last year, big changes were introduced to the way the electoral roll is compiled. Now, everyone who is eligible to vote is responsible for registering themselves, under a new national scheme called Individual Electoral Registration.

Registering to vote is easy – just go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote or call Worcester City Council's electoral services team on 01905 722027. You will need to quote your birth date and national insurance number.

If you wish to apply for a postal vote rather than voting in person on election day, the City Council's election team must have received your application by 5.00pm on Tuesday 21 April 2015. If you want to apply for a 'proxy' vote, which allows someone else to vote on your behalf in very specific circumstances, the deadline to receive applications is 5.00pm on Tuesday 28 April 2015.

Further information on voting and voter registration is available at www.worcester.gov.uk/elections

“

If you've recently moved to Worcester, or have changed address since you last voted, now is the time to act and make sure that you're registered to vote in this year's elections. Your vote matters, so make sure you don't lose it!

Diane Thomas, Electoral Services Officer at Worcester City Council.

”



Our elections team recently paid a visit to the Students Union at the University of Worcester, to encourage students living in the city to register to vote.

Worcester City Council finds new home

Many staff at the City Council moved to a new office 'home' last month, following the recent sale of its administrative offices at Orchard House in Farrier Street to the University of Worcester.

The University also bought two neighbouring buildings, Wyatt House and Graveney House, in a deal worth £2.9m.

Most Orchard House based staff have now moved to the old library space on the ground floor of the Worcester Museum and Art Gallery, in Foregate Street.

Councillor Chris Mitchell, Worcester City Council Cabinet member for Value for Money, said: "This is excellent news for city residents, as the sale has produced a substantial capital receipt for the good of the city.



"It also means we can make better use of the properties we own, as we find an efficient way to utilise the old library space."

The council's customer service contact centre will continue to be based at The Hive and is not affected by this change in office.

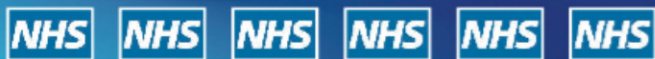
The Museum and Art Gallery in Foregate Street is still open to the public as normal! For opening hours and a listings of current exhibitions and events, turn to p.10

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Who are Care and Repair Worcestershire?

We are a Home Improvement Agency, which is a not for profit organisation funded by the government and part of Fortis Living.

We have over 10 years experience of providing practical help to people across the county adapting, repairing and modernising their homes.



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For more information call: **01684 579 456**

email: crw@fortisliving.com

www.careandrepairworcestershire.co.uk



Future Families Fostering Agency is a local independent agency based in Birmingham. We have a professional team of dedicated social workers, support workers and administrators who are committed to recruiting and approving a wide range of foster carers who are able to contribute to achieving positive outcomes for children.

“where every child
matters today tomorrow
and in the future”

Future Families firmly believe that every child/young person has the right to be brought up in a safe family environment and it is for this reason, that at the heart of everything we do, their needs are paramount. Whether the need is for a short or long term placement Future Families aim is to place every child/young person with caring and committed foster carers who will enable the experience of positive substitute care within a family setting.

Future Families provides:

- Continued learning and development opportunities
- A generous weekly fostering allowance
- Monthly home visits for supervision and support
- Out of Hours support service when the office is closed
- Telephone contact in between home visits
- Foster carer support group meetings
- A calendar of social activities for the whole fostering family

We will be holding FREE coffee mornings/evening information sharing events at our offices: 28-30 Hall Street, Hockley, B'ham, B18 6BS on:

- Friday 6th March (10am-1pm)
- Monday 9th March (4pm-7pm)
- Saturday 14th March (10am-1pm)
- Tuesday 17th March (4pm-7pm)
- Friday 27th March (10am-1pm)
- Wednesday 1st April (4pm-7pm)
- Monday 13th April (4pm-7pm)

The Team at Future Families look forward to hearing from you and hope that this will be the beginning of a long and fulfilling career as a foster carer with us. Do get in touch to find out more about becoming a foster carer with Future Families.

tel: **0121234 6210** • email: info@FutureFamilies.co.uk • www.futurefamilies.co.uk



A message from the City Leader

Dear resident,

Spring is in the air - the gloomy days of winter, when it's dark when you leave for work and return, are nearly behind us and thoughts are turning to the tasks that need to be done in the garden, the Easter break that is just a few weeks away - or that festival or holiday that you know you really need to book.

At the City Council, there is a renewed sense of optimism too with the approval of a new ambitious five year Corporate Plan entitled "Proud of our past, focused on our future" - which sets out five themes for the City and how the Council will operate in the future to support these aims. You can read more about the plan on page 13.

The vision for the City was agreed alongside a revised Financial Plan which provides a balanced budget for the next three years, putting the Council on a sound financial footing. This is being achieved by focusing on ensuring we are getting better value for your money by setting the outcomes we want to achieve and then sourcing the best organisations to deliver them. We will work with other public, private and voluntary bodies to deliver our aspirations for the benefit of the whole of Worcester, rather than trying to do everything ourselves.

This approach has enabled us to set a budget for the next year that freezes our element of your overall Council Tax bill, continues with the cuts to car parking charges and reinvests more money in keeping the streets clean, providing adequate litter & dog bins and improving play areas.

The budget also delivers a host of other new investments - such as £100,000 to support more events in the City, £20,000 to replace worn street name plates and £25,000 to keep the popular riverside corridor in good condition. It ensures no community is left behind by investing in the areas of highest need, paying the Living Wage and continuing the Welfare Assistance Scheme. £1.2 million is allocated to build new affordable housing.

This budget also provides the financial framework for the new £10.5 million competition standard eight-lane swimming pool and sports complex at Perdiswell. I'm committed to ensuring that the subsidy we provide to deliver the swimming pool that Worcester deserves is no higher than what we already pay for the current pool at Sansome Walk. This fantastic new facility will add to our growing reputation as a vibrant "Sporting City".

In the next year, we will contribute £500,000 to schemes to enhance the quality of the public space in the City Centre - such as repaving Broad Street and The Shambles - and further improvements to the Riverside. Up to £200,000 has been allocated for new public toilets in Gheluvelt Park to better meet the needs of families using the splash pad. The Council is also putting aside £200,000 to make the most of our history & heritage by enhancing The Commandery museum.

Finally, it's great to see the long term economic plan we have in this County is working, with Worcestershire being confirmed as having the third highest economic growth in England. That's right, after London and Oxfordshire, our area is growing the fastest and has benefited from major reductions in unemployment. Worcester has a prosperous future, and I hope the plans outlined assure you we are determined to make it an even better place.

Kind regards,

Simon Geraghty
Leader of the Council

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Going Upmarket



Worcester's Angel Place market has undergone a major revamp, following a £555,000 investment by Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council and the Crown Estate. After a temporary closure while the work got underway, the market re-launched in early December - just in time for the busy Christmas period.

When does the Angel Place market operate?

Currently every Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.

What do the traders say?

Mike Price runs Respoke Designs, which makes jewellery from bicycle spokes sourced from local shops. He has been running the business for about 12 months, and has had a stall at the Angel Place market for two months.

"There's been a really positive response from local people; they love the mixture of crafts and other products," he says. "People say how friendly the market is, and that it looks nice."

Pat, who owns Worcester Luggage, has had a stall at the Angel Place market for about ten years, and also runs Vida Handbags, a shop in the Shambles.

"The new Angel Place market is about ten times better than it used to be," he says. "It is run professionally, and the people that run it look after the market properly. There are more stalls now - and more people coming to browse."

Look out for new Upmarket Sundays!

From Easter Sunday (5 April), a new market will be held every Sunday from 10.00am to 4.00pm on the Worcester High Street, between the Elgar Statue and the Guildhall. You'll be able to shop for arts, crafts, antiques, vintage items, hot food, jams, chutneys, and much more! Be entertained by buskers and street performers while you browse.

Easter Monday (6 April) sees the first in a series of regular riverside markets to be held on Bank Holiday Mondays - come along and pick up a bargain! For more details, go to www.worcestercitymarkets.co.uk



...more improvements to city centre coming soon!

A major revamp of Worcester's Cornmarket will begin soon. Improvements will be made to pavement surfacing and widths, lighting, and unnecessary street furniture will be moved. Improvements will be made to pavement surfacing and widths, lighting, and trees will be planted.

The aim is to create a space which is better suited to hosting events such as the Worcester Victorian Christmas Fayre, and a more appropriate setting for the historic buildings which surround this iconic public square.

Preparatory works, including repairs to cellars, are due to commence from Monday 23 March - further details will be published shortly in local media.



Hartlebury

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Worcestershire County Museum
Hartlebury Castle • Hartlebury • DY11 7XZ
Tel: 01299 250416

Email: museum@worcestershire.gov.uk

Adults: £5 Children: £2.50 Under 5s: FREE
Family ticket: £13
(admits two adults and two children)

Opening times:

Tuesday - Friday 10am - 5pm
Weekends and Bank Holiday Mondays
11am - 5pm

 Worcestershire County Museum

 twitter.com/worcestermuseum

www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk



Country Capers

Bank Holiday Monday 6th April,
11am-5pm

A country-filled day including traditional crafts & games, local produce, children's activities and archery. Enjoy fantastic falconry displays, meet alpacas, watch ferret racing and have a donkey ride.



Tue 31st Mar-Thurs 2nd April and
Tue 7th-Fri 10th April

Enjoy countryside themed craft activities
An additional charge of £2 per child applies
for the day's activities.



Gorgeous Georgians

Bank Holiday Mon 25th May, 11am-5pm

Time travel back to 1788 and meet King George & Queen Charlotte who are visiting Bishop Hurd at Hartlebury Castle. Learn more about the world of the Georgians and make your own Georgian wig.

Tue 26th-Fri 29th May, 10.30am-4pm

Gorgeous Georgians themed craft activities
An additional charge of £2 per child applies
for the day's activities.

Shakespeare at the Castle - Love's Labour's Lost

Friday 12th June, gates open 6.30pm,
performance begins 7.30pm

Bring a picnic and enjoy outdoor theatre at
its best by Heartbreak Productions, played
in the round and set against the stunning
back drop of beautiful Hartlebury Castle.

Advance Tickets Adults £14.00 Children
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Tickets can be pre-booked on:
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Adults £5.50 Children £2.50 Family ticket £13
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Opening times: Tuesday - Saturday 10am - 5pm;
Sunday 1.30pm - 5pm

 The Commandery Worcester

 twitter.com/worcestermuseum

www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk

Easter at the Commandery

Tue 31st March - Friday 10th April
11am-1pm (excl. Sunday) & 2pm-4pm

A selection of traditional crafts and Easter
fun for all the family. £2 for craft activities.



Easter Bonnets

Easter Monday 6th April,
11am-1pm & 2pm-4pm

Create your own unique Easter bonnet at
The Commandery and then join our
friends on Fort Royal Park for a day of
Easter activities. There will be a prize for
the best creation! £2 for craft activities.

Oak Apple Day

Saturday 30th May, 10am-5pm

Discover the meaning of Oak Apple Day
and immerse yourself in this 17th century
celebration with music, dancing, talks and
activities for everyone to take part in. Listen
to Samuel Pepys eyewitness account of
Charles II restoration to the throne.

Worcester LiberTea

Sunday 14th June, 11am-4pm

Be part of a national, simultaneous
celebration of rights and freedoms by
joining in the LiberTea at The Commandery
and nearby Fort Royal Park. We will bring
to life the key characters of Worcester's
democratic story including US presidents'
John Adams and Thomas Jefferson,
together with Royalists and
Parliamentarians of the English Civil War.
In partnership with the Friends of Fort
Royal Park and Commandery Gardens.

To find out more about the Year of
Liberty and Democracy please see:
www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk

WORCESTERSHIRE
Home of Liberty and Democracy

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum

Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum
Foregate Street • Worcester • WR1 1DT
Tel: 01905 25371
Email: gallerymuseum@worcestershire.gov.uk

FREE ADMISSION

Opening times:

Monday - Saturday: 10.30am - 4.30pm
The Art Gallery & Museum will be closed on
Good Friday and Easter Monday.



Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery



twitter.com/worcestermuseum

www.museumsworcestershire.org.uk



Exhibitions

Stanhope Forbes' England

21st March to 6th June

Explore an idyllic slice of English life through the eyes of the much-loved landscape painter, Stanhope Forbes. The exhibition investigates Forbes' work, life and influences and includes iconic coastal scenes as well as revealing depictions of England's rural communities, green landscapes and new railways.

Tuesday 14th April 1pm enjoy a fascinating insight into Stanhope Forbes; artist, teacher, and businessman. Just £2. No booking necessary.

Way of the Warrior

13th June to 5th September

A visually-stunning exhibition of arms and armour from epic historical movies including Gladiator, Last Samurai and War Horse. The armour and costumes are

highly accurate reconstructions of warrior equipment and weapons spanning the last 2500 years. Put yourself in the picture by trying on armour from a gladiator helmet to a World War II backpack.

Activities

Easter Fun for Everyone!

Tuesday 31st March, 11am-3pm

Family drop in day (£2 for craft materials) Join us to make lovely Easter gifts and decorations for your home. Throughout the day we will be making dazzling daffodils, flower head bands and ribboned Easter eggs - a lovely way to start the holiday!

Eggstraordinary Easter Garlands

Wednesday 1st April, 11am-1pm

£4.50 per child. To book please call 01905 25371. Suitable for 7 years and over. Create and decorate a lovely Easter garland full of the signs of spring.



Discover the buzz at the Hive!

The Hive is so much more than a traditional library. Combining an academic library with a public one was a bold and visionary decision made by Worcestershire County Council and the University of Worcester - and the result is a space that offers inspiration, education, variety and somewhere to just "be" in the heart of Worcester.



Walk around the five floors of the iconic golden building and you will find wonderful, imaginative spaces carefully designed to offer so many different experiences, atmospheres and purposes.

A café; exhibition spaces; an outdoor story island; one of the largest children's libraries in the UK with creative areas for reading, games, crafts and learning; a studio for theatre, poetry and dance performances, debates, lectures and talks; meeting and study spaces; archive and archaeology collections; a business



Michael Rosen, former British Children's Laureate

centre; University of Worcester resources; and cosy, quiet reading spots with sweeping views of the city.

Home to over a quarter of a million books, 12 miles of archive collections, online e-resources for businesses and researchers, the heart of The Hive is firmly rooted in books and learning, but in an environment designed to entice, inspire, inform and encourage ambition and discovery.

To find out more why not pay a visit, grab a coffee or attend one of our many events and activities. There's also free access to PCs and the internet too.

To see The Hive's full list of events visit www.thehiveworcester.org You can follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

The Hive is open 8.30am to 10pm seven days a week.



The Hive

What's On
at The Hive

Film

Gone Girl (18)
26 March, 7pm

Live Performance

Back Down
by Steven Camden
23 March, 7pm

Open Mic Night
27 March & 24 April, 6pm
A night for 12 - 18 year
olds to showcase
their acts

Lectures, Courses & Workshops

**Build Your Own
Website**
23 March, 4.30pm

**Activate Your
Workspace:** the
benefits of workspace
physical activity
1 April, 6pm

**First Steps in Family
History**, 7 April, 11.30am

Explore House History
18 April, 10am

Explore Archives
Poor Law, 21 April, 2pm

Children & Family Activities

**Spring Flowers
Workshop**
Thursday 2 April, 10am

**Spring Mosaic
Workshop**
Thursday 9 April, 10am

World Book Night
Thursday 23 April, 5pm

Business Events

**How Does The Budget
Impact on Me?**
25 March, 6pm

**Business structure -
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Balancing the books - and increasing your prosperity

Plans for a new focus on Worcester's future and a balanced budget have now been approved by the City Council. The £10.1 million budget for 2015/16 will:

- Freeze the City Council's element of Council Tax bills and maintain current levels of parking charges
- Reinvest in some of the areas that are important to Worcester's residents - £80,000 will be put back into street cleaning and £15,000 back into play areas

- Invest £25,000 in riverside maintenance
- Re-direct one-third of the New Homes Bonus money the council receives from the Government - amounting to just over £0.5m - into residents' services
- Use the other two-thirds for improvements to the city, supporting regeneration, infrastructure and the economy £6.6m expected to be invested over the next five years.

A series of budget amendments have also been agreed, seeing an additional £87,000 invested in a range of initiatives for 2015/16. These include the development of a potential City of Culture bid and a tourism business strategy, plus support for sustainable energy initiatives.



“ This budget aims to balance the books over the next three years, while freezing taxes and investing in services. It's an ambitious agenda for the city that we've set out in this new corporate plan. ”

Council Leader Simon Geraghty

Our priorities for Worcester: 2015-2020

Increasing prosperity through successful businesses and great jobs

We will create a business-friendly environment to help companies grow and create higher-paid jobs. We will work to improve road, rail, skills and regulation. We will support the Worcester Technology Park, superfast broadband, dualling of the Southern Link Road, upgrade of M5 junction 6, Worcester Parkway railway station and faster trains to London.

Growing a vibrant city with sports, leisure and retail

We will make our city one of the top five retail centres in the West Midlands. We will



build a new competition-standard eight-lane swimming pool, invest in an active programme of events and support the development of more high quality hotels.

Making the most of our history and heritage

We will work to gain greater recognition for Worcester as England's premier Civil War City. We will promote the city's tourist assets and invest in the Commandery museum.

Continuing to enhance our city centre and riverside

We will continue the programme of quality repaving and enhancement of public spaces

including Cathedral Square, Commarket, Broad Street and The Shambles.

Ensuring our city is clean, green and safe

We will continue to ensure our city is clean and well kept, and aim to secure a Clean City award. We will work to reduce litter, dog fouling, seagulls and the fear of crime with continued use of CCTV. We will continue to invest in public parks to retain their Green Flags. We will launch measures to tackle unsuitable rental properties.



Making Worcester safe for vulnerable residents

A new scheme which aims to help vulnerable people feel confident and safe while out and about has launched in Worcester.

The national Safe Place initiative gives the elderly and people with a disability, illness or learning difficulty, or who just feel in danger, a range of safe places where they can go to for help if they feel they are being bullied, abused or harassed while out alone.

Worcester's Co-operative stores have already signed up to the scheme and it is hoped that more retailers and cafes will now come forward.

Safe Place venues display the national Safe Place logo in a window or other prominent place. Staff there will be ready to help and assist anyone who goes to them for help, creating a temporary safe haven for them, whatever the circumstance.

Safe Place cards can also be carried by individuals, with useful contact details for family members or carers, which can be presented to staff inside a Safe Place.

The Safe Place scheme has already launched in Kidderminster. Here's how some individuals have benefited:

- A 32 year old male with moderate learning disabilities was walking from the Town Hall to Cafe Nero and tripped and fell in the street. Very upset, the fall caused him to break his mobile phone, and he hurt his arm and side. He went to and received help in Café Nero, an identified Safe Place, and staff contacted his mother.



Community Safety manager Jude Langton with Cllr Roger Knight, Deputy Mayor. Photo courtesy of Worcester News.

- An elderly lady in her 70s fell over in the town, grazing her knee, elbow and breaking her glasses. She was very shaken by the incident. She sought help at a Safe Place where she was able to sit down and have her grazes cleaned, while a relative was called to pick her up.
- A 22 year old female with learning disabilities was walking past Kidderminster Library and approached by two females asking for money. The female sought help at a Safe Place - Carters Bar.

More help for homeless people

Worcestershire has been awarded £242,968 over two years following a successful bid to the Government's Help for Single Homeless Fund.

The funding will be used to explore and break the route into rough sleeping across the county, and in particular focus on preventing homelessness arising from hospital and prison discharges.

Worcestershire's six local authorities will be working closely with public health, probation services and the voluntary sector to achieve this goal.

"We really want to improve the quality and consistency of service for single homeless people across the county and this funding will enable us to do this in a joined up way," says Cllr David Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities at the City Council.



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 **Worcester CITY COUNCIL**

Parklife

Calling all green fingered residents!

Have you ever wanted to grow your own fruit and vegetables, but don't have the space to do it? Then why not hire an allotment from Worcester City Council!

At the time of going to press, over 50 plots were vacant at a number of locations in Worcester. Renting a plot is very affordable. A full plot (one sixteenth of an acre) costs just £58 a year, and a half a plot, which is an ideal size for weekend gardeners, costs just £29 a year.

Dawn Morris has looked after an allotment at Pitchcroft since 2011.



"I first decided to hire an allotment so I could grow my own vegetables, take them home and cook and eat them," she says.

"You don't need to be an expert gardener to enjoy having an allotment. I love just being outdoors; you can enjoy the quiet and observe wildlife such as foxes and birds. I love it, and would recommend it to anybody."

To find out more about available allotments, please contact the Worcestershire Hub on 01905 722233.



New arrangements to manage allotments

Two of the city's 25 allotment sites, at Oldbury Road and Hill Avenue, have now moved to a self-management model following consultation with their allotment holders.

"We're happy to talk to allotment holders on other sites if they are interested in exploring self-management in the future," says Warwick Neale, Community Engagement Manager for a Cleaner and Greener City.

"Where this is not the case, we will always strive to provide best value for allotment tenants through our work with the allotment forum, made up of volunteer allotment site representatives."

Time to get growing for Worcester Show!



Now that some warmer, drier weather is on the cards, green-fingered residents are being encouraged to dust off their trowels, dig out their seeds and compost and start planting to ensure they can harvest their fruit and vegetables in time for the tenth annual Worcester Show.

The popular event, which was attended by over 6,000 people last year, will be held in Gheluvelt Park on Sunday 16 August. There will be over 100 classes for people of all ages to enter, ranging from vegetable produce, flowers and floral decorations to handicrafts and photography.

Go to www.worcester.gov.uk/worcestershow to see the full schedule.



The Worcester Show celebrates the amazing creativity of our residents, and is a fantastic day out for the whole family. If you've never entered something in the Show before, then why not have a go this year? You don't have to be an experienced gardener or craftsperson to participate - enthusiasm is the main ingredient we're looking for.

Cllr Andy Roberts, Cabinet Member for a Cleaner and Greener City

Vibrant workshop for possible **City of Culture bid**

Last month a workshop was held to consider what it would take for Worcester and the surrounding area to bid for City of Culture 2021.

The event at Worcester Racecourse, which was open to all stakeholders, sought to bring as many interested parties as possible together to explore:

- The process to make a City of Culture bid
- Who would need to be involved
- What a local bid could look like
- Resources required, financial costs and benefits
- The feasibility of a potential bid.

Led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), this programme uses culture and creativity to transform communities and help grow artistic talent. A City of Culture is designated every four years.

Following the first award to Liverpool, Derry-Londonderry (2013) and Hull (2017) have also been awarded City of Culture status.

Our local workshop, organised jointly by Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council, attracted more than 75 representatives from businesses, local authorities, sporting clubs, arts, cultural and other partner organisations.

The City of Culture debate was positive and very engaging. There was real enthusiasm for, and belief in, the strength of Worcester's offering - from arts organisations, businesses and public bodies alike. We now need to stand back and analyse all the feedback received.

Councillor David Wilkinson, Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities at Worcester City Council

All of the feedback from the workshop will now be collated and considered by the three organisations to understand what the next steps should be.

Worcester City Council has pledged £25,000 in its budget for 2015/16 to be put towards the development of any future City of Culture bid.

Boasting the **Best of Worcester**

The Mayor's annual charity dinner has this year been totally transformed into the first-ever "Best of Worcester" Community Awards Ceremony on 20 March, celebrating everything that is good about the City. We have received a staggering 173 nominations!

It was extremely difficult to draw up the shortlists as literally every nomination was worthwhile and had merit. In that sense, everyone who was nominated was in reality a winner. So my personal thanks to everyone who took the time and trouble to send in a nomination. Each one was carefully and seriously considered.

My Mayoral charities aim to tackle the problem of loneliness amongst older people by setting up a Citywide network of luncheon clubs/snack & chat/meet & greet groups, intended to become a permanent feature in their localities.

In addition, I'm fundraising for Forces Support, a local organisation which gives families practical help following the death of a soldier in action; and also the Cathedral Charitable Fund to help the poor and needy.

*Councillor Alan Amos
Mayor of Worcester*



WORCESTERSHIRE

Home of Liberty and Democracy

2015 marks the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta by King John – significant because for the first time, it gave the rule of law precedence over the rule of the monarch. The foundations were laid for liberty and human rights; England and Great Britain were on the road to democracy.

Worcestershire holds a unique place on that road. Throughout history, it has been a stopping point on the journey towards the constitutional democracy we enjoy today. The county is, in many ways, the home of Liberty and Democracy.

By the time he sealed Magna Carta in June 1215, King John had already formed a special relationship with Worcester and the surrounding county. He often visited Worcester Cathedral to worship at the shrine of Saint Wulfstan. His favourite hunting grounds were nearby in forests at Wyre, Feckenham and The Chase.

But his relationship with the county was destined to be bittersweet. As civil war brewed and the King was forced to concede many of his powers under Magna Carta, Worcester declared for the rebellious barons.

Worcester: the final resting place

In July 1216, the King's forces recaptured the city, but the monarch's days were numbered. He died in October that year, specifying in his will that he be buried in Worcester Cathedral.

The great tomb we can still see there today is surmounted by the oldest royal effigy in England. It is a masterpiece of early thirteenth-century sculpture and is said to be in his likeness. It gives Worcestershire a direct link to the story of Magna Carta - and to the story of Liberty and Democracy - that is genuinely unique.



Worcester Cathedral and Magna Carta: What's On

**4 March 2015 to December 2016:
King John and Magna Carta Exhibition
at Worcester Cathedral**

From April 2015:

Talks by King John's Tomb for pre booked groups

Talks beside King John's tomb covering King John, Magna Carta, Henry III's rebuild of the Cathedral and Simon de Montfort connections to Worcester Cathedral. £5 per person: call 01905 732900 for further details

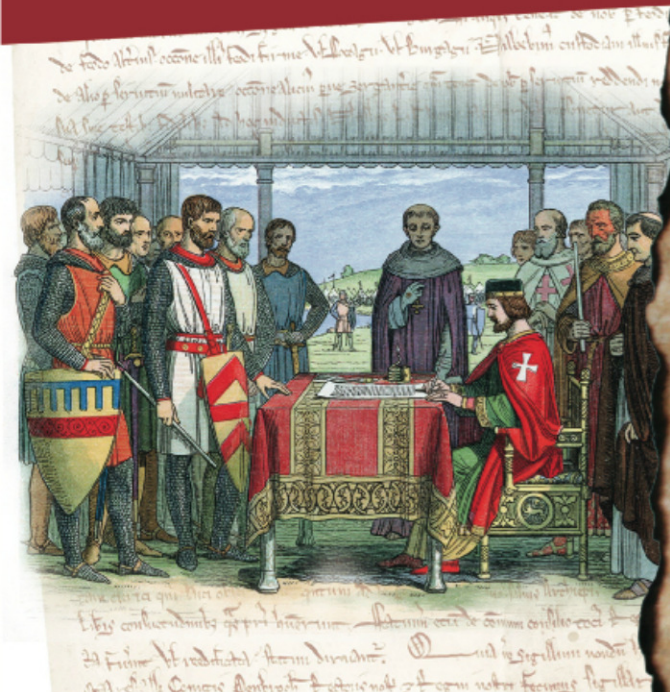
Thursday 28 May 2015:

Bad King John? Did he do good at the end? The relevance of the Magna Carta in the 21st Century

Lecture on Magna Carta by Sir Robert Worcester, Chairman of Magna Carta 800th Committee. With pre lecture reception in the stunning setting of the Nave Crossing in Worcester Cathedral. For further details call 01905 732900

Sunday 14 June 2015: 12 noon to 4.00pm - Worcester Cathedral Peal of Bells. A special Evensong Service to commemorate the 800th anniversary of the Sealing of Magna Carta will be held from 4.00pm to 4.45pm.

Go to www.visitworcestershire.org/magnacarta for more information



Sport, Art and Play

Are you ready for the Race of your life?

Cancer Research UK's Worcester Race for Life is BACK! And once again, we need you to stand up, stretch your hamstrings and be counted.

Last year over 3,000 ladies took part in the Worcester event, raising a massive £162,689. This year we aim to smash this, and raise a whopping £181,000 for vital cancer research. With your determination and fighting spirit, we are sure together we can do it!

This year's event will be bigger and better, with the addition of Pretty Muddy - a 5k muddy obstacle course where women of any ability can climb, jog and walk all over cancer. This event takes place on Saturday 30 May 2015.

Then there are the traditional 5k and 10k events, which will take place on Sunday 31 May 2015. So on your marks... get set... sign up! To take part simply go to www.raceforlife.org and enter today.

Alternatively, you and your friends can join the fight by volunteering. Our events can't take place without the hundreds of people who give up their time. You can do this by going to the 'Support Our Events' section on the Race for Life website, and signing up as a volunteer today. For those with us and those not - we will defeat cancer sooner.



Worcester City Run aims to grow in 2015

Organisers have revealed plans for the 2015 Worcester City Run events. In a partnership involving Worcester City Council and athletics legend Steve Cram, this year's Worcester City 10K, Run-Bike-Run and Young Athletes Run will be held on Sunday 20 September. The events made their debut in 2014, with thousands of competitors taking to the streets of the city for a festival of running and cycling.

Steve Cram says: "We were delighted with how everything went last year. Working closely with Worcester City Council, we staged three races that were a pleasure to be involved in as either participant or supporter. Worcester offers a stunning backdrop and the enthusiasm generated on the day by everyone was great to see.

"After such a positive experience in 2014, we are very excited about the potential to grow the events this year, and make them

even better. I am sure that runners and cyclists of all ages and abilities will be signing up very soon and look forward to cheering them along the route on 20th September."

After a break of two years, the 2014 Worcester City 10K marked the return to racing of British athletics icon Paula Radcliffe. Radcliffe finished an impressive third in the women's race, which was won by local rising star Jenny Nesbitt.

"I have competed in many road races, but the Worcester City 10k has immediately become one of my favourites," says Jenny. Of course, the result helped, but everything about the event was fantastic.

"I can't wait to come back this year and try to defend my title, as I never in a million years imagined being in this position. Starting alongside my long time idol, Paula Radcliffe and finishing in front of her was an experience I will never forget, ever. I'd really encourage any experienced or aspiring athlete to enter one of the Worcester City Run events. There's going to be a great atmosphere on the day again and I hope that we see even more competitors and spectators there this year."

The City Council is providing up to £50,000 of funding for this event.



Jenny Nesbitt - fastest woman in last year's Worcester 10K



Get into shape for the summer!

It's finally starting to feel like we've turned a corner; the days are getting longer and hopefully snow and frost are a thing of the past. Therefore now is the time to start thinking about how you'd like to look in your shorts and t-shirt this summer!

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If you've never visited us before, why not pop in for a no obligation tour - we're confident that you'll find there's more than you thought, for less than you think. Free parking is available at both sites.

So what are you waiting for? Drop in and see us today; we promise you'll be met with a warm welcome.

For full details on Nunnery Wood and St. John's Sports Centres, go to www.advancelisure.org.uk or call 01905 357842.

So what are you waiting for?

Entries to the Worcester City Run events are now open at www.worcestercityrun.com. Places on the Worcester City 10K cost £25/£23. The Run-Bike-Run (10k run, followed by a 35k bike ride, and a 5k run) costs £50/£47 to enter as an individual and £75 per team. Places on the Young Athletes Run (one mile for under 11s and 3k for under 16s) cost £8.

European Wheelchair Basketball Championships heads for Worcester this summer!



Worcester will have the eyes of the sporting world upon it when the city plays host to the 2015 European Wheelchair Basketball Championships.

The tournament will take place between 28 August and the 6 September and will finish exactly one year before the opening ceremony of the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio, Brazil.

The Championships will see an exciting competition of 12 men's and seven women's teams fighting for qualification to the Summer Paralympic Games in Rio. They will also be competing for the title of European Champions - which has been held by the Great Britain Men's Team for the past two championships.

Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Local Enterprise have teamed up to become official regional sponsors of the event. The event will be hosted at the University of Worcester, and will be attended by over 400 elite athletes and officials.

Councillor Simon Geraghty, Leader of Worcester City Council, says: "Worcester is building a reputation as a vibrant city for sport, with the Worcester 10k and the Tour of Britain having enhanced our standing over the last 12 months. It's very exciting to be able to welcome the European Wheelchair Basketball Championships and I'm looking forward to people across the world seeing for themselves what fantastic sporting provision we have in the city."

City Of Worcester Sport Award Nominations are now OPEN!

Do you know a Worcester individual or team who has shown great dedication or excelled in sport over the last year? Then it's time to give them the recognition they deserve!

Nominations are now open for the 2015 City of Worcester Sport Awards. This is your chance to make sure that local sporting heroes are rewarded for their work and dedication.

Former international athlete, world record holder and Olympic medallist Steve Cram will be presenting trophies to winners and nominees at a glittering awards ceremony in September.

You can nominate a team or individual online at www.sportworcester.org.uk



An Easter holiday full of FREE activities

Want to keep boredom at bay over the Easter school holidays? Worcester City Council's Sports, Art & Play team have the perfect antidote to help work off all those chocolate eggs!

The team are providing two weeks' worth of free sports and play activities across Worcester. The sessions, which will take place in several Worcester venues, will all cater for 2 to 18 year olds. Activities include rounders, kwik-cricket, tennis, football and much more. No booking required - all you will need to do is turn up and take part!

To view the full timetable, go to www.worcester.gov.uk/holidayactivities



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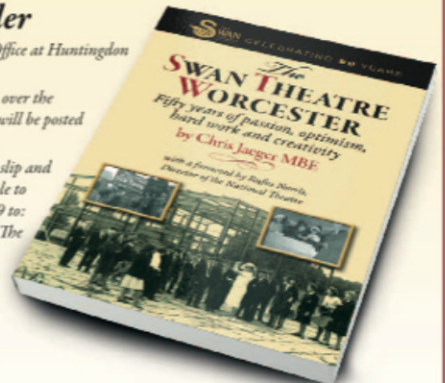
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Preparation for Cathedral Square improvements underway

This scheme will bring major benefits to our city centre so it will be very exciting to see the revival of the southern end of High Street, as it unfolds. I am pleased that an approach has been found that will keep traffic disruption to a minimum while this work is carried out.

Cllr Marc Bayliss, Worcester City Council Cabinet member for Economic Prosperity

The first preparation work on the multi-million pound Cathedral Square retail and leisure scheme is now underway.

A radar survey of the roundabout has searched for signs of archaeological remains on the site, and two trees have been removed to prepare for future excavation work. Replacement trees will be planted as part of the completed scheme next year.

A full archaeological excavation of the traffic island is now underway, and is estimated to last until early May. During this time, a small section of one of the traffic lanes will be closed off.

The work is being conducted by Worcestershire County Council.

Image courtesy of Worcester News

Have your say on new infrastructure and affordable housing

Three new consultations on planning documents supporting the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) are underway.

The funding of new infrastructure – from roads and schools to village greens – and guidance on where and how affordable housing is built are under the spotlight.

You can make your views known at www.swdevelopmentplan.org. The consultations conclude on 30 March 2015.

These consultations complement work on the SWDP, which is being jointly developed by the councils for Malvern Hills, Worcester City and Wychavon. The Plan will provide a long term vision up to 2030 for south Worcestershire, with the emphasis on boosting the local economy and delivering sustainable housing development.

The consultations concern the Community Infrastructure Levy that will be applied to developers

who gain planning permission for new housing and large scale retail development; guidance on the contributions developers will need to make towards local infrastructure; and guidance on the provision of affordable housing.

At the same time, the latest public hearings are taking place in the Examination of the Plan.

The next two sessions are:

- Commencing 14 April 2015 at the Sixways Stadium, considering development management policies (the detailed rules that future planning applications will be assessed against, covering, for example, the design of new developments, the proportion of affordable housing to be included in residential developments)
- Commencing 12 May 2015 at the Worcester University Arena in Hylton Road, focussing on proposed sites in the main towns and villages in south Worcestershire.

New College students take over Worcester's sporting scene

Three students from New College Worcester, a school for blind or partially sighted young people, recently scrutinised the city's disability sport provision and made recommendations to councillors.

The students, who were aged between 16 and 18, visited the City Council on National Takeover Day – an annual initiative which gives children and young people the chance to work with adults for the day and be involved in decision-making.

After a quick pep talk from Corporate Director Ruth Mullen, the students interviewed representatives from Worcester's Boccia Club and the Old Elizabethans Cricket Club to get some insight in to what sporting opportunities are on offer for people with disabilities in the city.

Then they paid a visit to Worcester Snoezelen, an independent charity specifically set up to offer multi-sensory and creative activities for people who have a diverse range of needs.

In the afternoon, the students gave a short presentation to City Council Cabinet members, based on their findings and own personal experiences.



“It is essential that we get feedback first hand from as many people as possible who are using our services – only then can we ensure that we're offering what local people want and need, and can adapt our offering where necessary.”

Councillor David Wilkinson

Making a difference where it's most needed

Community groups from Warndon and Rainbow Hill came together in February to celebrate the difference that Community Development Foundation funding has made to the lives of local residents.

“The Community First programme has helped residents in some of Worcester's most deprived areas,” explains Francesca Davies, Project Co-ordinator at Worcester City Council.

Applicants were able to apply for grants of up to £2,500 in any one year, with awards going to those that best met local people's priorities, decided by a panel of local residents and public representatives.

The Panel allocated £84,000 to over 60 projects, using more than 6,000 hours of volunteering.



Tracey Anyon from the DAWN project and Marilyn Furlong from the Friends of KGV Playing Fields group, with panel member George Davidge and the Mayor

Groups to receive the cash included:

- Blackpole and Fairmount Community Group, which organised a big clean up and revamp of the play area in Turners Close Park
- Transport for a group of elderly people, enabling them to be more mobile and less socially isolated
- Worcester Volunteer Centre, which funded a worker to go out to schools, community centres, GPs, shops and parks to encourage more Warndon and Rainbow Hill residents to volunteer
- More play rangers trained to meet Ofsted standards, raising the quality and amount of play provision in Warndon and Rainbow Hill
- Launch of DAWN – a support group for the victims of domestic violence

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Money available to help your **business take off!**

Worcester City Council has made important changes to its Business Grant programmes for 2015. New businesses can now apply for a start up grant of up to £1,000 – you can submit your application at any time within the first year of trading.

New businesses can now apply for a grant of up to £1,000 - you can submit your application at any time within the first year of trading.

Business Growth Grants of between £1,000 and £3,000 are now available for businesses trading to consumers, which have been operating for more than one year. So if you have plans to grow your business, take a look at the full details at www.worcester.gov.uk/business. The grant is not available for day to day running costs, or items that would be considered normal business expenses.

Both grants can be used to cover costs for a wide range of items, including the repair and refurbishment of empty units that the business is taking on. Grants must be match funded by the business.

Whether you are in your first year of trading or are already well established, these grants can help to take your business to the next level.

Councillor Marc Bayliss, Cabinet Member for Economic Prosperity

Want to find out more?

Full details of both grants can be found at www.worcester.gov.uk/business

For more information contact our Economic Development Team on 01905 722554 or email bev.kittle@worcester.gov.uk

Businesses trading business to business can apply to the Enterprising Worcestershire Programme for support. For more information visit: www.business-central.co.uk/BC/

Apprenticeships

The smart way to earn as you learn

Do you want to earn money - and improve your workplace skills at the same time? If so, working as an apprentice may be the solution you're looking for!

Take the example of Taryn. She wanted to earn a wage, and felt she could learn more about the world of business by working directly for an employer than she would by studying theory in the classroom.

Finding an ideal match

Her first step was to visit the National Apprenticeship website at www.apprenticeships.org.uk to search for available opportunities. She spotted a position working for ScopeNEXT, a company which distributes goods both nationally and internationally. As ScopeNEXT has some business interests in China and were seeking a fluent Chinese speaker, Taryn felt she fitted the bill perfectly.

She attended a preview interview at the Heart of Worcestershire College, where she got the opportunity to practise interview techniques before meeting her prospective employer.

These obviously worked as Taryn landed the role, and is now working at ScopeNEXT

"I'd recommend becoming an apprentice to anyone looking to enter the world of business, or anyone who wants to expand the skills they can offer in the workplace," she says.

Want to find out more about apprenticeship opportunities in Worcester?

Contact the Solutions Team at Heart of Worcestershire College: tel. 01905-743435 or email employers@wortech.ac.uk

Are you interested in hiring an apprentice?

Help is available for Worcester based small and medium sized businesses.

Motivated and keen apprentices can help make your organisation more productive and competitive, by reinvigorating the workforce and addressing your skills gap directly.

If you're a small or medium sized local business and have not participated in an apprenticeship programme during the past two years, you may be eligible for a Worcester City Council grant to assist with the costs of Apprenticeship training.

Heart of Worcestershire College are delivering this programme on behalf of Worcester City Council, they will also help with recruitment and provide ongoing support for you and your apprentice.

To find out more call 01905 743435 or email: employers@wortech.ac.uk





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What's on in Worcester's Parks

Easter Egg Hunt

When: Saturday 4 April, 14:00 - 16:00 (last entry 15.30)

Where: Gheluvelt Park, near the Pump House
Complete the quiz trail to receive a chocolate prize and a chance to win a luxury Easter egg! Organised by The Friends of St. George's RC Primary School.
No need to book.

Easter Eggstravaganza

When: Monday 6 April - afternoon

Where: Fort Royal Park

Cost: FREE

Join in with some Easter fun in the park, including a treasure hunt and Easter Bonnet competition. Organised by the Friends of Fort Royal Park (The Commandery are also running an Easter Bonnet making session from 14:00 - 16:00, cost £2 per child)

Gheluvelt Nature Trail Celebration

When: Thursday 28 May, 10:00 - 12:00

Where: Gheluvelt Park, near the Pump House

Cost: FREE

Nature-themed activities for families, to celebrate the launch of a new Nature Trail in Gheluvelt Park
No need to book.

Bands in the Park

When: 14:30 - 16:30 on 3, 17, 31 May, and 28 June

Where: Cripplegate Park, near Sons of Rest building

When: 14:30 - 16:30, 10, 24, 7, 21 June

Where: Gheluvelt Park Bandstand

Cost: FREE

Enjoy an afternoon of live music in the park. Refreshments available in the Sons of Rest building.



Grab-a-Plant

When: all sessions from 10:00 - 12:30

Where: 12th May Fort Royal Park

13th May Cripplegate Park

14th May Gheluvelt Park

Cost: FREE

Grab some pansies, primula, daisies and forget-me-nots before the beds get re-planted. Bring your own plastic bags, gloves and trowels! Please check with staff on site before removing any plants, take from the annual beds only, and do not remove plants before 10am.

VE Day 70th Anniversary Remembrance Ceremony

When: Friday 8th May, 11:00

Where: Gheluvelt Park

Cost: FREE

Small remembrance and wreath laying ceremony at the Regimental Stone, to honour the members of the Worcestershire Regiment on the 70th anniversary of VE Day. Organised by the Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regimental Association, Worcester Branch.



Canal Festival

When: 12 - 14 June

Where: Lansdowne Park

Celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the Canal and benefiting local charities and community groups, events include local bands, children's activities, school choirs, food and craft stalls and traditional sideshow stalls in addition to a gathering of narrow boats. Free Admission.

For information about all our events in Worcester's parks and green spaces, visit www.worcester.gov.uk/park-events or find "Worcester Parks" on facebook. Alternatively you can email: greenspaceevents@worcester.gov.uk or phone 01905 722233

Around the city

Celebrate the Swan Theatre's 50th anniversary! Go to www.worcesterlive.co.uk for full theatre, music and entertainment listings

Worcestershire County Cricket Club celebrates its 150th anniversary this year too. Some high profile events are planned for the summer; go to their website at <http://wccc.co.uk> to find out more!





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"My son has blossomed since coming to this school. He loves school for the first time"

