



Evington Echo

EvingtonEcho.uk

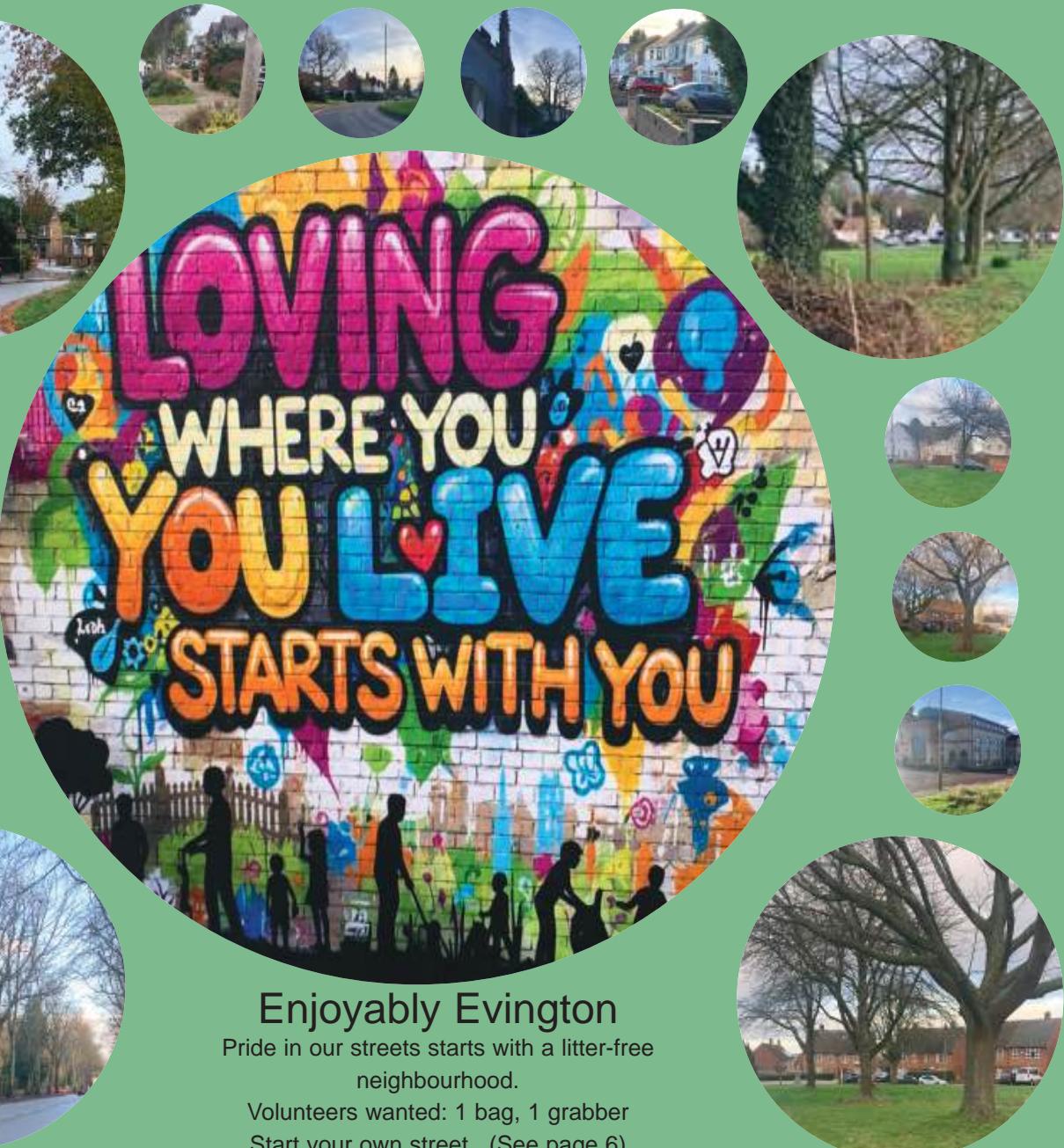
Issue 318

Circulation 6,000

Keeping you up to date with Evington's news

February and March 2026

The newspaper of Friends of Evington Charity No. 1205219



Enjoyably Evington

Pride in our streets starts with a litter-free neighbourhood.

Volunteers wanted: 1 bag, 1 grabber
Start your own street. (See page 6)

Unite the Union
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Join Today!

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(For a free welcome pack when calling quote - EM LE19)



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Evington Echo is a project of the charity Friends of Evington. It is regulated by Impress. It is a member of the Independent Media Association.

2026	Deadline - Fri.	Published - Thur
April/May	13th March	2nd April
June/July	15th May	4th June
Aug./Sept.	10th July	30th July

Editorial

The Friends of Evington, the charity that manages the Evington Echo, has been reflecting on the publication's history and mission. Since the first independent issue in 1981, the editors have aimed to be a "non-political, general interest paper" that showcases local news and stories. The founding editor, Angela Plowman, emphasised the importance of community involvement, saying: "We want to print YOUR news, so tell us about your neighbourhood, your street and even your home."

Over the past 45 years, our community has evolved, and we have adapted to changing needs. However, our core mission remains the same and aligns with

our charitable values: "To protect and improve the local environment, uniting the community and partners to advance education, inclusive recreation and residents' quality of life."

Editorial approach

As a community-run publication, we strive to provide a platform for diverse voices and perspectives, in line with our charitable objects and commitment to neutrality. We have reviewed our editorial approach to ensure our content remains balanced and inclusive. Unfortunately, this means we can no longer publish articles submitted by individual councillors. We appreciate the efforts of all our local representatives in supporting community initiatives and events.

This issue's cover theme

The front cover of this issue features roads that have Neighbourhood Watch groups, It's Your Neighbourhood groups, or other groups that loosely fall under the title "Enjoyably Evington". The word *enjoyably* is deliberately used as an adverb to indicate that it is the process—not just the end result—that matters. (See the article on page 6.)

Thanks and fundraising update

Many thanks to the management of The Cedars and to everyone who has helped by donating to and buying from the bric-a-brac table. After raising enough money for the defibrillator, the Friends of Evington trustees have gone on to raise funds for Christmas events and over £300 for environmental projects. All funds go into the Friends of Evington bank account. Our major projects include the Evington Echo magazine, the Evington Echo website, and support for social and environmental groups around Evington.

Local notices and updates

Please be aware that there are new parking restrictions at Tesco, Hamilton.

The by-election for Stoneygate ward, following the death of Cllr. Manjula Sood, will be held on Thursday 19th February. An obituary for Cllr. Manjula Sood appears on page 11.

The closing date for sealed bids for Evington Park House was Friday 9th January. The Council will now decide which bids are valid, then shortlist and score them against its criteria to identify an organisation to take on the leasehold of the property or not.

Website-articles since the last issue

Since the last Evington Echo magazine, the following articles have been published exclusively on the Evington Echo website (evingtonecho.uk):

- * Festive Day Walking on New Year's Day
- *Leicester Museum preparing for Evington Road exhibition
- *Beware Creeping Development
- *Cyclist seriously injured in Evington
- *Houghton Lodge Farm – The Mystery Deepens
- *Houghton Lodge Farm – an update
- *Church Road Traffic Calming consultation in Evington
- *Moving the Deck Chairs again
- *Holiday Centre bus schedules for routes 22/22a/22e
- *What Christmas means to Evington
- *New Year 2026 – will you be making a resolution?
- *New Year 2026 – How to sustain your resolution
- *Move to tackle Evington Road parking chaos
- *Bedbugs in Evington
- *Reporting domestic abuse in Leicester
- *'Spotlight on Arts' exhibition: 'Computala'
- *Business rates hikes could force closures in rural areas and on high streets
- *Vehicle theft in Evington Ward
- *Armchair Fan – Leicester City Football Club

Helen Pettman



"We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"

EVINGTON CHAPEL

(Baptist)

Welcome to our meetings

Sunday : 11am and 6pm

Wednesday : 7.30pm

Other meetings as announced

www.evingtonchapel.org.uk

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New opportunities to help deliver the Evington Echo are as follows:

Wakerley Road/Tavistock Drive and some on Ethel Road. (88 copies)
Goodwood Crescent, Gamel Road, Gamel Walk and Goodwood maisonettes (106 copies)
Evington Lane from Wakerley Road to St. Philip's Road (130 copies)
Oakhampton Avenue and part of Tavistock Road (65 copies)
Norwood Road and Horston Road (64 copies)

The Evington Echo is part of a charity, and we are very grateful to all our wonderful volunteers who deliver the Evington Echo free of charge. We appreciate that in some cases it is a family undertaking, so under 18s may be involved in making the delivery. In such cases, the parents'/guardians' names are on our list. If you can help, please contact Chris Hossack on 2414885. Delivery is 6 times a year.



If you, or someone you know, is worried about physical, mental or economic abuse from a partner, previous partner or family member, call the local domestic abuse helpline run by Freeva.

Helpline: 0808 80 200 28, weekdays from 8.00am to 8.00pm, weekends and bank holidays from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Calls are free and hidden from bills. The helpline team will listen, they understand, and can help you think about your options.

Anyone concerned about domestic abuse can call the helpline for advice. So,

whether you want to find out how to support a friend or family member who you think might be experiencing domestic abuse, or to ask for help to change your own behaviour, the helpline's here for you. Freeva has a website which has translation into other languages if you need it (visit freeva.org.uk), and Freeva offer interpretation services over the phone for those needing language support.

You can find information about all the help and support available in Leicester around domestic abuse on Leicester City Council's website:

EXPIRED SMOKE DETECTORS CAN'T PROTECT YOU – REPLACE THEM TODAY!

Advertisorial (See advert on page 2)

This is the advice given by our regular Evington Echo advertiser, Pravin Patel. He says that a smoke detector only has a lifespan of 10 years. After that time, they lose their effectiveness, even if they're still functioning. So it is in your interest to protect your home and loved ones with up-to-date safety devices because: of:

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RAFFLE

*In aid of
Evington Village Fete & Show*

LETTERS AND LETTER-LIKE CONTRIBUTIONS

POLICE PRIORITIES FOR EVINGTON AND NORTH EVINGTON WARDS (EFFECTIVE 1ST JANUARY 2026 FOR 3 MONTHS)

* Enhanced community engagement through beat surgeries, community leaders, patch walks, ward meetings and social media, working in collaboration with local councillors and the Neighbourhood Link team.

* Continued patrols around key school times, in partnership with Leicester City Council, taking positive action against obstruction and inconsiderate parking.

* High-visibility patrols and licensing checks with local licensed premises to help prevent anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime, including planning local policing operations with partner agencies.

KNITTED GOODS AND OTHER ITEMS

Dear Readers,
This is to let you know that knitted/crocheted goods, food and other items donated for Moldova, where refugees from Ukraine are situated, were sent off in November.

Thank you to all the people who contributed by donating knitted and crocheted goods, plus yarn. Those articles left at the Cedars have been passed on by me, and were included.

We are still keeping busy by continuing to make hats, gloves, scarves, blankets, baby blankets, etc. and still collecting any unwanted yarn.

Thank you,
Lesly Biro 2419096

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theolivebranchleicester



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FRIENDS OF EVINGTON'S A.G.M.

This is to let you know that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for Friends of Evington will be held on 17th March and is for members only.

ARMCHAIR FAN



In this latest Armchair Fan column, Steve Billingham reflects on Leicester City's up-and-down run of form, highlighting Jordan James, Abdul Fatawu and (pre-injury) Aaron

Ramsey as key positives. The piece mixes big moments—James' goalscoring streak, Fatawu's spectacular strikes and improved delivery—with frustration at missed chances, poor marking and game management that repeatedly cost points. Results swing from morale-boosting wins (Norwich, Stoke, Ipswich, West Brom) to damaging defeats and draws, leaving the overall mood as "promise, but not yet consistency." For the full article go to www.evingtonecho.uk/armchairfan S. Billington.

SCRABBLE AT THE CEDARS IN EVINGTON

The Scrabble group meet on a Thursday morning at 10.45a.m. until 1.00p.m. We welcome any new members who wish to join us. Lesly 2419096



Post box topper knitted by the 'Knit and Natter' Group at Eden Cafe.

COMPUTALA



Computala was an exhibition at LCB Depot in Leicester that brought together artists working with digital technology, artificial intelligence, and robotics. Running throughout January, it explored how creative work is changing as computers and automated systems become part of everyday life.

Rather than presenting technology as simply good or bad, the exhibition asked practical questions. What happens to creativity when machines can generate images, music, or text? How do artists stay in control of their ideas while using new tools? The works on display included visual installations, interactive pieces, sound-based projects, and performances.

Computala was organised by New Media Art Club and featured artists from Leicester, across the UK and internationally. Alongside the exhibition, there were workshops, talks and events designed to help people of different ages engage with these ideas.

The exhibition was open to the public at LCB Depot on Rutland Street, Leicester.

Rob Watson



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FREE EVINGTON ECHO EVENTS - ALL WELCOME

WORLD LANGUAGE DAY 2026

21st February

Did you know The Language Movement had a major cultural impact on Bengali society? It has inspired the development and celebration of the Bengali language, literature and culture.

16th December 1971 marked the Victory of freedom fighters after a very bloody period, where it is estimated that the previous nine months of conflict caused the loss of life of an estimated 3 million people. At the Ramna Race Course in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 81 thousand soldiers capitulated, and this is recognised as the largest military capitulation since WWII and the birth of Bangladesh.

After further laws prohibited the use of diverse languages, a proposal from Bangladesh was sent to the 30th General Conference of UNESCO on 17th November 1999 to declare 21 February as International Mother Language Day, this was unanimously supported.

Evington is proud to be home to residents who speak many different languages. Language is more than words—it's

identity, heritage and belonging. In a neighbourhood as diverse as ours, it's also a reminder that kindness and understanding can begin with something as simple as greeting someone in their own language, sharing a phrase, or listening with patience when English isn't someone's first language.

To celebrate, the Evington Echo and Soar Sound Radio would love to bring neighbours together for a get-together with refreshments provided. Everyone is welcome—whether you speak one language or many. If you'd like to join us, please see the details below.

Date: Saturday 21 February

Time: 10.00am to 2.00pm

**Venue: Bishop Street Chapel,
Bishop Street, Leicester**

Cost: Free

Further Information:

FriendsOfEvington1@gmail.com
or 07817720688.

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER HERITAGE HUB 21ST MARCH 2026

The University of Leicester will host a Heritage Hub open event on Saturday 21st March 2026, offering local residents an opportunity to explore how heritage, research and community storytelling can work together. Taking place at the University of Leicester, the Heritage Hub brings together researchers, cultural organisations and community groups to support collaborative approaches to understanding and sharing heritage, with a strong emphasis on participation and lived experience. **SAVE THIS DATE IN YOUR DIARY.**

There will be opportunities to get involved as community reporters with the Evington Echo and Soar Sound, who are working in partnership around local storytelling and community media. This will be of particular interest to people who enjoy writing, audio, interviewing, photography, and simply paying close attention to what is happening in their area, and who want to develop practical skills while contributing to local conversation and civic life.

ERRATUM

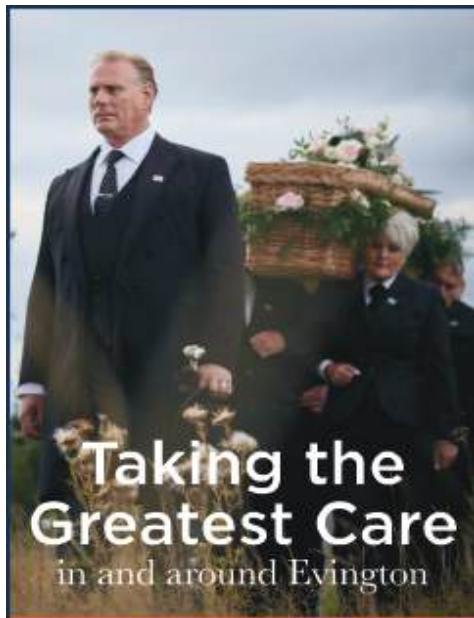
In an article in the last issue for Dec./Jan. '26 on page 9 called 'Evington Youth Club – Working together to build a brighter future for our Young People' there was an error in the amount the Youth Club had raised themselves. It should have read £19,000. The Youth Club would love more donations, large or small. Please could you put money in a sealed envelope labelled 'Evington Youth Club' and take it to Bennett's shop in the village, at 30 Main Street.

ZUMBA - £3 A SESSION

Jyoti Patel is a fully qualified fitness instructor who delivers upbeat sessions choreographed to music. The classes are designed to be friendly and welcoming, combining fitness and fun, while being mindful of participants' needs.

Suitable for women of all ages, the sessions work well for beginners through to intermediate level. Jyoti also encourages participants to get to know one another, with the option to join a WhatsApp group to stay connected outside the class.

These sessions are organised by the charity Friends of Evington, with the aim of supporting the health and wellbeing of women in the Evington area. At just £3 per session, there are only a few places left. See advert below.



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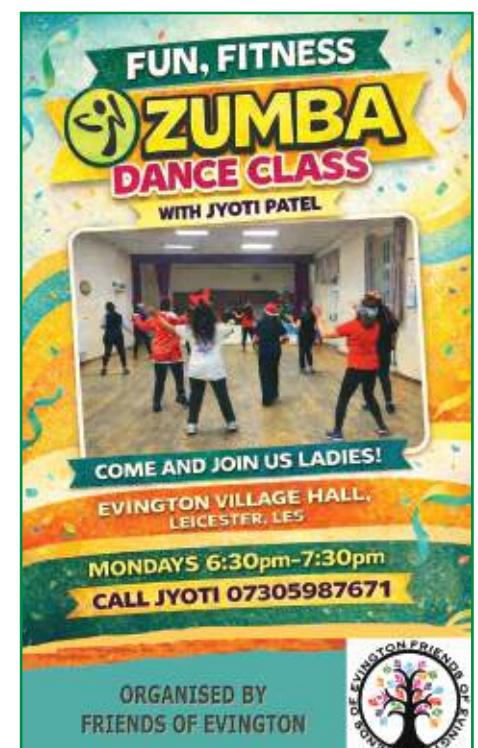
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Page 5

'NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH', 'IT'S YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD' AND 'ENJOYABLY EVINGTON'

The pictures on the front cover show roads linked to 'Neighbourhood Watch', 'It's Your Neighbourhood', or to residents who litter-pick as part of 'Enjoyably Evington'.

The roads featured are: Main Street, High Street, Church Road, Spencefield Lane, Evington Road, Delaware Road, Downing Drive, Sedgebrook Road, Earlswood Road, Thurnview Road, Goodwood Road, Greenacre Drive, Davenport Road, Harringworth Road, and Goodwood Crescent.

'Neighbourhood Watch'

Neighbourhood Watch groups work with a coordinator (a local resident) and neighbours, to share information and provide support.

For more information, search Our Watch - Knowledge Hub, or contact your local police team. (See the police surgery dates on the adjacent page 7.)

'It's Your Neighbourhood'

The idea for these groups in England and Wales came from the Royal Horticultural Society and they are administered by regional teams. In our area the regional team is called East Midlands in Bloom. Very local groups (a road, or a small collection of roads) work together around three pillars: community, environmental responsibility, and gardening, usually on land where they have permission to garden. Roads aren't in competition with each other; instead, they work to improve standards and receive yearly feedback

from judges.

For more information, search East Midlands in Bloom. Locally, you can email admin@friendsofevington.uk or phone the editor (contact details on page 2 of this magazine).

'Enjoyably Evington'

Everyone can help look after our local environment in their own way. Every little bit helps-and it all makes a difference. Around Evington, many people regularly go out collecting litter, but more hands are always needed and appreciated. Some of us go out by ourselves; some prefer to go out with others. Addy Tyler tries to go out for an hour or two once or twice a week around her local streets and through the village. Others pick up litter every day while walking the dog-it's amazing how much they collect.

One "Womble" goes out daily with his dog Rango. Over the last year he has collected thousands of bags of litter and large numbers of nitrous oxide cylinders, as well as cleaning road signs, unblocking drains, and removing graffiti. Despite living further afield, he regularly tidies Shady Lane and the area around Evington.

We've also had other visitors helping out: one from Wigston picked 19 bags on Rowlatts Hill Road on a Sunday morning, and another from Bushby is often seen tidying around the village. We are incredibly grateful to them-and they don't even live here.

We do need more residents to get involved to keep our community clean. Even a quick tidy near your house on bin day, or "adopting" your own street, makes a real difference.

Equipment: litter-pickers aren't expensive,

or you can request a free picker (with bags) from parks@leicester.gov.uk.

Want to join a group? Let us know on the Evington Litter Wombles Facebook page-Addy hopes to organise a few group picks soon.

* South Leicestershire Litter Wombles organise group picks each Sunday morning on our side of the city.

* The Wednesday Wombles meet most Wednesday mornings closer to home. (Both are advertised on the South Leicester and Leicestershire Facebook page.)

We'd also like to run a blitz around the village-giving signs and other street furniture a bit of a facelift. If you'd like to help, contact Addy or Helen through the Echo.

Rango's 'Womble Walkies' collected all this along Shady Lane on 19th January 2026.



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THE BEAT SURGERIES FOR EVINGTON AND NORTH EVINGTON ARE AS FOLLOWS:

Evington

10.30am – 11.30am Sat. 7th February 2026 at Eden Cafe, Main Street

1.00pm – 2.00pm Fri. 20th February 2026 at Evington Library

5.00pm – 6.00pm Sat. 7th March 2026 at Tesco Downing Drive

10.00am – 11.00am Thurs. 26th March 2026 at Tesco Ethel Road

North Evington

All meetings in North Evington are held at St. Barnabas Library, French Road and are aligned with the local councillors. This is also planned to be implemented soon with the Evington Ward councillors.

12.00 noon - 2.30pm 7th February 2026

5.30pm - 6.30pm 10th February

12.00noon - 2.30pm 14th February

5.30pm - 6.30pm 24th February

12.00noon - 2.30pm 14th March

5.30pm – 6.30pm 31st March

We're inviting residents to come along and meet their local beat team at our upcoming community surgeries. These sessions are a fantastic opportunity for people to speak directly with the officers who police their neighbourhood, share any concerns, and celebrate what's working well in the area.

Our policing priorities are shaped by the community we serve. By hearing from residents, we can better understand the issues that matter most, identify areas that need attention, and work together on meaningful improvements.

Your insight helps guide our work—and your positive feedback helps us recognise the progress already being made. We encourage everyone to come along, say hello, and be part of the ongoing conversation about keeping Evington and North Evington safe, supportive, and connected.

POLICE OFFICER: JIGNESH ARICHANDRA PCSO 6153

I am Police Community Support Officer Jignesh Arichandra, based at Spinney Hill Police Station, covering the Evington and North Evington areas.

As the newest member of the beat team, having joined Leicestershire Police in August 2025, I am already genuinely enjoying my role and take pride in serving the community. I am passionate about being visible, approachable and supportive, and I strive to make a positive difference for residents within my beats.

I will be holding regular beat surgeries across the Evington and North Evington areas. These are informal drop-in sessions where residents can speak to me directly about any local concerns, ask questions, or simply get to know me better. Everyone is welcome to come along, and I encourage you to stop by for a chat if there's anything you'd like to raise or discuss.

Before joining Leicestershire Police, I gained valuable experience in both public-facing and security roles. Most recently, I worked as a Security Officer at the Job Centre in Leicester City Centre, where I

developed strong skills in conflict management, communication, and maintaining a safe environment for both staff and the public.

Prior to that, I worked at Sainsbury's Petrol Station, which strengthened my customer service skills and taught me the importance of patience, teamwork, and dealing effectively with a wide range of people.

I'm excited to continue getting to know local residents and to work alongside the community to help keep Evington and North Evington safe and welcoming for everyone.



Get news, updates and crime prevention advice from your local police team

Scan the QR codes with your phone's camera to visit the links. Alternatively, visit our website leics.police.uk

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CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL



This popular event, held at St Denys Church, made Christmas in Evington sparkle. The festival gave independent community groups the opportunity to highlight their work. They were:

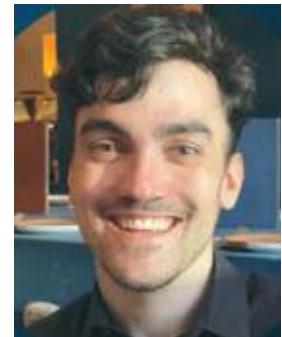
Babyloss
 Blue Christmas (St Denys Church group)
 Concorde Ladies Luncheon Club
 Creative Woodland
 Eden's Knit and Natter Group
 Evington Local History Group
 Friends of Evington
 Gentle Exercises
 Leicester Society of Recorder Players
 Lily House Bereavement Support Group
 LOROS
 Monday Meet (St Denys Church group)
 Nelliebee Ballet Silver Swans
 Support—Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland
 The Harmonics Choir
 Women's Institute

Businesses taking part were Atkinson Funeral Directors and Joe Smith (decorator). There were also individual entries.

St Denys Church would like to thank the Lord Mayor, Cllr. Teresa Aldred, for judging the trees and for her support. It is hoped that this festival will become a highlight for Evington in future years. Many thanks to all entrants and helpers last year.



BEN HARDING NAMED IN MORTGAGE STRATEGY'S NEXTGEN 30 UNDER 30 (CLASS OF 2026)



Ben Harding, a local Evington resident and Business Partnerships Manager at Barclays, has been named in Mortgage Strategy's NextGen 30 cohort for 2026, which looks to spotlight up and coming professionals from across the UK's Mortgage Industry and supports them through professional development and networking.

Ben will also be familiar to some Evington Echo readers as a former volunteer community reporter. In September 2016 he wrote a popular feature, 'Pokemon Go' Guide to Evington, encouraging residents to explore the village and its landmarks. (Readers can find the article on our website by searching "Ben Harding".)

Reacting to the news, Ben said: "This feels like a real milestone moment, and is up there as one of my proudest achievements so far. Being recognised alongside so many talented young professionals shaping the future of our industry is something I'm incredibly grateful for."

The past year has presented me with so many opportunities to step outside my comfort zone and grow. I'm energised for the year ahead and looking forward to learning from the talented leaders, peers and mentors I'll be working alongside through this programme."

Ben added his thanks to Mortgage Strategy, James Prosser and the judges, and said he was extremely grateful to have been selected. He also thanked colleagues at Barclays UK for their support, especially Helen, Sophie, Danica and Zoe adding: "Working with people who push you to be your best makes all the difference." Ben said he is looking forward to connecting with others in the cohort.

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CHRISTMAS 2025 IN EVINGTON

Activities for Christmas in Evington weren't centralised, with many groups having their own parties. Here are some pictures that have been sent in to the Evington Echo.



Santa didn't miss Evington out. He was seen here outside Tesco on Downing Drive.



The free Christmas dinner in St. Denys Parish Centre on 19th December was mainly sponsored by Best Community Charity, but Friends of Evington volunteers also helped with sponsorship and organising. Participants were all Evington Echo readers, some coming from the 2025 weekly Lunch Club.

The Christmas tree in the middle of Evington created an opportunity to sing Christmas songs around it. Students at Judgemeadow Community College led the singing from a song sheet made at the College. Afterwards many participants went to the Cedars, including students and their parents, who enjoyed hot chocolate and a community 'get-together'.



Santa and his elf are pictured here as well. They gave out presents and chatted to young children at The Cedars. Santa was helped by volunteers working for Friends of Evington and was made most welcome by the staff at the Cedars.

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EDEN CAFE BAR

Eden Café Bar is located on Main Street, Evington.

It is a popular venue with many clubs, such as Eden's Knitter and Natter group, Bingo, and the Nordic Walking Group. In addition, it offers the venue for events, like the recent V-day celebrations and parties that took place in August.

Eden Café Bar was initially opened eight years ago, when owner Suzy Bown had another café at Stoughton Grange and noted that many of her customers were from Evington. Then Suzy opened Eden Café Bar on Main Street and made a business that supported the local community. Eden Café remained open for another two years until it was sold. Then two and a half years ago, Suzy reopened the Café.

The Café is a safe, friendly, welcoming place for Evington village. Everyone can enjoy this pleasant environment that offers good food and coffee at affordable prices.

The Café relies mostly on footfall and customers to keep going.

Its aims are to be an inviting and safe place with consistent hours for the residents of Evington village. It is open Mondays to Saturdays from 9.00am to 2.00pm.

Ariana

*Somewhere there lurks a litter lout
That leaves a trail when it's about.
Day and night it creeps around
Evington without a sound.
And instead of using litter-bins,
Throws chip-trays, bottles and soft drink
tins,
Into hedges, shrubs and trees;
Each place it thinks that no-one sees;*

EUROPEAN TWINNING ASSOCIATION

Students at Judgemeanow College enjoyed tea with the Lord Mayor last year to learn more about the City's European Twinning Association. Leicester has been twinned with Strasbourg, France from



1960, Krefeld, Germany since 1969 and Haskovo, Bulgaria from 2008. Rita D'Silva Griffiths, a Manager at Judgemeanow Community College, is on the executive committee for this Twinning Association. She says that now, for health and safety reasons, exchanges no longer take place so they work to find other ways students can get involved and understand shared values. Students continue to study European foreign languages at Judgemeanow.

Leicester also has twinning partnerships with Chongqing (China) Rajkot (India) and Masaya (Nicaragua).

TRACK THAT LITTER LOUT!

*Spits bubble-gum where'er it moves
For us to walk home on our shoes.*

*When cartons, crisp-bags, wrappers and
foil,
Our pavements, drives and gardens spoil,
We daily sweep, have paper-chases,
And wish that those who pass this way*

THE STOUGHTON GRANGE ESTATE



Stoughton Grange Estate is promoted today as a centre of 'boutique rural commerce', but the land has a long and complex history.

After the First World War, the Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd bought most of the estate in 1919, creating one of the largest farming enterprises in Great Britain. In 2014, the Wellcome Trust (through Farmcare) purchased most of the Co-op's local landholdings, a move that prompted debate about the future of farming.

In the post-Covid period, Steamin' Billy Co. Ltd became involved in acquiring and leasing back parts of the remaining Grange Estate, helping shape the site's current redevelopment.

The full article is available to read at www.evingtonecho.uk search 'Stoughton Grange Estate'. This article gives much more detail about past purchases of huge areas on land around Evington and links with another article about 'Penbury', the Eco town that was never built.

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OUNCILLOR MANJULA SOOD MBE

23 December 1945 – 24 December 2025



Picture courtesy of Leicester City Council

Manjula's city was definitely Leicester, where she took a keen interest in all its stories. She loved meeting people and did what she could to bring communities together, always ready with a kind word, practical support and time to listen.

She was involved in many Evington events, including the Evington Village Fete and Show, and she recently thoroughly enjoyed her visit to Evington at the Lunch Club at St Denys Parish Centre on 9th April 2025.

Manjula was born in India and later lived in Tanzania before coming to Leicester with her new husband, Paul Sood, in 1970. At first, she found the cold, damp weather difficult, and her early living conditions were very challenging. However, following her grandfather's advice to make the best of her new home, she enrolled on a Postgraduate Certificate

of Education course at Leicester's School of Education and went on to teach for the next 20 years.

As an Asian teacher, Manjula championed the recognition of Indian culture and helped children feel proud of who they were, particularly at a time when newly arrived families—including refugees from Idi Amin's Uganda—were building new lives in Leicester. She believed that schools should reflect the communities they serve, and she worked to ensure that pupils and parents felt welcomed, respected and included.

A profoundly difficult period came with the death of her husband, Councillor Paul Sood, in 1996. He had been a councillor for Abbey Ward (now Latimer Ward). Her younger son persuaded Manjula to stand in the by-election, saying it would be the best tribute she could pay to Paul's memory. She won convincingly and, later that year, became Leicester City's first female Asian councillor.

This marked the start of an illustrious career in public service. Manjula served as Lord Mayor of Leicester from May 2008 to May 2009, becoming the first Asian female Lord Mayor in the UK. During and around her year in office she was appointed an MBE for services to the community and also received an honorary doctorate (Doctor of Laws) from the University of Leicester.

She served as a councillor for Belgrave for many years and returned to the council in 2023 as councillor for Stoneygate. Manjula continued to serve the city in a wide range of roles, including trustee and executive director of the Leicester Council of Faiths, where she was passionate about promoting understanding between religions.

Her co-councillor Raffiq Mahomed said

"Manjula was a true community champion who always saw the best in everyone. She believed deeply in people, in unity, and in bringing communities together. Through her selfless service—first as a teacher, then as a councillor—she helped others realise their potential and create a strong sense of belonging. Manjula's legacy lives on in the many lives she touched and the community she so lovingly served. The Stoneygate and Evington community have truly lost one of their own, and she will be missed by all her family and those whose lives she touched."

Tributes have been pouring in for Manjula. Her funeral was held on Saturday 10th January 2026, following a special cortege through the city with stops that allowed friends and residents to pay their respects.



Manjula Sood at Evington Lunch Club -9th April 2025.


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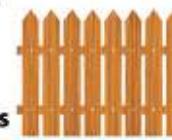
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PILGRIMS' FRIEND SOCIETY IN EVINGTON



Theme: Hibernating in Winter. This picture shows residents making muffins that illustrate the theme.

Barbara is the Activity and Community Engagement (ACE) Facilitator at the Pilgrims' Friend Society Care Home, based in Evington, just off Grocot Road.

The 30-bed home supports 23 elderly Christian residents, known as "Family Members". The youngest is 68 and the oldest is in their 90s. Alongside the care home in an adjacent building, the project also includes independent living accommodation.

Barbara outlined the home's wide-ranging programme of activities and highlighted its strong volunteer support network. Activities include poetry, singing (with musical instruments), "Singing for Wellbeing", devotional speakers and Sunday services, seated exercises, film afternoons, games of all kinds, monthly

outings, and a variety of crafts including cooking. Family Members also enjoy celebrating national events (such as the Olympics), as well as birthday celebrations tailored to individuals' interests—often with dressing up, bingo, and even "messy play".

Theme days are another popular feature. (See the photo to the left). Barbara emphasised that choice is central to daily life at the home. She also introduced Eve Webb, the Wellbeing and Dementia staff member. Eve explained the home's "Hummingbirds" programme—named because hummingbirds "flit around"—which provides meaningful activities while upholding dignity at all times. The team takes care to learn as much as possible about each person, their life story, and their preferences, keeping dignity at the heart of everything they do. This approach extends to mealtimes, where there are always choices available.

Around 20 volunteers support the home, including local community groups (such as Knit and Natter), local schools (including St Paul's and Kiddycraft), and individual volunteers. All volunteers are trained and DBS-checked, and they assist with outings and the events and activities described above.

The care home also has a garden, previously featured in Evington Echo. Barbara would welcome volunteers who could help develop and maintain this space for the benefit of Family Members.

To find out more or to volunteer, please contact Barbara on 07940 796356 or email ace.evington@pilgrimfriend.org.uk.



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Search 'Evington Scouts' on Facebook.

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ALEX PORTLOCK COMES BACK TO EVINGTON

In early 2023, Alex Portlock, a trainee journalist from Nîmes, France, completed a fortnight's internship with the Evington Echo. During her time in Evington she met many local people and explored a wide range of stories, including French Leicester, fair-trade chocolate, the Sedgebrook Open Space project, and other media organisations across Leicester.

This January, Alex returned to the area while visiting her grandparents in Uppingham. She also took time to indulge her love of English charity shops and made a quick stop at The Cedars in Evington to catch up with Evington Echo community reporter Harkesh Farma.

Asked about Evington, Alex said she felt the same strong sense of community as she had on her previous visit. She also mentioned that the article in the last edition, "Disliking Evington", caught her attention. Alex agreed it is important to acknowledge and confront the less pleasant realities of an area, because that is how improvements can be made—by working together, finding new solutions, and applying for funding.

Alex added that she was surprised Evington does not have a community centre, given how many people live in the area and how much is happening locally.

STAY IN THE LOOP.

If you have a local event, class, club or volunteering opportunity to share, please send a short note:

who/what/when/where plus a contact method.

The Evington Echo is here to connect neighbours and help good ideas spread across our community.



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HISTORY AND HERITAGE TALK – ST MARGARET'S AND WOODGATE, LEICESTER



Trevor Allen returned to the History and Heritage Group this January to give an illustrated talk on the St Margaret's and Woodgate areas of Leicester. A former history teacher at Leicester Grammar School, Trevor is now retired and supports Leicester City Council's Choose How You Move programme. As part of this, he leads a series of well-researched and popular guided walks around the city.

His talk ranged widely across local history, including St Margaret's Church—its Saxon remains and the many times it has been rebuilt - Andrew Lloyd and his career in the West Indies; Corah's factory, and Lesley Corah, who was killed in the First World War. He also spoke about the old Board School on Slater Street, and the Frisby and Jarvis building, which bears a plaque to Len Wickwark. Wickwark fought 473 professional bouts—believed to be the most ever recorded.

This article, however, will focus on Mary Royce (1845–1892). Mary has a blue plaque stating that she was the founder of the Royce Institute and Leicester's first woman doctor. "Well," said Trevor, "that is really underselling a woman!"

Mary came from a wealthy, nonconformist family living in Gallowtree Gate. She became a Sunday school teacher at the Congregational Chapel, teaching poor boys in the area and giving them a basic education. Then, in 1879, she used her own money to set up the Royce Institute, extending learning to art, music and sport for around 100 boys.

Following the 1876 Parliamentary Act that allowed women to become doctors, Mary began her medical training in London in 1881 and qualified in 1890.

That may seem a long time, but she needed time out along the way. Once qualified, she threw herself into caring for the poor and sick, working tirelessly until her death in 1892, after catching smallpox in the Poor House.

Helen Pettman

For more about 'Choose How You Move' and the walks – www.choosehowyoumove.co.uk and click on 'Walking' and scroll down to find "guided walks in your area" and 'Walking groups you can join'.

SURGERY UPDATE



Builders have been hard at work at 10 The Common, Evington. Formerly owned by Dr. Wood and used as a surgery, the building is currently being refitted.

Following Dr. Wood's retirement, the property was sold to a private individual who hoped to lease it as a GP surgery or for other business use. However, no interested GPs took this forward, and the building has now been leased as an office for a company that runs care homes.

R.O.S.E. (Retain Our Services, Evington) intends to continue campaigning for the NHS Integrated Care Board to restore a GP surgery in Evington.

The full article by John McFadyen is available on the Evington Echo website (evingtonecho.uk).

MAPS - FINDING INFORMATION

maps.leicester.gov.uk is Leicester City Council's online mapping portal, designed to help residents quickly find trusted, property-linked information. By searching an address or postcode, you can view an interactive map and switch on layers that reveal what's nearby and what could influence a home now or in the future. It's especially useful for day-to-day queries—such as locating the nearest parks, schools, public transport routes, and other local services—and for getting a clearer picture of boundaries and site locations than you might from a standard map app.

For anyone considering moving, the portal can also support early-stage due diligence. Depending on the layers available, you may be able to view planning applications and decisions in the surrounding area, as well as conservation areas, listed buildings, or other heritage-related designations.

From an admin perspective, it's a practical starting point for gathering background information consistently and efficiently, before escalating questions to the right service area.

However, it should be used as a research tool rather than a final authority. Always confirm key findings through the official planning pages and, where appropriate, seek professional advice (for example, from planning consultants, surveyors, or legal representatives).

DOCTOR IN THE PARK

During the 1891 census - while transcribing Evington records during lockdown - I was surprised to find unusually 'international' residents living at Evington House: a young Australian doctor who served as Leicester's Medical Officer of Health (MOH), his Russian-born wife, and a Swiss maid.

After Miss Henry Ann Burnaby (Colonel John Burnaby's last surviving unmarried daughter) died in 1888, Evington House was no longer occupied by the family and was instead rented out to a series of tenants on short leases. One such tenant was Dr John Andrew Turner. Dr. Turner graduated from Edinburgh Medical School in 1882, he had previously held a post in Stony Stanton, and developed a strong interest in public health and sanitation. This interest shaped his career as he was appointed Medical Officer of Health for Leicestershire and Rutland at the end of 1888.

Turner's wife, Vera, was born in St Petersburg on 31 December 1861. Although Russian-born, she came from a British family. Her father, William Blake Lambert, was a prominent marine engineer who became Engineer-in-Chief to the Imperial Russian Navy during the modernisation period under Tsar Alexander II.

The household also included a Swiss maid, Emma Treudiger. Many Swiss people of the era were multilingual (often German and French, sometimes Italian). Experience in English domestic service could provide strong English skills and cultural knowledge—assets that could later support work in Switzerland's hotel trade.

I also found out about Dr Turner's Australian background: he was one of five sons of a Sydney businessman (also named John Andrew Turner), an auctioneer and trader in wool and hides. The family experienced tragedy in 1870 when Dr. Turner's father died by suicide, after which his widowed mother moved the children to England for schooling, enabling prestigious university paths (Edinburgh, Oxford, and Cambridge).

Anthony Yates

Editorial comment: Anthony gave this fascinating talk to the History and Heritage group at an informal meeting last December.

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT CONSULTATIONS ON THE INTERNET.

<https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk>
This website lists all current consultations hosted by Leicester City Council.

Leicester City Council say "We welcome all feedback - tell us what you think of our services by using our comments, compliments and complaints forms."

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FOUND: Glasses dropped on Church Road pavement near the War memorial on 20th January. Please enquire at the Cedars (Tel: 2739482) if you think they could be yours.

To help raise funds for Friends of Evington's projects including for cleaning and greening Evington Village, and charitable events. Please take bric-a-brac to the Cedars after 12.00noon or telephone 07910431044 or The Cedars 2739482.

Evington Youth Club The Common, Evington, LE5 6EA Tel: 0735 234 4183

<https://www.evingtonyouthclub.com>

Facilities for all, offering a safe and fun space for young people to meet and enjoy themselves. Offers football practice, basketball, chess club, pool and table tennis.

When not in use for youth activities, the club's premises are available for hire. All proceeds from venue hires go directly to supporting the club and its mission.

COUNCILLORS' INFORMATION

The Evington Echo is circulated in Evington Ward, but also parts of Stoneygate Ward and North Evington Ward. Here are details of how you can contact a councillor in your ward.

Evington:

Cllr. Deepak Bajaj 0797 609 6183
Cllr. Jenny Joannou - 0774 276 6461
Cllr. Zuffar Haq - 0774 276 6454

North Evington Ward:

Cllr. Dilip Joshi 0774 276 6456
Cllr. Ravi Mahesh 0774 276 6437
Cllr. Sanjay Modhwadia 0778 492 0818

Stoneygate Ward:

Cllr. Manula Sood (Deceased) (see obituary on page 11)
A by-election will take place on 19th February.
Cllr. Raffiq Moosa Mohammed 0774 276 6430
Cllr. Yasmin Surti 0774 276 6430

Local councillors are elected officials who represent the interests of residents, making key decisions on local services like housing and transport, and a clean, pleasant, workable environment. They act as a bridge between the community and the council.



Cllr. Deepak Bajaj



Cllr. Ravi Mahesh



Cllr. Jenny Joannou



Cllr. Sanjay Modhwadia



Cllr. Zuffar Haq



Cllr. Raffiq Mohammed



Cllr. Dilip Joshi



Cllr. Yasmin Surti

THE CEDARS

The Cedars is a restaurant/bar owned by King Henry's Taverns, located on Main Street, Evington Village that has been in the community for over 40 years and is the only one of the franchise's 6 pubs located in Leicester.

The Cedars has also served as a venue for the various social groups like Rummikub, the Scrabble group and Evington Bloom, (supported by Friends of Evington,) since Evington Park House shut down, as well as a general local centre by the elderly.

In addition to food and drink, the Cedars is soon to offer musical entertainment on weekends, and offers a venue for wakes and parties if booked in advance.

The pub is an integral part of the community, used as a centre by the elderly, and regularly raises money for charity through their Bric-a-Brac sales, which raised £300 to fund the defibrillator, frequently raises money for Sunny Days, and raised £50 for Children In Need.

Ariana

MEETINGS AT EVINGTON VILLAGE HALL LE5 6FA

Attitude 4 Dance

Dance classes for children aged 3 upwards and an adult, ladies only, tap class. All based at Evington Village Hall. For more information contact Nicola on nicfb123@hotmail.co.uk

Evington Garden Club

Meetings are on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at Evington Village Hall from 2.30pm. As usual, visitors are welcome

17th February. Bees. A talk by Peter Bounovic.

17th March. - Scents and Sense Ability. - A talk by Stephen Ashpole.

Further information tel: Merrick on 2705950.

Silver Swans Ballet Classes

Sessions are held on Thursday morning from 9.15am through to 12.45pm. For more information about joining a class, please contact Vanessa 07765 407323. nelliebeeswans@gmail.com www.nelliebeeballet.co.uk

Fun , Fitness and Zumba Dance Exercises

Every Monday 6.30pm to 7.30pm. £3.00 a session.

A Friends of Evington supported event. Tel: 2204525/07910431044. A waiting list may apply. See more information on page 5.

Women's Institute

Humberstone Heights and Belgrave WI. Meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 2.00pm to 4.00pm at Evington Village Hall. You are welcome to come along. For more information about joining contact Barbara on 077 138 04407.

Leicester Recorder Players

Meet at Evington Village Hall on Saturday afternoons 2.30pm - 5.00pm (Twice monthly). Please contact us for more details. Email leicester@srp.org.uk

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Wednesday mornings - warm welcome coffee morning drop ins. 10.00am - 12.00noon.

Tuesday mornings 1000am - 12noon. Toddler time.

Saturday mornings 11.00am - 12.30pm Puzzle Library Play for 8 years and under. Children can enjoy playing with a range of different puzzles.

One day event

February half term. Either 18th or 19th February. Full craft session for children 5+. To confirm the date and times telephone 4540320.

MEETINGS AT ST. DENYS PARISH CENTRE LE5 6FA

Monday Meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays in the month 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Tea and chat.

Lily House Bereavement Support. Tuesday evenings from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. For more information contact 2739714. Please leave your name and phone number and your call will be returned.

Gentle Exercise Group meet weekly on Thursdays from 10.30am to 11.30am. Tel: 07910431044.

EVINGTON LOCAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE GROUP

Venue: St. Denys Parish Centre

Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday in the month from 2.30pm to 4.00pm. £3.00 a session for visitors, includes coffee and tea. £20 a year for members.

Wednesday 11th February. Edwardian Leicester. An illustrated talk by Cynthia Brown.

Wednesday 11th March. Following on from the talk in November about the garden behind Wigston Framework Knitters Museum, we welcome Bill Boulter to tell us about the museum itself.

Wednesday 8th April . Roman Towns of Leicestershire and Rutland. Peter Liddle (previously County Archaeologist).

ST DENYS CHURCH

Every Thursday at 10.00am. Holy Communion with Homily (Book of Common Prayer) or Morning Prayer followed by refreshments.

Sundays at 10.00am. Holy Communion with refreshments in the parish centre afterwards.

Our website is <https://stdenys.org.uk> On this website you can download weekly bulletins. Contact office@stdenys.org.uk Tel: 0780 3 82 8454.

World Language Day

An Evington Echo event Saturday 21st February 10.00am - 2.00pm. Free. Bishop Street Chapel. More information Contact 07817720688 or Editor for this magazine. See page 5.

Heritage Hub

Saturday 21st March at University of Leicester. A date for your diary. Community reporters' training with the Evington Echo and Soar Sound Radio. See page 5.

Beetle Drive in aid of Evington Village Fete and Show. See advert on page 3. Saturday 7th March 3.00pm - 5.30pm.

MEETINGS AT EDEN CAFE LE5 6DN

EDEN'S KNIT AND NATTER GROUP

Tuesdays 12.00 noon at the Eden Café Bar, Main Street. Tel: Linda on 077 587 322.

EVINGTON FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Meetings are at the Eden Café Bar, 11 Main Street, every Wednesday 10.00am to 12.00 noon. Tel: Barbara on 077 138 04407.

THE CEDARS LE5 6DN

RUMMIKUB CLUB

Monday morning 11.00am. Rummikub is a board game. £1.50 includes a tea or coffee and a biscuit.

EVINGTON SOCIAL CLUB

Every Wednesday from 11.00am to 1.00pm at The Cedars, Main Street, Evington. £1.50 with tea, coffee, biscuits provided. Tel: Renuka on 07514 202579.

EVINGTON SCRABBLE GROUP

Every Thursday from 11.00am to 1.00pm at The Cedars, Main Street, Evington. £1.50 with tea, coffee, biscuits provided. Tel: Lesly on 2419096.

GOODWOOD EVANGELICAL CHURCH GAMEL ROAD LE5 6TB

Messy Church - first Sunday of the month 4.00pm to 5.30pm. Craft, music, food and friendship within a Christian church. The Ark for parents, carers and pre-schoolers Wednesdays 9.30am - 11.30am . For all other meetings contact Stephen Taylor on 079 0294 6004. www.goodwoodevangelicalchurch.org.uk

SCRAPTOFT PLAYERS

At The White House Thurnby. Amateur dramatics group looking for more adult members. Rehearsals Thursday evening and some Sunday afternoons. Not for profit and donating to charity. Contact Jude on 07946 414982.

Crown Hills Art Society

For details of their regular meetings, etc. www.crownhillsartsociety.co.uk crownhillsartsociety@gmail.com

BHANGRA CLASSES

Mondays: At Judgemeadow Community College for adults and children.

Saturdays: at Hamilton Community College for adults. Tel: Preet on 07525153284.

NORDIC WALKING

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EVINGTON HOUSE YOGA

at Mayflower Methodist Church, Ethel Road, LE5 5ND

Mondays 6.00 - 7.00pm with Manjula (Ladies). Wednesday 6.00 - 7.00pm (Ladies). See advert on page 8.

Tel: Manjula on 07448 732696.

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