

As this is my first article of 2023 can I start my wishing everyone a happy New Year! I appreciate that was some weeks ago now, but with two young children at home and a front room which still hasn't fully recovered from Santa's visit (the boys consistently thwart my efforts to keep the place tidy), the festive season has certainly left its mark in my house! Whatever you did over the Christmas period, I hope you had a great one.

Council asks people to think about fostering

Do something amazing and make a New Year resolution to find out about fostering. That's the call from Leicestershire County Council, which is urging people to take the first steps to find out more about fostering in 2023.

Anyone who has ever, even fleetingly, thought about fostering, is encouraged to get in touch or check out the authority's useful resources, to see if fostering could be a path for them. Make those first steps and just find out a little more about fostering, whether that be through your own research on the website (<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/fostering>), attending one of the 'Find out about fostering' events (<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/fostering/find-out-about-fostering-events>), or giving the team a call or message to chat through all things fostering. Whatever your gender, race, sexuality, living arrangements, age, and employment status, they want to hear from you.

The county council also has some useful resources on its website and social media to help people understand more about fostering and the commitment of a foster carer. From busting myths to providing important information from the team and current foster carers, there's a lot of bitesize, digestible information for those just beginning to think about fostering.

Free three day pass on offer for Charnwood's leisure centres following £1 million investment works

People are being invited to try out Charnwood's leisure centres following the completion of £1 million investment into improvement works. Charnwood Borough Council and its leisure partner Fusion Lifestyle have completed a range of improvements at Loughborough, Soar Valley and South Charnwood leisure centres.

To give everyone a chance to try out the new state-of-the-art facilities and get their fitness journey started, Fusion is offering a free three-day pass to each of the centres. The three sites have received significant investment in new gym equipment including Life Fitness cardio machines with built in TVs, virtual outdoor runs and games with Apple watch connectivity. All three centres in the borough also have new gym layouts, lighting and flooring. In addition, a further £150,000 has been invested in LED lighting across the three sites to help reduce carbon emissions.

To claim a free three-day pass, all people have to do is visit the Fusion website: <https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/offers/free-pass/> and register their details.

Loughborough Town Deal confirms £669,000 to improve lanes and links and create iconic Covid memorial

A project to better connect Loughborough's award-winning Queen's Park with the town centre and create an iconic Covid memorial has been given the green light by Loughborough Town Deal. The Town Deal Board has confirmed £669,000 of funding to support the Lanes and Links project which includes the Hope Bell, a lasting memorial to those who lost their lives in the Covid-19 pandemic. The bell will also be a tribute to the NHS and key workers and a reminder of how communities came together to support each other in challenging times. The Hope Bell builds on Loughborough's unique place in the heritage world as it is home to the last major bell foundry in the country – John Taylor & Co.

The Hope Bell will see the creation of a clock chime installation comprising four quarter chime bells and the Hope Bell to sound the hours. The main Hope Bell will weigh over a ton and measure 4ft 4in in diameter. The structure supporting the bells will be made of metal with a stone base but the final decision on materials has yet to be decided. Planning permission will also be required.

If you need my help with anything please do get in touch.

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