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Special 16-page pull-out inside today

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Feature – pages 28-29

Pubs and restaurants prepare for safe return

Hospitality sector gears up for July 4 reopening

WEST Berkshire's pubs, hotels and restaurants are working round the clock to ensure they can open their doors on July 4, following the Government's latest announcement on lockdown easing.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Boris Johnson gave the green light for the hospitality sector to start welcoming people back from next week, providing appropriate safety measures are in place.

Pete Lumber, from The Newbury pub in Bartholomew Street, welcomed the Government's latest announcement and said he was now busy preparing to reopen under the new guidelines.

Perspex screens are being hung from the ceiling over the bar and between tables, which has allowed him to keep most of his seating as it was and still ensure all customers are safe.

"Our customer and staff safety is paramount to me," he said. "It is about people coming in here and feeling safe."

"We are not back to normal yet and all the businesses in Newbury have got big challenges ahead of them."

"We need people to support our local independents and the town will flourish; something good could come out of

Report by SARAH BOSLEY AND DAN COOPER
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all of this."

When The Newbury opens it will be table service only and all waiting staff will be wearing visors.

There are foot-pedal sanitiser units at the door, outside the toilets and kitchens and a more casual menu is being introduced, as well as gin tasting boards and pre-mixed cocktails.

Ed Turner, the owner of The Dolphin in Newbury, said he was delighted by the Government announcement, having previously called on it to provide greater clarity over social distancing rules.

And he said he was pleased his concerns had been addressed, adding: "I'm really pleased the scientists think one metre plus is going to be a safe distance and I'm delighted the Government recognise pubs and restaurants are a much safer environment."

"Staff are very excited to get back and we can't wait to welcome our loyal customers again."

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One of the children taking part in the Jubilee Nursery sports day

Ref: 26-0720W

Sports day back up and running

READY, set... go!

It was all fun and games at Jubilee Day Nursery in Padworth Common on Tuesday as the children celebrated a socially-distanced sports day.

The pre-school children and their parents took part in traditional races, including an egg and spoon race, an obstacle course and running races.

The children had plenty of fun preparing for the event the week before by practicing the races in their bubble group.

The event was held outside and adapted to ensure the children, staff and parents remained safe amidst the coronavirus pandemic.

Jubilee Day Nursery deputy manager

Emma Hirst said: "It was a lovely opportunity to spend the time together on a warm and sunny day, giving the children and parents the most wonderful sports day to remember."

"It has been brilliant allowing the children to organise and practice the activities they wanted to take part in during sports day. They had plenty of fun practicing egg and spoon races and showing their competitive side while racing around our paddock area."

"We were delighted we could still go ahead with the event under the circumstances and would like to say a huge well done to all of the children who took part."

■ More pictures on page 5

Court hears of 'senseless killing' of police officer in line of duty

POLICE officer Andrew Harper "died in the line of duty" in "truly shocking circumstances", a jury has heard.

Pc Harper, 28, was dragged more than a mile down a West Berkshire country lane, "swung from side to side like a pendulum in an effort to dislodge him" after his ankle got caught in a strap attached to a vehicle.

The young officer had been responding to reports of a burglary in Bradfield Southend on the night of August 15 last year.

The court heard that Pc Harper and colleague Pc Andrew Shaw encountered a vehicle described in the burglary, being driven by Henry Long, 19, from Mortimer.

He was accompanied by Albert Bowers, 18, from Mortimer, and Jessie Cole, 18 from Aldermaston.

Long denies murdering Pc Harper, but has pleaded guilty to manslaughter and conspiracy to steal a quadbike.

Bowers and Cole deny murder and manslaughter, but have admitted conspiracy to steal.

A trial into Pc Harper's death opened earlier this year, but had to be abandoned following lockdown and after three jurors went into self-isolation.

Addressing the Old Bailey at the start of a new trial, Jonathan Laidlaw QC said the incident was "a senseless killing of a young police officer in the line of duty; a young man who was doing no more than his job".

The court heard that the two officers were heading back to their base station at Abingdon to end their shift when the burglary call came through.

"Despite it being well beyond the end of their shift, because they were close and thought they could help, they responded to the call," Mr Laidlaw said.

"Going beyond the call of duty, as it were, would cost Andrew Harper his life."

The officers turned in Lambdens Hill in Beenham and then into Admoor Lane, where they encountered a Seat Toledo being driven by Long with Bowers in the front passenger seat.

Cole was riding a stolen quadbike being towed by the Seat on a strap that had been looped around the handlebars.

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