

THATCHAM

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Council Dying Matters awareness campaign

THATCHAM Town Council will be hosting a free information session on Saturday for residents to talk more openly about death.

The session will be hosted by Thattham Town Council's cemetery officer, Stacey Clarke, from 10am to noon, at the London Road cemetery chapel.

Dying Matters Week is a national awareness campaign that encourages communities to talk more about the end of life.

It helps people make informed choices and support one another.

As part of the week, the council will be holding an open Q&A session to help residents explore important questions around death, dying and planning for the future.

The session will offer a safe, supportive space for anyone who has questions they've never felt able to ask, whether about their own wishes or those of a loved one.

Gas cylinders blaze

A GARDEN fire was started in Thattham by propane cylinders which spread on to a fence, hedge and the shed of neighbouring properties.

At 8.29pm on Wednesday, April 29, a fire was reported on Meadow Close.

Upon arrival, crews found a garden fire involving two propane cylinders.

Firefighters wearing breathing apparatus used two hose reels to put out the fire and cool the propane cylinders to a safe temperature.

They were on scene for one hour and 21 minutes.

Sophie's salon offers 'something different'

Hairdresser wants her new business to be a 'cool space'

A HAIRDRESSER has opened her own salon in the hope of offering "something different" to the residents of Thattham.

Owner of Sophie & Co, Sophie Nixon, 30, opened on Thattham's Broadway for the first time on April 7 – less than a month after receiving the keys to the new premises.

In just under four weeks, Miss Nixon and her team transformed what was previously a charity shop into a salon, with a separate beautician room and kitchen.

"We ripped down walls, built walls, new plumbing and electrics; the whole place has been re-wired, we've completely transformed it," she said.

Miss Nixon hopes she can bring new 'experiences' for customers.

"A lot of people have said 'Oh, another salon in Thattham', but I want to be different to everyone else," she said.

"People say stay in your lane, but I am in everyone's lane – I'm not here to steal clients, I want to give more of an experience."

"There isn't another salon that looks like this round here, and that's what I pride myself on being, that little bit extra."

Hairstylist and owner Miss Nixon has been in the profession since the age of 13: "I've just worked myself up, from working inside a salon, then I've just gone through the ranks."

"I was a Saturday girl, then apprentice, I had my daughter,



Sophie Nixon outside her new salon

Ref: 16-1326A

then went self-employed five years ago," she said.

Miss Nixon started out by renting a room at the Hair and Beauty Barn in Midgham, where she worked for five years, but said she "just wanted more".

She said the push to finally open her own salon was when she had her daughter: "I needed the flexibility, but when you're working for someone else, you get such a small percentage and you have to do what you're told... I'm not very good at that."

"I'm not very calm, but I like my environment calm and welcoming."

"That's why there's calming col-

ours; I wanted it to be a cool space, not dark and dingy."

"Everyone's life is so crazy. When someone comes here I just want both me and them to breathe."

Miss Nixon's business was previously named Sophie Nixon Styling before being re-branded for the new building, as Miss Nixon said she wanted to involve her 'co'.

Her 'co' is made up of eight employees including apprentice Jess, a beautician and five women who rent a chair in the space.

"She is literally my right hand man," says Miss Nixon about apprentice Jess, who is a finalist for Trainee of the Year at the Hair and Beauty Awards.

Sophie & Co are also in the running at the awards for Best New Salon and Hairstylist of the Year – and having come 15th in previous years, Miss Nixon has high hopes.

For now however, her focus remains on building the business and bringing back loyal customers.

"I just want to enjoy it right now, and thrive off how happy I am and everyone else is," she said.

"You don't want to get too ahead of yourself, but that would be the dream to have multiple Sophie & Co's, but right now I'm happy being in my bubble of happiness."

"This place is just everything to me."



Sophie inside her salon on Broadway

Ref: 6-1326F

Proposals submitted for wellbeing facilities

A NEW health and well-being facility has taken a step forward with a planning application now submitted for a purpose-built hydrotherapy pool in Thattham.

The project, led by the West Berkshire Therapy Centre charity, will create a warm-water hydrotherapy pool alongside an expanded rehabilitation gym.

Trustee and project lead John Holt said: "This is something that, for many years, the local community has been asking us to deliver."

"When the hydrotherapy pool at the Royal Berkshire Hospital closed, a vital service was lost."

"Our aim is to restore that provision locally, while making it more accessible, more efficient, and available to far more people."

The development will also include expanded rehabilitation gym facilities, new jobs and volunteering opportunities and environmental features such as solar panels, heat pumps and extensive landscaping, including planning for 70 new trees.

The proposed development will be located next to the existing therapy centre at Frank Hutchings Hall, off Harts Hill Road.

Residents are now being invited to learn more at two public consultation events at the Thattham Town Council offices in Brownsfield Road, on Wednesday, May 13, and Monday, May 18, from 4pm until 8pm.

All welcome at mayor making

ALL are welcome to attend Thattham's mayor making ceremony this Sunday at Frank Hutchings Community Hall.

Doors will be open from 2.30pm, with the ceremony beginning at 3pm to welcome and vote in the town's new mayor.

The town will also be saying goodbye and thank you to current mayor councillor Petra Pemberton.

Warm welcome for URC minister



The Rev Stephen Ansa-Addo with mayor Petra Pemberton

A NEW minister has been warmly welcomed into Thattham's community.

The induction of the Rev Stephen Ansa-Addo as minister at Thattham United Reformed Church on Church Lane took place on Sunday, April 19, at 3pm.

The Rev Dr Michael Hopkins, moderator of Wessex Synod, presided over the service and the preacher was the Rev Dr John M Campbell, minister at Mr Ansa-Addo's former church in East London, which he attended before he was ordained in 2020.

Attendees said: "It was an amazing afternoon of celebration with a packed church raising the roof with enthusiastic singing."

A welcome to Thattham was given by other members of Thattham clergy, Churches Together in Thattham and Thattham mayor

Petra Pemberton, along with councillor Justin Pemberton, who greeted Mr Ansa-Addo on behalf of the town.

The church's festival choir sung a blessing to Mr Ansa-Addo before he led the final prayer.

Thattham makes the third church that Mr Ansa-Addo is in pastoral charge of, alongside Hungerford and Park (Reading) URCs, and the three churches are now formally recognised as a 'cluster'.

The new change for the church follows the internal decoration last year.

It was an amazing afternoon of celebration with a packed church raising the roof with enthusiastic singing



The induction of the Rev Stephen Ansa-Addo saw a packed church on April 19