

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

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www.bell-tower.org.uk



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Open evening for new secondary school



Work is continuing on a new secondary school, River Academy, in Richfield Avenue on the site next to Cow Lane. At the time of writing the foundations appeared to be complete and construction of the buildings had started. When full, River Academy will cater for 1500 students between the ages of 11 and 18, of all abilities and backgrounds. The new school will be part of the Maiden Erlegh Trust and is expected to open for Year 7 students in autumn 2024.

Parents of prospective students are invited to an open evening



on Wednesday 20 September. As the new school is still under construction this event will be held at the new Rivermead Leisure Complex. It will be a chance to hear from the headteacher and staff about what River Academy has to offer its students. The event will take place between 5.00pm and 7.30pm, with presentations from the headteacher at 5.15pm and 6.45pm. To attend this open evening please fill in the online registration form in advance by scanning the QR code or at bit.ly/3NNaeTq.

David Neale

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News in brief

- Reading Borough Council is looking for feedback on its proposed electric vehicle charging strategy. For more information and to have your say please visit <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/evcistrategy>.
- Bell Tower's 'G Team' has been kept busy, clearing plenty of graffiti in the local area. If you spot any graffiti in the area that we have missed please contact us at info@bell-tower.org.uk.



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Changing lives through music



MUSIC FOR ALL: Some of the many activities organised by Readipop (Photos: Readipop)

Our area is a popular place to live because of its convenient location, but in addition to the town centre, Caversham, the Thames Path and railway station we are also close to a venue where anyone can go to make music.

Readipop is a local charity based at 15 Trafford Road, within the industrial estate. Its aim is to foster community access to music making. This covers all age ranges and abilities.

Accessible to all

For over 50s Readipop offers a weekly juke box jam session, which is ukelele-oriented but to which people can bring their own instruments.

For those interested in percussion there are two drumming sessions, both focused on African drumming. One is Room for Rhythm, a weekly drumming group for adults, exploring rhythm and sound using a variety of instruments. The other is Tankata Learn, developing and rehearsing African rhythms played on a mix of traditional drums and percussion. This is an informal workshop leading to opportunities to perform at local events. Complete beginners are welcome, and drums are provided.

I am participating in Room for Rhythm myself, simply because drumming is so far outside my comfort zone due to poor coordination and lack of rhythm. The course is relaxed and makes participants feel free to challenge

themselves. I am enjoying it and feel much more confident about drumming as well as improving my coordination and sense of rhythm.

Readipop also organises monthly family jams, the intention of which is for children and adults to experience and learn to play music together.

There for young people

One of the charity's focuses is on developing creativity and originality among young people. It specialises in working with socially excluded young people to help them find their own musical voice. "Music and Readipop are the only thing that's bringing me joy right now", a participant is quoted as saying.

It also provides one-on-one mentoring for those sent by pupil referral units, the young offenders service and other children's services. The charity also provides one-week intensive music courses for those aged 16-25 who are not in education, employment or training. Courses are supported by the Prince's Trust.

Readipop also has its own record label, Riser, which is a non-profit platform for new music and artists. "I feel like a superstar when everyone comes and listens to my tracks", a participant told the charity. More prominently, it organises its well-known festival in Reading every July.

Readipop: www.readipop.co.uk, email: office@readipop.co.uk, tel: 0118 327 2442.

Jonathan Dart



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