

Man fined £150 for kicking police van

A MAN who kicked and punched the inside of a police van after being arrested has been ordered to pay costs. Magistrates heard police were called to a fight involving 25-year-old Lee Read from Mountain Road, Wellingborough, on June 23.

Prosecuting, Stella Moses said: "Read became aggressive when he was arrested and was telling them that he had only been defending himself.

"Police noticed him leaning back and kicking the windows, they then pulled him out of the van and restrained him." Police found that a section of the van door had buckled during the incident involving Read. He pleaded guilty to damaging a police vehicle at Wellingborough Magistrates Court.

He was ordered to pay £250 costs, including £150 compensation towards the repair of the van.

Getting crafty

A VARIETY of presents and bargains will be on offer at a two-day craft and gift sale taking place next month.

The event, organised by Kettering Operatic Society, is being held in the grounds of Cranford Hall on Saturday, September 4, and Sunday, September 5.

The fair will run from 10am until 5pm on both days.

Admission is £3.50 for adults, £3 for pensioners and £2.50 for children aged between four and 12 years old.

A family ticket costs £9.

Car parking is free.

Music memorabilia

A MUSIC memorabilia and record fair takes place next month.

The event, on September 4, is at the Parish Rooms in Market Place, Kettering.

The fair will include a range of vinyl, CDs, DVDs, tapes and different collectable items.

The fair runs from 9am until 4pm.

Admission is free.

There is also another record at the same location on October 2.

Short mat bowls

KEEN bowlers are welcome to go along to regular short mat bowls sessions held at a community centre in Wellingborough.

Players are welcome on Mondays and Fridays from 2pm to 4pm, and Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am until midday at the Victoria Centre, Palk Road. For more details call the centre on 01933 277400.

Town issues

RESIDENTS are invited to a town council meeting taking place tonight.

Burton Latimer Town Council will meet at the council offices to discuss issues affecting the town.

The meeting starts at 7pm. For more information call the secretary on 01536 743219.

Touch of the blues

BLUES performer Bex Marshall will be headlining the Finedon Sessions at Finedon Community Centre on Friday, August 6, from 9pm. Call Phil Wilton on 01933 398377 for tickets.

Market place 'hazard' for visually-impaired

By Clive Whittingham

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THE design of Kettering's new Market Place development has been criticised by charities representing people with visual impairments.

The Guide Dogs Association has raised eight specific concerns with the layout and Northamptonshire Association for the Blind says its members face huge problems when walking through it.

Kettering Council has defended the design, pointing to the numerous awards the development has received recently.

Hugh Spence, a visually impaired 18-year-old who volunteers with the Association for the Blind in Kettering, said: "The thing I find difficult is that the tramline design on the ground, which visually impaired people would follow, leads directly into trees and the water.

"My big problem is I cannot judge depth, so I would come along here and without handrails to warn and guide me would see it as all one level."

Stefanie Davies from the Northamptonshire Association for the Blind said: "The council has a responsibility for the safety of all people in the borough. I cannot think of one good thing about it from the point of view of a visually impaired person."

Concern has also been expressed that plans to have traffic and pedestrians sharing space in the second half of the development could prove hazardous.

Graham Kensett, from the Guide Dogs Association, said: "The area has a number of other features – tapering ramps, irregular step heights and as-

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sociated seating and a recesses water feature – which could be hazardous to people with low vision.

"Added to that, pedestrians and vehicles are expected to "share" the access road to the church car park. There is very little space and a real risk that in moving aside for vehicles, blind and partially-sighted or mobility-impaired pedestrians may trip down the steps.

"We would strongly recommend that the route is either pedestrianised or designated a vehicular only route – not both."

Kettering Council refused to address the eight individual concerns raised by campaigners, but did defend the design of Market Place.

A spokesman said: "A conscious decision was taken to create an open space that is flexible and usable for a variety of uses and events.

"To achieve this it was important to minimize impediments such as handrails to allow the most flexible use the area and to maintain the simplicity of the design, while ensuring the project met safety audit standards.

"The Market Place has been recognised as a design of the highest quality and has achieved a number of notable awards.

"Kettering Council is working with stakeholders, including Guide Dogs, to ensure that future public realm projects in the borough continue to deliver high quality design that benefit the whole community."

The association's concerns

- 1 Lack of textured paving or warning around trees, blind people's white sticks can become caught in the grate.
- 2 Steps have no guide rails.
- 3 Steps merge into deeper seats with no barrier or guide rail between them.
- 4 Ramp merges into steps with no warning or textured paving.
- 5 No barrier or guide on the floor warning of the water feature.

Tramlines on the ground actually lead into it.

6 Shiny metal staples designed to stop skateboarders can become slippery and shine into people's eyes.

7 Deep seats may be mistaken for steps by guide dogs who lead their owners up them.

8 Planters and other street furniture obstruct walkways.

UNHELPFUL – Hugh Spence tries to negotiate the Market Place in Kettering

ET pictures by Kit Mallin: 28-07-10-km 6-01 to 08

