

# From Westside to Westminster

## **BID director Saqib wins Meriden for the Conservatives**

By Steve Dyson

One of the leading directors of Westside Business Improvement District (BID) is taking on a new national political role after winning a seat in the general election.

Saqib Bhatti, a director and company secretary of the BID for the last seven years, will now be taking a seat in Westminster as the new Conservative MP for Meriden.



■ Saqib Bhatti

Speaking exclusively to Westside World, Saqib said: "I will never forget my time with Westside BID, and I will follow its progress closely."

"Along with my role at Birmingham Chamber, my time at the BID has given me the opportunity to champion businesses in the area, to tackle and help resolve various problems, and to understand just how important it is to accurately reflect the views of members."

"The constituency I now serve is Meriden, and so it will be important for me to put most of my efforts into representing the voters from that constituency. I will be using my experience from Westside to help support the residents and businesses in Meriden."

It was Saqib's job as an accountant at his father's company, Younis Bhatti & Co Ltd, based at 93 Broad

**Turn to page 2**



■ Birmingham comedy legend Jasper Carrott meets his namesake outside Birmingham Town Hall.

## Jasper honour is on the right track

Brummie comedy legend Jasper Carrott is used to seeing his name put up in lights – but not on the front of a tram!

However, Jasper got to

enjoy this novel sight last month when one of the West Midlands Metro's trams was named in his honour.

The naming ceremony took place to mark the latest Metro

extension from Grand Central to Centenary Square, which is due to be carrying passengers onto Westside starting this month.

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# Proud and loud about our district

**By Mike Olley**  
Westside BID general manager

Welcome to the Christmas edition of Westside World. We're proud of individuals who play such a big part in our BID. People like Jasper Carrott, who chairs Broad Street's Walk of Stars committee. It's great to see a tram named after him, along with news that the West Midlands Metro has finally reached Westside.

We're also thrilled to see Saqib Bhatti heading to Westminster after years of dedicated service on the BID's board.

But one of the most important stories for me is the flood compensation meeting you can read about on page 11. Why? Because we covered the flood chaos in our last edition and committed ourselves to helping businesses get something done about it. Thanks to our help several claims are now in the system and due to be paid.

That's what Westside World is all about: shouting loud about the great people and events in our area, and always sticking up for members.

Merry Christmas!

**WEST SIDE World**  
BIRMINGHAM

Published on behalf of Westside BID, the Business Improvement District is constantly working towards creating a more attractive, better marketed, brighter, safer and cleaner business environment in Birmingham's Westside entertainment area. Westside BID was voted in by 350 businesses in the area in August 2015, with a 99.75% yes vote (the best in the UK). Westside BID is based at Quayside Tower, 252-260 Broad Street, B1 2HF.

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■ Conservative candidate Saqib Bhatti with his supporters out on the campaign trail in Meriden.

# Saqib vowing to be BID champion

## From page 1

Street, that prompted him to get involved with Westside BID.

During his time serving on Westside BID, Saqib has helped to support and promote numerous projects, most recently the extension of the West Midlands Metro tram and the redevelopment of Centenary Square.

"The Westside BID will always hold a special place in my heart, and I'm determined as an MP to champion the wider interests of business improvement districts across the Midlands and UK."

Saqib's father, Younis Bhatti, said: "I have proudly spent over

Commerce, where he has served as president since last October.

Saqib added: "Younis Bhatti & Co believes in the value of Westside BID and will continue to serve it in every way they can.

"Saqib has worked incredibly hard and as a family we are very proud. Westside BID was a great experience for him in dealing with various stakeholders, and these are all experiences that he will use going forward."

His work on the BID also helped him to progress up the ranks at the Greater Birmingham Chambers of



■ Spandau Ballet star Martin Kemp (centre) with The Notebenders outside Birmingham Symphony Hall.

# Martin peeks through the barricades

Rock star and actor Martin Kemp was given a VIP tour of Symphony Hall's £13.2 million redevelopment ahead of his appearance at the venue next year.

The legendary Spandau Ballet bassist, who also once starred in BBC's EastEnders, is taking part in the Big Band Broadway on 16 February.

On his visit Martin was joined by Birmingham community big

band The Notebenders, one of many local community groups which will benefit from the new performance space.

The Big Band Broadway on Sunday 16 February 2020 will see Martin and his wife Shirlie Kemp – who found fame in the 1980s with Wham! – joined by legendary Broadway music-man Larry Blank and the London Concert Orchestra.

Audiences will enjoy a

20 years on Broad Street and the BID has been an integral part of our business life.

"I'm proud of the work we've done with the BID and as a company we'll continue to proudly serve both it and local area.

"Saqib has worked incredibly hard and as a family we are very proud. Westside BID was a great experience for him in dealing with various stakeholders, and these are all experiences that he will use going forward."

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But seriously, having a tram named after you is an honour, especially when it is all tied up with Birmingham and the West Midlands where I was born and bred."

Jasper is the latest celebrity to have a tram named after them following rocker Ozzy Osborne and the late football star Cyrille Regis.

Alejandro Moreno, director of the Midlands Metro Alliance which is constructing the Birmingham tram extensions, said: "We share a real pride in delivering such a transformative tram extension for the city and we are all excited about this month's opening."

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# Hero warden Enoch to the rescue... AGAIN!

**By Tony Collins**

A courageous Westside warden has again proved his value to the BID businesses in and around Broad Street.

Enoch White featured in the Autumn edition of Westside World after bravely refusing to hand over his pizza to a gunman who threatened to shoot him.

He has now helped police arrest a would-be coach hijacker who climbed into the driver's seat of the single-decker vehicle in Broad Street shortly after midnight on 2 November.

Enoch said he was on street patrol in the vicinity of Pure Gym and the Park Regis Hotel when two coaches pulled up into the bus stop.

He said: "The one driver directed the second coach to park but then called me over to say that a group of lads were giving him trouble as they pulled up.

"At this point, as the driver was helping to back up the first coach, one of the lads climbed into the driver's seat.

"The driver shouted at him to get

## Brave Westside warden Enoch defies threat of gunman in car

**By Tony Collins**

Westside warden Enoch White was determined to enjoy a pizza he'd just bought for his late-night break – even when a gunman demanded he hand it over. Enoch and a colleague were walking along Broad Street when a car suddenly pulled up and the driver pointed a gun at him through the open window. But when the gunman demanded the pizza that Enoch, aged 62, had just collected from Pit Stop in Broad Street, the warden calmly replied "hell no". The terrifying drama happened before

■ Flashback: Enoch White on the front of the Autumn edition.

out, at which point the lad jumped out. But the driver was left pretty shaken as there were five or six lads in the area."

He kept City Watch informed as he maintained a view of the youths as they passed down Broad Street.

Enoch said he looked around and spotted a group of males hanging around near the coaches, so he alerted City Watch and gave them a description.

Row Middleway, but after a few minutes City Watch said the police had stopped the lads and wanted me to identify them.

"I escorted the driver towards Cineworld where two lads were being held by officers, but the driver said they weren't involved," he added.

"Police then caught more in Euro Car Park and I again escorted the driver there who confirmed one lad was the one trying to drive the coach."

A spokesman for West Midlands Police said: "Officers were called to reports of four men trying to take a coach in Birmingham city centre at around 11.50 on November 1.

"They fled without the vehicle.

"Anyone with information is asked to contact police via Live Chat between 8am and midnight, at west-midlands.police.uk or via 101. Quote 2818 of 1 November."

Westside BID general manager Mike Olley said: "This incident again illustrates the important role of our wardens in protecting BID businesses and keeping the people of Birmingham safe."



WINTER WONDERS

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WINTER WONDERS

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## Enjoy the winter Blues at Henry's



■ The Nitecrawlers are coming to Henry's.

Music lovers have plenty to look forward to at Henry's Blueshouse at The Bull's Head over the next few weeks.

Tuesdays are Bluesdays for Henry's, of course, and with that day of the week in mind here's the line-up:

- 17 December, The Shufflepack, free entry to the show;
- 24 December, The Nitecrawlers, £10;
- 31 December, Tipitina, £10;
- 7 January, artist still to be confirmed, free;
- 14 January, Big Jim & The Alabama Boogie Boys, free;
- 21 January, David Moore Blues Band, free;
- 28 January, Gianni Tbay (from Italy), free;
- 4 February, The 58s Blues Band, free.



■ WM presenter Tom Marlow and, inset top, Harriette Luscombe (right) with attendees and, below, Tom with Raj Singh and Rose Rees.

# Football networking? The boy done good...

**By Tony Collins**

It had all the excitement of a top-notch football match – but without any of the controversy associated with the use of video assistant referees.

A networking event with a difference was organised by Westside BID for its members using a football theme.

BBC WM sports presenter Tom Marlow compered the event on 31 October, which was held at Gin Vault, on Canal Edge, off Gas Street.

And it even lasted 90 minutes – the regular length of a football match before VAR was involved.

"I went round as they were networking to interview the nominated group captains on how it was

going, what they were learning about other team members, and how they might work together on future events."

Tom added that after the 'half-time' break, delegates were split into two teams and given five questions each about Broad Street in a 'penalty shoot-out'.

He added: "They all know a lot about their area because both teams scored four out of five, so we had a sudden death of three further questions before getting a winner."

"It was a thoroughly enjoyable football-themed event, and we managed to steer well clear of VAR."

Luisa Huggins, BID operations manager, said: "We're committed to supporting our members by enhancing business links but realise networking can be dull, so we came up with an event with a twist."

"The football theme made it engaging and fun as opposed to the conventional style of networking, and the result was more people engaging, exchanging business details and learning things about other unique businesses across Westside."

The BID team provided complimentary food and worked closely with O Bar and Gin Vault on Broad Street to organise the event.

## It's business as usual at Le Bistrot Pierre

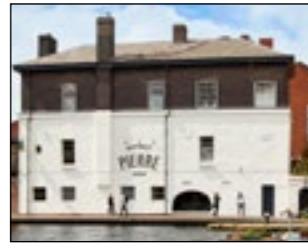
It is business as usual for French restaurant Le Bistrot Pierre despite the building housing the established eatery being put up for sale.

The restaurant is situated in Gas Street, in one of Birmingham's most historic

buildings, formerly serving as the headquarters of the Birmingham Canal Company.

The building has now been put on the market for a reported £1.75 million, with the freehold of the property being up for sale.

Emma Lester, general manager of Le Bistrot Pierre in the city, said: "We'd like to reassure customers that Bistrot Pierre remains unaffected by the sale of the building. We look forward to another busy Christmas in Birmingham."



■ Gas Street's Le Bistrot Pierre.

# Hoteliers call for more say over city's future



■ Members of the Birmingham Hoteliers' Association meeting in the city centre to coordinate a single voice for the local hotel industry.



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**Bottega Birmingham**  
Unit 1, Arena Birmingham, King Edwards Road, Birmingham, B1 2AA

By Tony Collins

A new hotel leaders' networking group in Birmingham is demanding greater consultation when it comes to future decisions that affect their businesses.

The Birmingham Hoteliers' Association is made up of around 25 hotels across the city, including all those within the Westside BID area.

John Angus, managing director of the Park Regis hotel at the top of Broad Street, is chair of the association, whose members employ around 5,000 people and have more than 1,500 bedrooms across the city.

The combined group of general managers has now come together to provide one coordinated voice for the city's hotels.

Mr Angus said: "When I came to the city, it was clear the city's hotels did not have a joined up strategy and were not recognised for consultation on major issues.

"We've now come together to ensure all hotels have a voice and to make it easier for various authorities to consult with one group representing the majority of the city.

"A number of authorities are responsible for key decisions that affect all of our hotels, including the four city BIDs, West Midlands Growth Company and Birmingham City Council. We have agreed to have a member of our Association on the boards of as many relevant authorities as possible.

"We already have a member on Westside BID's board who reports



■ Association chair John Angus.

back to us each month, and we're striving to be recognised as the route to consult the city's hotels."

Mr Angus, who worked in London and across the UK before taking over the Park Regis in April, said each authority now regularly attends the hoteliers' meetings.

Westside BID has attended two meetings to date and the West Midlands Growth Company gave a presentation at the last meeting.

Mr Angus added: "Best practice is shared among the hotels and managers now communicate with each other on a regular basis.

"Our main objectives are to be part of the new tourism strategy that we haven't been consulted on and to encourage the city council to provide greater support, in the light of current cuts, to West Midland Growth Company when we have major events."

The Birmingham Hoteliers' Association meets on the last Thursday of every month at different hotels across the city.

# Offering the homeless a helping hand



■ PCSO Harry Qureshi (left) and Westside warden Dimitrios Mitropoulos on patrol and (above) PCSO Dave Shipley offers help.

al of winter. The first two patrols involved warden Dimitrios Mitropoulos and two PCSOs in October, when a total of 11 homeless people were identified and offered support and guidance.

A few of the individuals accepted the offer of a shelter through homeless charity Street Link, which Westside BID works closely with.

The patrols, which began in October, came about after wardens noticed a recent increase in the number of homeless people sleeping in and around the area's car parks.

Concern over the situation has grown as night-time temperatures start to drop with the arriv-

Dimitrios, aged 26, who has been a warden for just three months, said the patrols began because wardens and Westside members reported an increase in begging and rough sleeping around the car parks in the area.

He said: "It has become more of a problem due to the cold weather, so we want to try to get as many rough sleepers off the street as we can by directing them to shelters.

"The patrols focus on the five main car parks in the area, including Arena North and South West and Euro Car Park, but we also engage with any rough sleepers

we come across during our normal street patrols.

"Just like with the car parks, we approach them and offer them help."

The scheme has not only helped homeless people, but has also enabled members of the public to feel safer when travelling around the area. Patrols will continue to take place on a weekly basis.

Westside BID general manager Mike Olley said: "We're proud of our street wardens who are working with the police to reduce begging and offer any rough sleepers a roof over their heads."

# New site is golden for Alchemist

By Luisa Huggins

More than 50 jobs were created when the latest Alchemist cocktail bar and restaurant opened on Brindley Place earlier this year.

The new venue on The Water's Edge follows the success of the premium food, drink and music venue elsewhere in the city, including the popular Colmore Row branch.

John Paul, senior general manager of the Alchemist in both Colmore Row and Brindley Place, said: "During the three years since we opened in Colmore Row, we've been nominated for multiple awards and so wanted to create another venue in Brindley Place



■ New Alchemist staff members Tomi Jzekely, Emily Johnson and Billy White get to work.

for the partygoing customers. The Brindley Place site opened this summer creating 55 jobs and has proven to be a great addition to the bars and restaurants currently existing in the area."

The Alchemist is well known for the creative presentation of its drinks with smoke rising from the glasses and fire displays while making tropical cocktails.

Mr Paul added: "We have something to offer for everyone! The Colmore Row site was originally a more corporate venue and popular among workers in the city.

"However the Brindley Place branch wants to differentiate itself from that by being a premium location for a night out.

"We have a big, gold-plated masterclass table in the middle of the venue and a stage area for a DJ on a Saturday and live music on Sundays," he added.



■ John Paul, of The Alchemist.



**Hey, Sabbath fans – don't get  
PARANOID  
...the bench will be back!**

**By Steve Dyson**

The heavy metal bench which was installed on the newly-named Black Sabbath Bridge on Broad Street back in June has quickly become a new mecca for tourists and rock fans.

Thousands of visitors have enjoyed having their pictures taken sitting on the new bench, which pays tribute to Tony Iommi, Geezer Butler, Ozzy Osbourne and Bill Ward, the city's legendary heavy rockers.

Many of these images have since been posted, liked, retweeted and shared across Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, and we've used just a few of them here.

But what's happened to the bench since 10 October, when workers in hard helmets and yellow jackets were seen using a crane and lorry to remove it?

***Don't get 'Paranoid', it hasn't simply disappeared 'Into The Void'!***

We want to reassure Westside BID members and the general public the missing bench

■ The Black Sabbath bench is carried away by a lorry and (above right) rock legends Geezer Butler and Tony Iommi at the grand unveiling in Broad Street in June 2019.

is only taking a temporary absence while the West Midlands Metro tram extension works take place.

Westside BID is now safely storing the iconic bench in a secret warehouse in an inner city suburb, and it will be returned to the Black Sabbath Bridge once all the tram works have been completed.

Mike Olley, general manager of Westside

BID, said: "Our Black Sabbath events in the summer brought unbelievable media coverage to the area, with press teams visiting from as far away as South America.

"When the bench returns, we'll let BID members, the general public and the wider world know, and hopefully we will attract even more visitors to the site for its reinstatement."

Meanwhile, if you had your picture taken on the bench between 26 June and 10 October this year, post the picture on Twitter or Instagram with your details and include our @WestsideBID handle. We'll then repost your images across all our social media platforms, and the owner of best shot will win the chance to shake the hand of the bench via the new tram extension.

# Big city developments are real hot property



■ Birmingham's Centenary Square development was named Construction Project of the Year and the HSBC UK HQ (right) was runner-up.

**By Tony Collins**

Two landmark developments at the heart of the Westside BID area were successful in a prestigious property awards competition.

The Centenary Square development, which has transformed the outdoor area into a world-class public space, was named Construction Project of the Year in the recent Insider's West Midlands Property Awards.

And in a double success story for the BID area, the new HSBC UK corporate headquarters at 1 Centenary Square was judged runner-up in the same competition.

The Insider's West Midlands Property Awards, held at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel on 7 November, were open to architects, developers and construction companies from across the region.

The redevelopment of Centenary Square, completed in July this year, was carried out by construction firm Bouygues UK and Graeme Massie Architects on behalf of Birmingham City Council.

The project sought to create a dynamic new outdoor venue as well as improve the setting for historic

buildings such as the Hall of Memory.

It incorporates groves of various trees, a large reflecting pool that doubles as an events space when drained, and a grid of 25m-tall lighting columns.

Meanwhile, the new HSBC building at 1 Centenary Square is a 210,000 sq ft office block built by Galliford Try on a site owned by Kier Property, who recently secured the purchase of Arena Central.

The building comprises ten upper floors in a design of three interlocking 'blocks', and features two offset balconies providing outstanding views over Centenary Square to the front and the recently landscaped Arena Central public area to the rear.

Westside BID general manager Mike Olley said: "These thoroughly-deserved awards are a reflection of all the exciting projects that Westside has now and coming up in the future."

Graeme Massie said: "It's great that a development like Centenary Square can win an award like this. We are proud to have been involved in such a project which has acted as a catalyst for the transformation of the area."

## New breakfast menu launched

One of Broad Street's favourite snack bars has launched a new breakfast menu.

Five Guys, based in the Fiveways Leisure Complex, is normally frequented for its burgers and fries.

But now morning visitors will be able to feast on menu items including egg, egg and cheese, egg and bacon, and egg, bacon and cheese sandwiches, for £3.95, £4.95, £5.45 and £5.95 respectively.



■ Westside BID general manager Mike Olley addresses the meeting at O Bar in Broad Street.

# BID helping to turn on tap for water payouts

**By Tony Collins**

Westside businesses who suffered a major loss of trade after a burst water main are stepping up their compensation claims with help from the BID.

Up to 20 restaurants, bars and other businesses in the Broad Street area attended a compensation meeting organised by BID operations manager Luisa Huggins.

This saw Andrew Thomas from Mayflower Solicitors advising BID members on how to make claims after turning customers away when they were left without water for up to a day on 26 September.

The damage to the nine-inch mains pipe was caused by workers extending the Midlands Metro route along Broad Street.

Mr Thomas said they had received "very positive feedback"



■ The chaotic aftermath of the flooding in Broad Street.

from the 15 to 20 business representatives who attended the meeting at O Bar on Broad Street on 5 November.

He said: "Our role was to provide information on behalf of the BID. We discussed the legal aspects and gave businesses various options. It's completely up to individual businesses whether they

make a claim through their insurance company or go through us or their own solicitor."

Mr Thomas gave businesses the option of seeking compensation directly from Midland Metro Alliance, who he said had accepted liability. He added: "Their insurance may have offered some cover, but there's the question of how much

their premiums might be affected if they pursue insurance claims. We are expecting a number of claims and have already received some instructions from businesses affected."

Pushkar Cocktail Bar & Dining is one of the businesses affected after being without water for a day.

Sushil Virmani, operations manager, said: "It was a nightmare. We were told at 10.30am we would be up and running in a couple of hours, but then at 5pm they said we wouldn't be able to open until midnight."

"There was a conference at the NIA which meant we were taking £7,000 a day, so this is probably how much we lost by turning customers away. We will be putting in a compensation claim."

Westside BID general manager Mike Olley said: "We wanted to make sure our members are well looked after and receive all the necessary support and information they need in pursuing compensation."

Westside World approached Midland Metro Alliance for a comment but they had no update on a previous statement urging businesses involved to contact their insurance companies.

For more details of how to make claims, contact Andrew Thomas at [mayflowersolicitors.com](http://mayflowersolicitors.com).



■ Andrew Thomas from Mayflower Solicitors (left) and (right) business owners look on with interest.

## Crescent's wintertime wonders

Whatever the weather, visitors to Birmingham are assured of a winter wonderland of shows at The Crescent Theatre over the coming months.

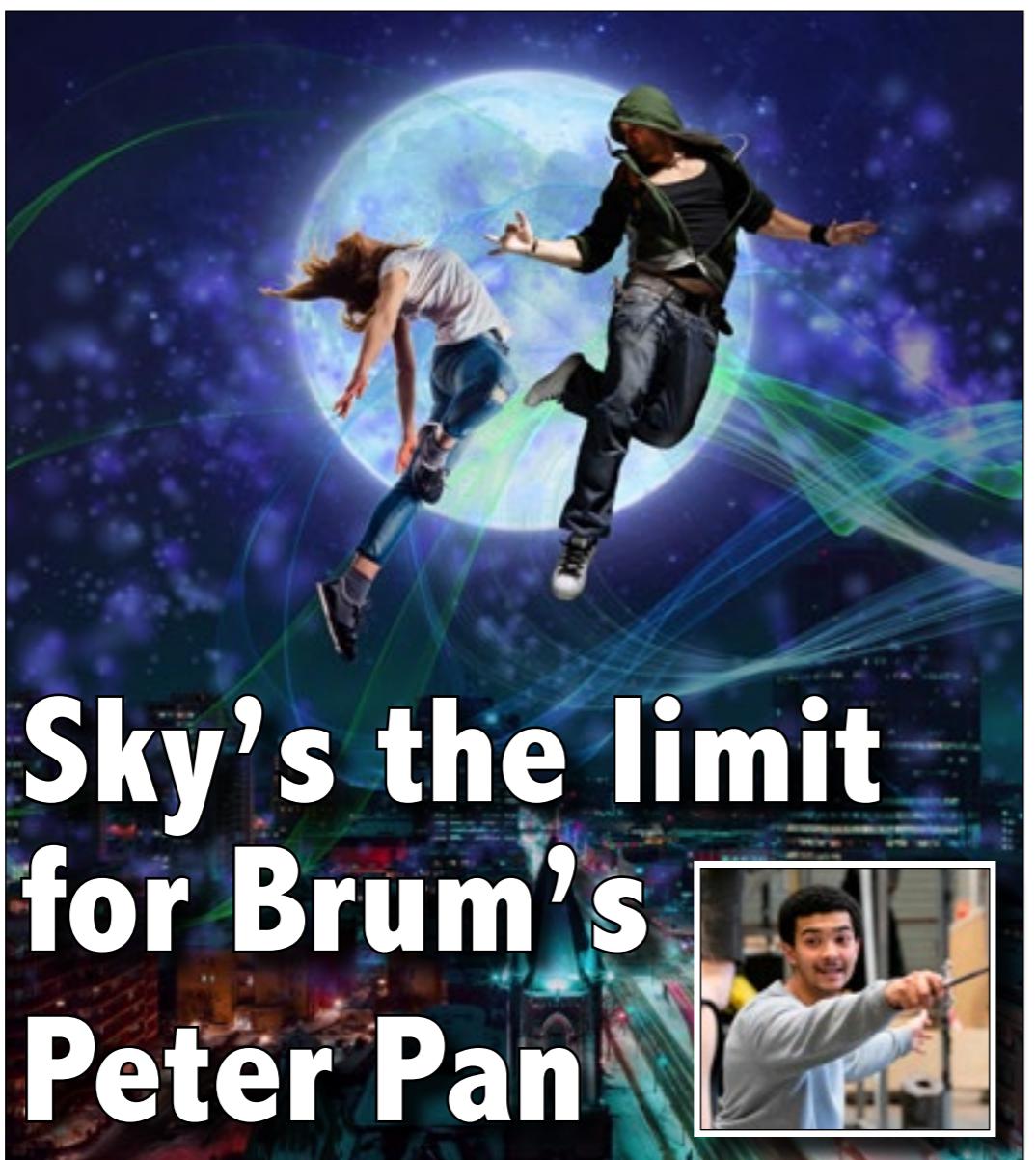
The favourite venue for amateur dramatics starts with its current seasonal offering of *A Christmas Carol*, followed by *The Vicar of Dibley*, *Gaslight* and *The Vagina Monologues*, which are all being staged in the New Year. The Crescent's theatre company puts on 20 in-house productions a year in the 300-seat state-of-the-art building on Sheepcote Street.

Andrew Lowrie is the Crescent's chairman, and he's also currently playing Marley in *A Christmas Carol*.

He said: "Maybe the Crescent is still one of Birmingham's best-kept secrets – but if it is a secret to you then you need to visit the theatre and open up a whole new world of entertainment."

Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* runs until December 14, followed by *The Vicar of Dibley*, a stage production of Dawn French's hilarious BBC sitcom running from 25 January to 1 February.

Next up is the contrasting drama *Gaslight*, from 1 to 8 February 2020. And completing the winter season is *The Vagina Monologues*, celebrating women's sexuality, from February 5 to 8.



■ The spectacular imagery of The REP's Peter Pan show and (inset) Lawrence Walker rehearsing.

**By Tony Collins**

West Midlands actor Lawrence Walker will be flying high this Christmas as he helps to bring festive joy to the centre of his local city.

A new re-imaging of author J M Barrie's classic children's story, *Peter Pan*, sees the setting switch from London 1904 to a high-rise flat in Birmingham.

And helping to suspend belief, while being suspended above the stage of Birmingham Repertory Theatre, will be Black Country-born Lawrence, from Sedgley, near Dudley, who takes on the central role of the 'boy who never grew up'.

The REP's Christmas production sees Wendy and her brothers separated from their mother and sent to live in a flat in Birmingham. But from then on the story is totally familiar as Peter Pan flies in to whisk them to Neverland.

Lawrence, aged 26, from Sedgley, who's only been acting professionally for six years, said: "This is a dream job for me because I've always wanted to play this role."

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## Sky's the limit for Brum's Peter Pan

Christmas 2019

# The bar's not ugly, it's empowering women!

**By Tony Collins**

A new bar with a difference is preparing to unleash itself as Broad Street's newest go-to Christmas and New Year party venue this year.

Coyote Ugly Saloon is a country'n'western-themed bar which gave rise to the 2000 movie *Coyote Ugly*, featuring the songs of LeAnn Rimes among others.

And it prides itself on empowering women – in particular the 35 female bar tenders who make up the majority of the 50 staff it employs.

Karina Sparks, manager of Coyote Ugly Saloon in Birmingham, where the 'coyote' barmaids sing and dance on the actual bar, said: "It's all about female empowerment.

"We had a lot of girls who started whose confidence was low and they were pretty shy, but the more they worked here the more their confidence built up. They're no longer afraid to perform dances or use microphones to sing or speak to the customers.

"The girls have to learn the dance routines and speak to the crowd, and that gives them confidence to get on the bar and perform."

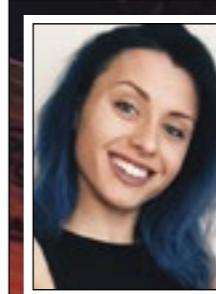
The Broad Street bar, which Karina, aged 25, says attracts around 3,000 customers a week, has strict rules around its bar staff.

She added: "There is no physical contact with the girls whether they are on the bar or behind it. And no one but the girls are allowed on the bar.

"Also, we don't allow their outfits to be too revealing. If it's too much, we tell them to go home and get changed. Denim shorts or jeans are fine, but the problem with full-length trousers is that the girls get really hot, especially when they're dancing."

"Other bars may have just had men staring at the girls who served them drinks, but they weren't really performers like in *Coyote Ugly*."

Westside BID manager Mike Olley said: "The new Coyote Ugly



## Bedding down on Snowdon for charity challenge

Intrepid Westside hotel manager Katie Grove (pictured front centre) helped to raise more than £1,500 for charity by climbing and making a bed on top of Mount Snowdon.

Katie, who works as assistant manager for Travelodge Birmingham Central at 230 Broad Street, joined 12 of her colleagues in

reaching the 1,085-metre peak.

Once there, the team completed their feat by making the bed which hundreds of colleagues and family members from across the Birmingham area had sponsored them to do.

The team initially hoped their adventure would raise £500 for the British Heart Foundation, but

generous donations have now more than trebled this target.

Adnan Ahmad, district manager for Travelodge hotels in the Birmingham area, said: "They raised £1,517, including £200 in Gift Aid, and this all went to the company's nominated charity, the British Heart Foundation."

# Wheely great to be back in time for Christmas



■ The bar in Centenary Square, offering refreshment to revellers.

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By Tony Collins

Thousands of visitors are flocking to Westside to enjoy the Big Wheel and ice rink which have made a welcome return to Centenary Square after a three-year absence.

And as an extra incentive for visitors, city firm Ice Skate Birmingham has also unveiled the highest attraction ever to come to Birmingham – the 55m-tall City Flyer, which will be swinging people around in chairs.

The redevelopment of Centenary Square resulted in the Big Wheel and ice rink setting up a temporary home in Eastside for the last two years, but both attractions are now back with a bang until 12 January.

Even better, the 40m wheel now

has an even better view of the city skyline following redevelopment work.

Alongside the wheel is the fabulous new 25m square ice rink covered by a transparent weather-proof canopy with hundreds of bright lights reflecting onto the ice.

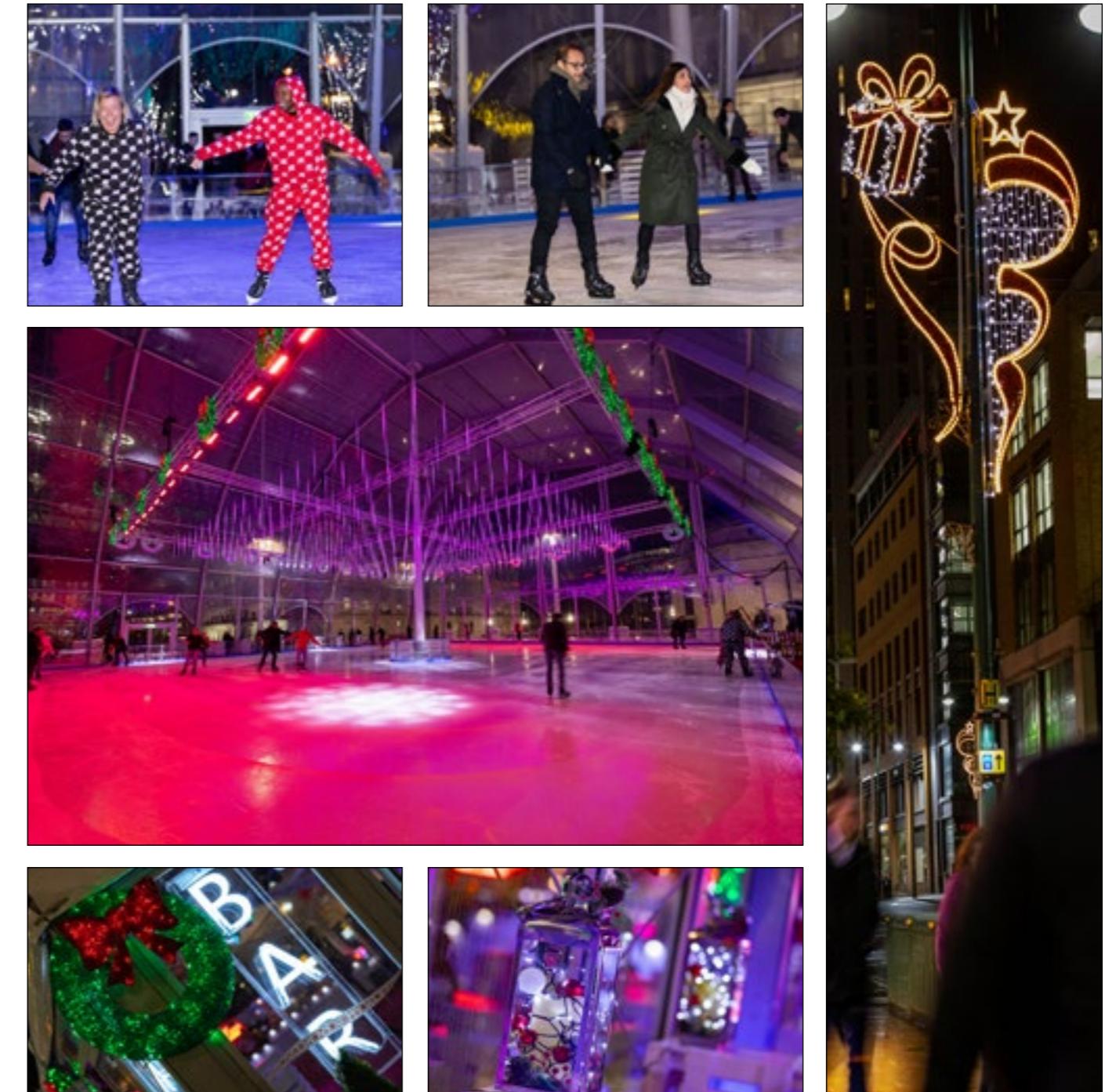
Emily Wilson, Ice Skate Birmingham general manager, said: "It is great to be back in Centenary Square after three years away and we hope that thousands of people will come and enjoy the wonderful attractions we have on offer."

The ice rink costs £10.50 (£8.50 for under 12s) per 45 minutes, while the Big Wheel and City Flyer each cost £5.

To find out more about the Big Wheel and ice rink, go to [iceskatebirmingham.co.uk](http://iceskatebirmingham.co.uk)



■ Emily Phillips (left) and Aneesa Riaz get festive at Rock Up.



■ Westside is full of attractions this Christmas, with the wheel (facing page) and ice rink making a welcome return to Centenary Square.

## Broadway Plaza is a winter wonderland

A host of Christmas activities will be taking place at Broadway Plaza over the festive season, ranging from blockbuster films to rock climbing.

There's also a range of seasonal treats on offer from various stores, bars, restaurants and other venues, including festive menus at Philpotts, Broadway Casino, I-Krave, and Costa, among others,

plus festive cocktails and cookies at Ralph's Bar and Subway respectively.

Seasonal discounts can also be found at Frankie & Benny's and Dominos, together with a free day pass at Nuffield Health.

Other festive treats range from a Christmas climb on the indoor climbing wall at Rock Up, some festive 'jingle time' fun at Hollywood Bowl, and a Star Wars triple

bill for all sci-fi fans at Odeon Luxe on December 18.

And for anyone still looking for a venue to hold their family or office Christmas party, then the BID area has venues including Mr Mulligans and Broadway Casino.

For more information about the various Christmas offers available, visit the Broadway Plaza website at [broadway-plaza.co.uk](http://broadway-plaza.co.uk)



■ Chelsea Ndlovu and Paul Upton exchange gifts at Hollywood Bowl.

# An evening of pure magic with Brum soul legend Jaki

■ Jaki Graham performs to a packed house at Pizza Express on Water's Edge, Brindley Place.

**By Steve Dyson**

Celebrated soul star Jaki Graham set Westside alight with the pure pitch and rhythmic brilliance of her singing last month.

Birmingham-born Jaki was performing to a packed house at Pizza Express on Waters Edge, Brindley Place – just a mile up the road from where she was brought up in Ladywood.

A packed audience swooned as Jaki belted out her favourite

numbers including Step Right Up, Round & Round, Ain't Nobody and many more, along with several other popular disco hits.

In the crowd was Westside BID general manager Mike Olley and his wife Lorraine, keen to see Jaki for the first time since she was honoured on Broad Street's Walk of Stars back in 2012.

Mike said: "Jaki gave a consummate performance that was faultlessly entertaining, her voice demonstrably brilliant at whatever

pitch she reached. She really did seem to be at her peak.

"She's a complete show woman and her performance gripped, engaged and really captured the audience. The warmth that flowed between her and everyone watching was astonishing."

Jaki is considered by the music world to be one of soul's true pioneers, paving the way for many black British female solo artists who followed her.

She scored international success

with a string of hits starting in 1985, making the Music Guinness Book of Records in the 1980s as the first black British female solo artist to have six consecutive top 20 hits.

Jaki appeared at Pizza Express on Friday 8 November.

The popular chain has regular live performances across the UK, and its schedule for the Waters Edge venue is at [pizzaexpresslive.com/venues/pizzaexpress-live-birmingham](http://pizzaexpresslive.com/venues/pizzaexpress-live-birmingham).



**Do you have a story for Westside World? If you have something to tell us about, or if you would like us to highlight the work of your business in our next edition, please contact [info@westsidebid.co.uk](mailto:info@westsidebid.co.uk)**