



Opening Reflection by Simon Cross Ordinand at Westminster College, Cambridge

Carry On Camping?

'An Englishman's home is his castle', so the old cliché goes. The problem is that having been born in Glasgow I don't consider myself an Englishman, and if my home is a castle it's the sort that most people drive past and decide not to visit on the grounds that there's a better one just up the road, which also has a café.

Castles, though, are a common enough sight in these islands, I see them whenever I go on holiday. Some are well maintained but many more thrill their visitors with the evergreen prospect of sudden and dramatic death from falling masonry, or indeed from falling off masonry. I was brought up on a farm where I learned that most animals are constantly trying to find new and inventive ways to die. Cattle and castles have this in common: they are always trying to fall down and pretend they never existed.



The appeal of a castle is obvious though – well, it would be if you didn't have to heat it or stop it from leaking. It's a fortified position, as such it is complete with substantial defences, mainly things like moats, high walls and those holes through which you can pour oil on to unwelcome Vikings. I suppose that in some ways it's the opposite to the tent – it speaks of permanence and power, it's a place where you can fend off enemies, store up treasures and lock down prisoners: solid and dependable. Tents aren't really that sort of structure: fundamentally they're not built to be Viking proof.

That solidity comes at a price though, plenty of maintenance is required if you don't want people burrowing out of the dungeons or breaking into the vaults. Constant vigilance must be maintained if you don't want the Vikings to sneak past the portcullis. No wonder so many castles have been handed over to charities, who wants do deal with the upkeep?

Tents on the other hand are rather easier to maintain, or even to replace when the time comes. They're portable too, so when you realise that change is required you can roll up the whole kit and kaboodle, pop it in your rucksack and toddle off to a place where there are fewer Vikings, or more sunshine.

Perhaps tents and castles embody two ways of thinking and living, particularly when it comes to faith. The first way – castle thinking – prioritises a fixed position that becomes a place of safety and security and requires thick walls and elaborate defences to ensure that such safety is ensured. The second way – tent thinking – recognises instead the primary value of change and movement. Tent thinking accepts that all positions are temporary and that context changes things. It may be less comfortable, but it's also much freer, has lower heating bills and requires far less maintenance.

Sometimes we expend all our energy building walls to protect a position which we then have to both maintain and defend, even when the Vikings sitting in our living room have made it quite clear that they feel the position is ultimately indefensible. It is both simpler and substantially more honest to accept that things change, that each new experience alters our understanding of the world and of God, and that as we grow aware of this we may need to move.



We started with one clichéd metaphor, let's end with another – 'life is a journey'. If that's true then it must be better to carry a tent than to spend all your time maintaining a castle.

Jubilee Banner

First unfurled at the East Midlands Synod's **Jubilee Celebration** last month, our spectacular **Jubilee Banner** has now been completed and is available for local churches to borrow for use in their own Jubilee services.



The banner incorporates numerous square panels created by members of churches all around the East Midlands, celebrating their buildings, life and witness. The names of other churches are given in the pennants along the bottom, so that each church in the Synod is represented.

The project was devised, guided and assembled by **Ally Ford**, with assistance from the Craft Club at St Andrew's with Castle Gate URC, Nottingham. We are enormously grateful to Ally and to all those who have applied their artistry to contribute to this lasting souvenir of the East Midlands Synod in its Jubilee year.



Before being hung in the Synod's offices, the banner is currently "touring" local churches. If you would like to feature it in your church's own Jubilee celebrations, please enquire by emailing jubilee@urc5.org.uk.



We look forward to featuring some of the individual panels from the Jubilee banner in forthcoming issues.

Meanwhile, please share news and pictures of your own URC Jubilee celebrations in this newsletter: email training@urc5.org.uk and trainingpa@urc5.org.uk.

New Resources from Daily Devotions



The **URC Daily Devotions** is part of the church's focus on Christian discipleship and mission. On every day of the year, they send out a reading, reflection and prayer. A team of volunteers records the Devotions as podcasts.

The Devotions are written and led by over 100 URC people from different places and perspectives. The Devotions are available by [email](#), [URC social media](#) and on the [website](#).

The Devotions usually follow a book in the Bible or a particular theme: the current series, exploring particular features of our tradition as we mark the URC's Jubilee this month, is warmly recommended.

Booklets and Study Material

Each series of Daily Devotions is also compiled into a booklet which is available to download, print off and distribute in advance to those without Internet access. In addition, a new resource is available in the form of [small group study material](#) based on the Daily Devotions, with the first two sets based on the themes of Jubilee and Advent.

Resources for Worship

Daily Devotions also provide a Sunday Service each week and now supply [Worship Notes](#) too, both of which may help those who prepare worship in local churches.

Intercessions

Another new resource from **Daily Devotions** offers a set of intercessions that will be written at the start of the week before they are to be used. These intercessions might be useful in your congregation, in a small mid-week group, or to enrich your own prayer life. They will be emailed out each Wednesday. The first set, designed for use this coming Sunday (9 October), [can be downloaded here](#) and explores themes of praise and lament reflecting not just on our 50th Jubilee but the wars and economic problems we face.

If you would like to find out more or to sign up to Daily Devotions please visit: [Daily Devotions Archive United Reformed Church](#) .

Energise – A Gathering for Children and Youth Leaders Across the Midlands

Saturday 29 October

10.30am-3.30pm

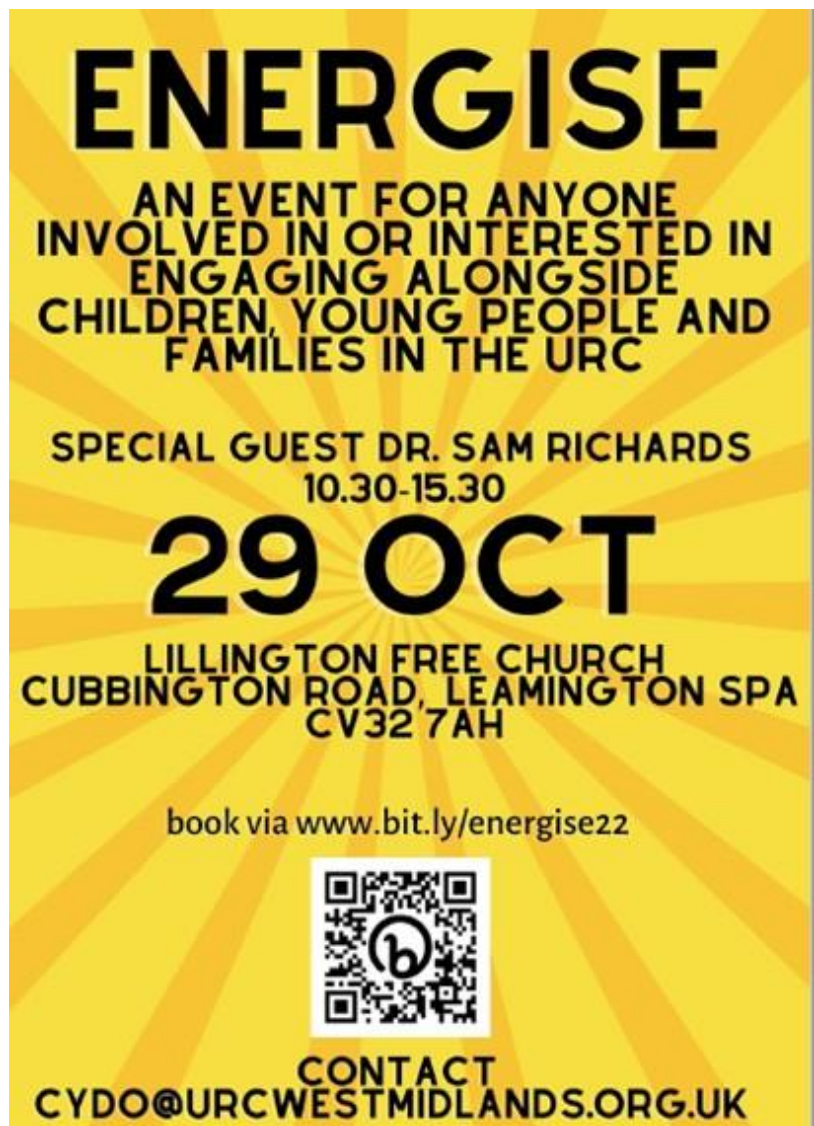
**Lillington Free Church,
Leamington Spa**

Children and Youth Leaders across both the East Midlands and West Midlands Synods are warmly invited to [Energise](#), a special event for all those engaged alongside young people. We are delighted to welcome **Dr Sam Richards**, the URC's Head of Children and Youth Work who will share with us in the day.

Energise takes place at Lillington Free Church, 136 Cubbington Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 7AH on **Saturday 29 October** between 10.30am and 3.30pm.

<https://bit.ly/energise22>

For more details and to book, please visit out the [event page](#) by clicking the poster, or contact **Richard Knott** for further information: email cydo@urcwestmidlands.org.uk

A yellow poster with a sunburst background. The text is in bold black and white. At the top is the word 'ENERGISE' in large letters. Below it is the text 'AN EVENT FOR ANYONE INVOLVED IN OR INTERESTED IN ENGAGING ALONGSIDE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN THE URC'. Then 'SPECIAL GUEST DR. SAM RICHARDS 10.30-15.30'. The date '29 OCT' is in very large letters. Below that is the address 'LILLINGTON FREE CHURCH CUBBINGTON ROAD, LEAMINGTON SPA CV32 7AH'. At the bottom is the booking link 'book via www.bit.ly/energise22', a QR code with a 'b' logo, and the contact information 'CONTACT CYDO@URCWESTMIDLANDS.ORG.UK'.

Funerals Workshop Day

led by **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby**, Principal of Northern College

Saturday 5 November 10.00am-3.30pm
at Hinckley United Reformed Church

Do you receive requests to take funerals in your church but don't always have an experienced celebrant available? Would you like to learn how to lead memorial services or discuss your practice with others?

We have joined forces with Northern College and the West Midlands Synod to offer a free **Funerals Workshop Day**. Facilitated by **Revd Dr Rosalind Selby** of Northern College, the URC's Resource Centre for Learning in the north of England, this training opportunity takes place on **Saturday 5 November**. The Workshop Day will be hosted at **Hinckley URC**, which is easily reached by road or rail from either East or West Midlands.



The topics to be covered include all the basics, such as arranging an appropriate service, liaising with funeral directors and the different options available to families. Most importantly, it will also explore the grieving process, equipping you to provide sensitive pastoral care to the bereaved, to be prepared for any hard situations and not least, to take good care of yourself throughout.

The day is perfect for **Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders** who are sometimes called upon to lead a funeral, but all ministers, elders and church members who want to learn more about this important ministry are equally welcome to attend. The training is offered free of charge: simply bring your lunch.

To register for the Funerals Workshop Day, simply email **Hannah Holmes**: trainingpa@urc5.org.uk .

First Aid Training

Saturday 28 January 2023 9.30am-3.30pm
Bulwell United Reformed Church

Bulwell URC has arranged to hold an **Emergency First Aid at Work** training session on Saturday 28 January 2023, from 9:30am-3:30pm. There are six spaces remaining for the day course, which Bulwell generously opens to other churches in the East Midlands Synod.

If you would like to claim one of these places, at a cost of £40 per person, please email: eleonor@bulwellurc.org.uk .

Church and Society – Autumn Update

Don't send Refugees to Rwanda

Earlier this year, the UK government announced plans to deny people the opportunity to seek asylum in the UK, and instead take them to Rwanda if they arrive here by an 'unofficial' route.

The **Revd Clare Downing**, speaking as Moderator of the General Assembly, called the policy 'disgraceful and dishonourable' (bit.ly/csupdate01), and in July, General Assembly passed a resolution urging all churches and members to write to their MPs about the issue. We have an example message you can use as a starting point, with advice on how to contact your MP: bit.ly/csupdate02.



Cost of Living



As living costs continue to rise, millions of households in the UK are struggling to make ends meet. A report by **Professor Donald Hirsch** concludes that many face going without food or heating, because the support they've been given simply doesn't stretch far enough .

The **Revd Fiona Bennett**, Moderator of the General Assembly, was a signatory of a letter to the UK government issued by 60 faith groups, charities and political leaders, appealing for appropriate measures to help those on the lowest incomes have enough to live. You can read the report and the letter here: jpit.uk/enoughtolive .

URC Environmental Policy

The General Assembly gave its support to an updated **Environmental Policy**, which will be implemented from January 2023.

The purpose of the policy is to enable us to respond in faith to the climate emergency. It sets out an ambition for the URC to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 and to put in place plans to achieve this. It requires everyone to take action. You can read the updated policy here: bit.ly/csupdate03 .



Personal News

It is with great sadness that we bring news of the deaths of the following servants of the Church. We give thanks to God for all that has been achieved through their life and ministry.

We regret to share news of the recent death of **H Keith Johnson**. Keith's faithful service to the East Midlands Synod included a long period as Bookkeeper and he remained an Honorary Member of Synod. For many years he also served as Treasurer at **Derby Central United Reformed Church**. We hold all Keith's family and friends in our prayers.

Following news in the previous edition of the death of retired minister, **Revd Gillian Brown**, the Yorkshire Synod has shared the arrangements for her funeral. This will be held at 1.00pm on Monday 24 October at Christchurch URC in Castleford.

Hybrid Church Session

Tuesday 11 October
7.30-9.00pm online

The URC's **Education and Learning** and **Children and Youth** teams are back with another opportunity to talk about the realities, risks, joys and challenges of **Hybrid Church**. On **Tuesday 11 October** from 7.30-9.00pm, there will be a chance to meet online with other people from local churches seeking to worship, work with children and young people, and gather and learn in a hybrid way.

The United Reformed Church Training

Talking about...
HYBRID CHURCH

Tuesday 11th October
@ 7:30pm

WORSHIP TECH OUTREACH
YOUTH WORK

Come along to YOUR space to share and learn

For more info, email:
jenny.mills@urc.org.uk;
dan@media4ministry.co.uk

Meeting ID: 892 8553 7599
Passcode: 655777

As with previous sessions there will be conversations around the tech side of hybrid church as well as the practical outworkings and the experiences we seek to enable. It is a space where those attending drive the meeting – what questions do you have and what help do you need? The aim is not to give answers but to facilitate discussion – and usually answers emerge! It is a space to learn and find out more as well as share expertise in this continually changing world.

Zoom meeting ID: 892 8553 7599

Passcode: 655777

If you have any questions, please contact jenny.mills@urc.org.uk or dan@media4ministry.co.uk

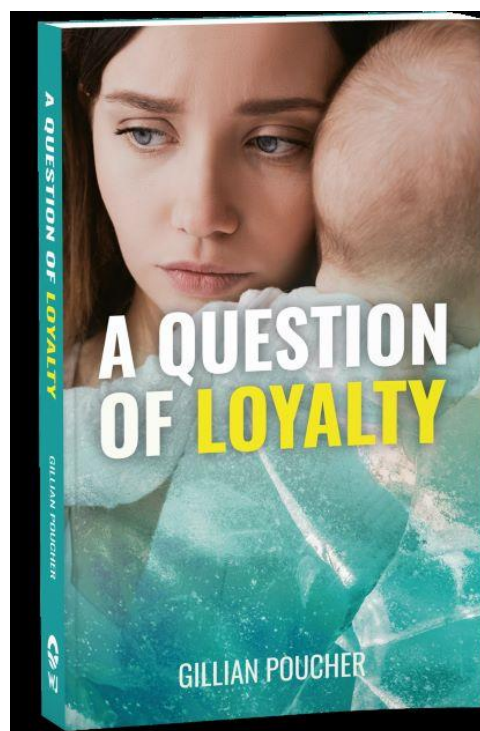
Book Launch: A Question of Loyalty

Saturday 29 October 11.00am-12.30pm
Trinity URC, Lincoln

Gillian Poucher will be holding a book event for her new novel, '**A Question of Loyalty**' on Saturday 29 October from 11.00am-12.30pm at **Trinity URC**, Garmston Street, Lincoln LN2 1HZ. The event will include author talks, readings and signings and Q&A. Tea and coffee will be available.

'**A Question of Loyalty**', published by Onwards & Upwards Publishers, can be purchased at the event at a discounted price of £10 (cash only please). Otherwise it is [available online](#) and from all good bookshops.

For more information, visit Gillian's web-site:
www.gillianpoucherauthor.co.uk.



URC Buildings Forum Online Event

Tuesday 15 November 7.30 – 9.00pm online

Two Synod Moderators share their experience of church development at the next **URC Buildings Forum Conference**, which is to take place on Tuesday 15 November from 7.30pm until 9.00pm. This online event will focus upon stories about church buildings being used for mission and how local churches can be guided in facing this challenge as we come into the 'New Reality' after the pandemic. There will be an opportunity to hear about the experiences of developing a church building, its life and its mission, and learn of some of the joys and pitfalls of following that path, with the **Revd Ruth Whitehead** and the **Revd Steve Faber** as guest contributors.

There will also be time during the conference for a conversation about the Environmental Policy agreed at General Assembly. As usual, there will be time in small groups to talk about your own experiences, opportunities and challenges.

To register, please email mission@urc.org.uk with 'Forum Online Event' in the subject heading by Monday 31 October, including your name, email address, and details of which church or organisation you are representing. Login details will be sent a few days before the meeting.

Webinars: Safeguarding for Elders as Trustees

Tuesday 14 March 2023 7.00-9.00pm or
Friday 20 October 2023 2.00-4.00pm

Following high demand for the recent webinars outlining the **Safeguarding** responsibilities of Elders as Trustees, two further dates are now available next year. To book please email carrie.kaunda@urc.org.uk.



Please join one of the dates below to gain vital information on your specific safeguarding role in the URC. This session is for all Serving Elders with Trustee Responsibility in their church.

From the webinar you will

- Gain an understanding of URC policies and how they underpin your role in relation to Safeguarding.
- Understand your role as a trustee for the church and how this links to safeguarding.
- Understand the 5 safeguarding actions outlined by the government for churches as charities.

PLEASE NOTE THIS TRAINING IS IN ADDITION TO THE FOUNDATION AND INTERMEDIATE TRAINING AND COVERS SEPARATE INFORMATION

March 14th 2023 7pm-9pm

October 20th 2023 2pm-4pm



**TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT
CARRIE.KAUNDA@URC.ORG.UK**

Reminders of Events This Month

Chesterfield Schools Art Exhibition

St Andrew's URC, Chesterfield
Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 October

After an enforced three-year break, **St Andrew's United Reformed Church Chesterfield** and **Chesterfield Rotary Club** are working together with local Secondary School art teachers to resume the fabulous **Schools Art Exhibition**, featuring new art works from nine schools across Chesterfield. The exhibition will be open from **10.00am–4.00pm** on **Saturday 8 October** and **1.00–4.00pm** on **Sunday 9 October** at St Andrew's URC (187 Newbold Rd, Chesterfield S41 7BE).



Everyone is welcome. The mayor and civic leaders will attend the opening awards ceremony at 10.00am on the Saturday when certificates will be given to all the students presenting their work. On Sunday morning at 11.00am, St Andrew's will hold a *Songs of Praise* service celebrating the URC's Jubilee.

Introduction to Makaton for Churches

Five dates available online from Wednesday 12 October

URC Children's and Youth Work has teamed up with **Education and Learning** to provide online training for all in the United Reformed Church in **Makaton**. To further the URC's aim to encourage churches to become increasingly accessible and inclusive, the URC hopes to apply for **Makaton-Friendly** status from the Makaton charity.

Introduction to Makaton for churches

Help make church and children/youth work more accessible for all

URC Children's and Youth Work and Education and Learning are pleased to offer a free online introduction to Makaton, led by Makaton tutor Laura Netley. Learn how to support your communication with simple signs which will make your meaning clearer. Places are limited to fifteen but the session is repeated on five different occasions:

Wednesday 12 October 19:00 - 21:00
Saturday 5 November 9:00 - 11:00
Monday 7 November 9:30 - 11:30
Thursday 17 November 19:00 - 21:00
Monday 16 January 19:00 - 21:00

Book on <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-makaton-tickets-394966865527>

Makaton is an easy-to-learn system of symbols and signs used alongside spoken language to aid communication. It's valuable not only for those with additional needs, but also very small children, children and adults with English as a second or foreign language, and many more. In a two-hour session you will learn the signs for some common words, including faith words, and hopefully be inspired to learn more.

Places are limited – 15 people per session – and the sessions are being offered on five different dates and times. See: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/makaton-sessions-tickets-394966865527> for details or else contact children.youth@urc.org.uk.

Spirit of the Jaguar: a Talk & Slide Show

Wednesday 19 October 7.30pm
The Dales URC, Nottingham

Anna-Louise Pickering presents her photography alongside the paintings of wildlife artist **Pollyanna Pickering**. The talk takes place at **The Dales URC**, Parkdale Road, Nottingham NG3 7GL on Wednesday 19 October at 7.30pm. Tickets are priced £6 for adults, £2 for children, with all proceeds supporting Pollyanna's foundation for wildlife projects.



Situations Vacant

The **Methodist Church** 

Children and Family Worker

 **BAPTISTS
TOGETHER**

Keyworth Methodist Church with the support of **Keyworth Baptist Church** are seeking to appoint a creative, imaginative and suitably qualified person to the position of **Children and Family Worker** based in Keyworth, a large village in rural Nottinghamshire.

This is an ecumenical post to further develop Christian outreach among children and young families in Keyworth by leading an existing team of volunteers working with children and young people. There are established relationships with schools, churches and the community and regular children and family events are currently running successfully. There are also several housing developments under construction where we wish to start relationships with new families.

You should be a practicing Christian willing to work with a Management Group, local clergy and lay people to further develop and start a wide range of activities within churches, schools and the village community. This is a full-time post with a salary between £20,592 - £24,645 p.a. depending on experience and qualifications. (Pay review November 2022)

Application closing date: 14 October 2022

Interview date: Week beginning 31 October 2022

The application pack and form are available on KMC's website: keyworthmethodistchurch.yolasite.com
Enquires and applications forms should be sent to the Church Secretary: kmchurchsecretary@gmail.com

**COUNTY ECUMENICAL
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER (CEDO)
FOR NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**

Are you inspired by the vision of Christians
of different traditions working together?

Are you a great networker, solution-finder and
administrator?

If so, this post may be for you.

£8,049 plus 10% pension contribution
Home based, 10 hours a week

Application pack available on www.shireandsoke.org.uk or from
Kate at methodistcircuit@gmail.com

Applications to be received by
12:00 noon on Friday 28th October 2022

Interviews: mid November 2022

Commencement date: asap

For an informal chat about the role contact
caroline.hutchings@shireandsoke.org.uk



Find Us Online



The [East Midlands Synod website](https://www.urb5.org.uk/) is the one-stop shop for all essential information:
<https://www.urb5.org.uk/>



Our [East Midlands Synod Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/) continues to host the **Evening Prayers** led by our Moderator the **Revd Geoffrey Clarke** and others during the ongoing pandemic. If you are a Facebook user, please consider **Liking** and **Sharing** this Page and its posts:
<https://www.facebook.com/URC-East-Midlands-Synod-102279281444717/>

Similarly the [Synod Youth and Children's Facebook Page](https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/) shares news and ideas related to our work with young people: <https://www.facebook.com/URCEastmidlandsYouth/>



On our dedicated [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g), the Synod shares special events, training videos, worship resources and more. **Evening Prayers** are also uploaded here. Please subscribe:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzXFUrjKn8XOGGeZU5SgN95g>

Contacting East Midlands Synod

The **Synod Office** is open from **Monday to Thursday** each week. Please contact staff members by email in the first instance, as this will receive a direct response from the person with whom you wish to correspond. The Synod telephone line (**0115 960 9241**) is answered Monday-Thursday, 9.00am-3.00pm.

This E-letter is produced on behalf of:
The URC East Midlands Synod, 1 Edwards Lane, Sherwood, Nottingham, NG5 3AA.
Telephone: 0115 960 9241

CCL1067405
Castle (Scotland): photo by [Hannah Wright](#) on [Unsplash](#)
Tent (Spain): photo by [Tati y Adri](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Next edition: Thursday 20 October 2022

Please send all material for this E-Letter to both:
trainingpa@urc5.org.uk and training@urc5.org.uk

Copy deadline for next edition: 12 noon on **Monday 17 October 2022**