

# Advice on loans as service ends

A housing group and union has offered advice as a doorstep lender stops its loans service.

The news that Provident Financial is to close down its doorstep lending operation has been welcomed by both The Wrekin Housing Group and Just Credit Union.

Last month, Provident Financial announced it was withdrawing the service following compensation claims from customers who said they had been mis-sold loans. While doorstep lending is legal and regulated, it has been criticised for the high interest rates charged and the ease with which people can get into significant debt.

Deb Morrison, financial inclusion manager with The Wrekin Housing Group, said: "At a time when many people across our communities are suffering financially, we welcome the news that Provident are stopping their doorstep lending service."

"There is a real danger that unregulated doorstep lenders – loan sharks – could step into the void Provident leaves behind. We urge people to go to their local community credit union to find out if they can offer them a better deal."

# Warning of text con on census

Trading Standards Wales has been made aware of a text message scam in relation to the national census.

Recipients are told that there is information missing from their completed census and asked to click on a link to complete their form or face prosecution.

By clicking the link they are directed to a site which appears identical to the original online census form.

On completing the form and submitting, the recipient is asked to pay a £1.25 fee.

Helen Picton, chair of Trading Standards Wales, said: "Scam calls and texts to mobile phones are a serious problem. There is no mobile phone equivalent to a landline call blocker to stop them coming through. Some of these messages are very convincing."

"Remember, that no government agency would send you a notification demanding money via text or via automated telephone message."

# Old Bell reopens and wants help

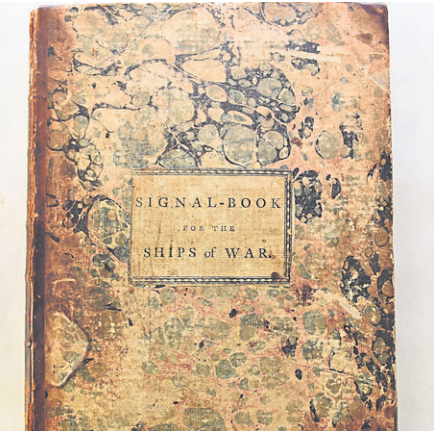
After being closed for the whole of the 2020 season due to the pandemic, a town's independent museum has finally reopened.

Montgomery's Old Bell Museum has reopened, acting chairman Eric Fairbrother announced this week.

Eric said: "We hope as Covid restrictions are eased we will be able to open more days in the week and allow more visitors in at any one time."

"In the meantime, we would welcome help to staff the museum and we are appealing to Montgomery folk who have previously helped with stewarding to come forward. Please contact Secretary David Thomas on 01686 668934 if you are able to help." The museum will initially open for two days a week on Thursdays and Saturdays between the hours of 11am and 4pm. It is preferred that visitors book online, though it is possible to attend without a booking if numbers in the museum allow. Eric added: "Any donations to support the Old Bell, which is your museum, would be much appreciated, and can be posted through my door at Bronwyllfa in Broad Street. Thank you."

# Napoleonic naval book sails home with £11k at auction



Book was used in famous theatre of war

A naval book from the Napoleonic period fetched £11,000 at a county auction.

A hand-coloured copy of Signal Book for the Ships of the Line, printed in 1794, yielded the princely sum at Halls Fine Art auction in Shrewsbury.

It contained extensive manuscript notes, 76 hand-coloured flags and a 36 part-thumb index with handwritten designations.

**Historic**

According to Halls, it was given on board HMS Boyne (a 98-gun warship) at Guadeloupe on April 23, 1794, to Capt. James Young, H.M.S. Reprisal, by command of Admiral George Purvis.

HMS Boyne was the flagship leading a

**NICK HUMPHREYS**  
nick.humphreys@shropshirestar.co.uk

fleet to wrest control of Guadeloupe from the French.

It was the following day that the French surrendered.

So, this codebook of the time was actually used in action during one of the most famous theatres of war.

From the same era, a holograph envelope signed "Nelson & Bronte" and inscribed by Nelson "Private. Sir Richard J Strachan, Bart. H M Ship Donnagel", achieved £1,650.

It was estimated at £500-800.

A brief letter by "Buffalo Bill" sold for

£1,400 and a letter written by Florence Nightingale from the Barracks Hospital in Scutari on September 23, 1855, announcing her impending arrival in the Crimea, made £1,900.

**Autographs**

Although 11 volumes of the Botanical Magazine by William Curtis made an above estimate £5,400, it was largely 20th century autographs that stole the limelight.

Two autograph albums, comprising pop and sports stars of the 1980s and 1990s, sold for £4,000.

And a Queen album sleeve notes, signed by all four members of the band, sold for the same sum.

# Public asked to nominate deserving hospital heroes

**DOMINIC ROBERTSON**  
dominic.robertson@mnamedia.co.uk

**After a year which has seen NHS workers battling through the pressures of the pandemic, the people of Shropshire are being asked to nominate their 'hospital heroes'.**

Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust (SaTH), which runs both Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Princess Royal Hospital Telford, is preparing for its first ever virtual awards ceremony.

Traditionally the trust would have held an actual physical awards ceremony, but the advent of Covid meant last year's awards did not take place, and this year's will be moving online.

The ceremony will take place on July 9.

And, after a year like no other, the trust has teamed up with the Shropshire Star to ask members of the public to nominate teams or individuals who have provided outstanding care and an exceptional level of service above and beyond the call of duty during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A shortlist will be drawn up from all of the nominations with a public vote later in the month to choose the winner who will receive the trust's 'Public Recognition Award'.



Roger Turner was the winner of the Volunteer Of The Year award, voted for by members of the public, in the 2019 SaTH awards

People do not have long to get their nominations in – the closing date for nominations is in just one week, on Saturday, June 19.

Louise Barnett, chief executive at SaTH, said the awards would provide a wonderful way to recognise the efforts of staff over one of the most difficult years in living memory.

She said: "We are delighted to be hosting our first virtual Trust Annual

Awards. This is an exciting opportunity to celebrate the amazing achievements of colleagues and teams over the last year, of which there have been many.

"I would like to say a big thank you to the Shropshire Star for teaming up with us to launch our Public Recognition Award, which will give you, the valued members of our community, the oppor-

tunity to nominate individuals or teams who you believe have been truly outstanding in their role. This award, together with our other awards, will highlight the incredible work and dedication of our colleagues during our fight against Covid-19, and recognise the hard work and commitment from partners, volunteers and fundraisers.

"The Public Recognition Award is an incredibly important one because the winner will be nominated, and voted for, by you, members of the public, who are the reason we do what we do. Thank you for your incredible support to our staff and hospitals over the last year, we are truly grateful." To nominate people visit [trustawards.co.uk/nominate](http://trustawards.co.uk/nominate)

# Contest offers chance to perform

Winners of a Shropshire music competition will have the chance to perform at a live concert.

Shropshire Music Heroes has launched the contest for young musicians. It has a top cash prize of £200 and chance to perform at a live concert in the autumn.

It is supported by Rock School (Inter-

national Exam Board) and Salop Music Centre.

The competition is to celebrate the success of Music Heroes' online lessons during lockdown and the return to face-to-face lessons. Music Heroes is a music school teaching guitar, drums, piano and vocals to children in schools and privately across Shropshire and Powys.

# Work of sisters set to be honoured

The humanitarian efforts of two Ellesmere women in pioneering life-saving aid for countless displaced children will be highlighted during Refugee Week which runs from June 14-20.

Eglantyne Jebb and her sister Dorothy Buxton co-founded the Save the Children charity just after the end of the First World War. The sisters' story will be fea-

tured on the Shropshire Refugee Week website organised by the Shropshire Supports Refugees group. It will include a video about the development of the recently-completed Jebb Garden next to the mere in Ellesmere Jebb Garden by volunteers from the Ellesmere Sculpture Initiative. The garden was created to mark Save the Children's centenary.