

Information Desk

Duty chemists

CORBY: Until 9pm: Asda, Phoenix Parkway. Until 6pm, Saturdays 8.30am-8pm: Boots, Lakeside, Cottingham Road; Chalks, Greenhill Rise; National Co-op, Great Oakley: 8.30am to 6pm week days; Mr Pickfords Express Pharmacy, Spencer Court, Monday to Saturday 8am to 11pm, Sunday 10am to 8pm. Weekdays 9am to 6pm, Saturdays 9am to 1pm: Pillbox Pharmacy, Studfall Avenue.

KETTERING: Until 6pm: Thursfield, Gold Street; Thursfield, Rockingham Road (Thurs 1pm); Thursfield, School Lane; Partridges, St John's Road; Odyssey, Lower Street (Thurs 6pm); Lloyds, Field Street. Until 6.30pm: Lloyds, Headlands; Patel, Mill Road; Elan, School Lane.

WELLINGBOROUGH: Until 6pm: Assura, Queen Street; Berrymoor. Until 6.15pm: Rowlands Pharmacy, Olympic Way; Assura, Gold Street; Lloyds, Stops Close. 3Q Pharmacy, Queen Street. Monday to Saturday 7am to 10pm, Sunday 8am to 6pm. Rushden: The Pharmacy at Parklands, Wymington Road, 6pm.

RAUNDS: Lloyds Pharmacy, Meadow Lane, open until 6.30pm.

IRCHESTER: Co-op Pharmacy, 48 High St, open until 6.30pm every day except Sun.

Handy numbers

Bodywise Health Advice for under-25s: 01536 493236 or 01536 720024

Contraception Advisory Centres: 01536 400030, 01536 492221, 01933 410192, 01933 440099

Corby Community Hospital: 01536 400070

Corby Women's Centre Counselling, emotional support, pregnancy testing and health information: 01536 263156.

Emergency dental service: Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays, 9am to 5pm 0800 665544

Kettering General Hospital: 01536 492000.

NHS Direct Helpline: 0845 4647

Rail inquiries: 08457 484950

St Mary's Hospital: 01536 410141 for visiting times.

Stagecoach Northants: 01604 676060

Trading Standards: 01604 707909

Mobile safety cameras

Northamptonshire Police says it is no longer able to provide the locations of mobile speed cameras in the county.

Roadworks

Market Place Kettering
Harrowden Road Wellingborough
Wellingborough Road Finedon
Geddington Road Corby
Stewarts Road Wellingborough
Aggate Way Earls Barton
Cranford Road Burton Latimer
Avenue Road Rushden
High Street Collyweston

Petrol prices

UNLEADED
Asda Kettering Kettering 132.7p
Ridgeclose Kettering Express 132.9p
Sainsburys Kettering 132.9p
Asda Corby 133.7
Morrisons Corby 133.9p
Tesco Wellingborough 133.9p
Shell Wellingborough 133.9p
Corby Service Station 133.9p
Fourways Sf Connect Corby 134.9p
Corby Murco Service Station 135.9p

DIESEL
Asda Kettering 135.7p
Ridgeclose Kettering Express 135.9p
Sainsburys Kettering 135.9p
Asda Corby 136.7p
Morrisons Kettering 136.9p
Shell Wellingborough 137.9p
Morrisons Wellingborough 137.9p
Corby Service Station 137.9p
Morrisons Corby 137.9p
Prices correct according to petrolprices.com on Thursday, June 16



John's DIY-ing



his whole house

LOTS of people dream of owning the perfect home and do the odd DIY job round the house to make it more how they would like it, but one man has taken it a huge step further and is building his own home. John Barraclough is slowly, block by block, timber by timber, constructing a very personal family home. John, who runs a garden design company, GreenFeat, said: "When the land became available it was too good an opportunity to miss. "Like others, I had renovated a previous home and wanted to go one step further." The house, in Rushden, is tucked away down a bumpy track and sits on the former croquet lawn of a larger house. John said: "We got planning permission at Christmas 2009 and were laying the footings in all the rain we had in March last year." Although it is an impressive house, complete with double garage, John insists it isn't a Grand Designs-style project. He said: "It's a true self-build on a very different scale, but I am including a water harvesting system and the house will have solar panels." John used to be a biologist for Unilever but tired of the corporate life so decided to branch out on his own.

For most of us, replacing a cracked tile is far as we like to go when it comes to altering our home. John Barraclough has rather more lofty ambitions and is building a house from scratch. Janet Bew went to meet him

He said: "I worked at Unilever's research facility in Sharnbrook looking into developing new products. It was very interesting and I got to travel the world. In the end I realised it wasn't what I wanted anymore, so I left and started GreenFeat. "The garden business is going well and I juggle that with building the house. There's no major timescale for finishing the house, I set the pace and work on it when I can." John's exploits are being followed by the BBC for a possible programme about self-builders. John said: "It's been a steep learning curve for me. I'm picking things up as I go along and the BBC have been down to record my progress several times. "My neighbour, Tony, is an ex-architect and he has been a useful sounding board. The building inspector at the council has been fantastically supportive, too. If I'm unsure about anything I'm hoping to do, I can call their office and often he will come down to chat and give me advice. "Higgins, in Wellingborough, have provided me with most of my materials and have

been great as well." The whole project seems much calmer than many of the house builds featured on television and John said: "There haven't been any major disasters so far. I get a bit frustrated sometimes when I have to correct things that haven't worked, and do things twice, but that's all." The house is designed to complement the house next door and has cedar shingles and an overhanging roof. It will have a terrace along one side on the first floor and has huge south-facing windows at one end to let the light flood in. John said: "The cedar shingles come in different shapes and you have to put them together like a jigsaw puzzle, making sure they overlap correctly so they are watertight. "There will be an orangery and I hope to grow an apricot against a south-facing wall. I've planted a small vegetable garden, too, using topsoil we moved when we levelled the land. "Nothing is wasted, if something's not needed, I find another use for it."

Although John, with support from his garden staff, along with occasional help from John's children Jack and Zoe, has done the majority of the work, there are some jobs he is leaving to the real tradesmen. He said: "I could do the internal plastering, but it would take me months so it's pointless. There's a reason why I've used breezeblock to build the walls – I can build a perfectly vertical wall using breezeblock, which wouldn't have been as neat if I'd used bricks. "An old friend, Michael, a local roofer, put the leadwork on the roof for me and the ridge tiles. Apart from that, it's pretty much all my own handiwork. "I've learned things, for example, the house has some tailor-made windows and the gaps left around them are larger than you think to allow the glass to expand in the hot weather, otherwise it makes a horrible creaking noise. I didn't realise glass expanded so much; things like that you pick up along the way." It will be full time on the garden design and construction business again for John once the house is built, but he said: "Having experienced this self-build, I would recommend it. "There's still lots to do but, who knows, I might want to do it again."



Self-builds

Getting your finances in order before starting to self-build is essential, Mark Robinson, the chief executive officer of the Market Harborough Building Society, said: "Lenders will have a number of concerns when looking at self-build propositions. Central to this is the realism of the project costings. A well-prepared budget with plenty of contingency is essential. Builds frequently go over budget. In setting the budget the final elements are key; bathrooms, kitchens and decoration are expensive items just when your budget is at it most stretched. "Self builders need to remember stage payments will be released on the basis of value, not just spend. Lenders don't want to have a part completed shell as their security!"