

## Man killed in car crash outside pub

A ST ALBANS man died in a car accident near Wheathampstead on Saturday.

Police are appealing for witnesses and information following the accident on the B651 between St Albans and Wheathampstead at around 10am.

Two cars, a silver BMW X5 and a blue Nissan Micra are alleged to have collided just south of the junction with Ferrers Lane.

The driver of the Nissan, in his 40s, was pronounced dead at the scene and the driver of the BMW was taken to the QEII Hospital in Welwyn Garden City suffering from minor injuries.

Ambulance service spokesman Gary Sanderson said: "We were alerted to outside the Wicked Lady on the Wheathampstead Road at 10.05am. Three ambulance responses from St Albans and one from Hemel attended the scene. Due to the nature of the call, the HEMS air ambulance from London attended the incident.

"Sadly on our arrival and after everyone's best efforts, a man was pronounced dead at the scene. Our thoughts are with his family at this tragic time. A second casualty, a man, received minor injuries. He was taken to hospital by land

ambulance."

Sergeant Colin Bonner from the Road Crash Investigation Unit said: "I am appealing for anyone who was in the area at the time of the incident and can help explain what happened to come forward.

"Those with information can contact me via the non-emergency number on 0845 33 00 222."

Road closures were put in place at the junction with Coleman Green Lane and Ferrers Lane until just before 3pm.

A 29-year-old man from the St Albans area has been arrested on suspicion of causing death by dangerous driving. He has been police bailed until August.



## Slimmers shift the pounds and help raise funds for homeless



Liz Kay, Slimming World consultant for St Albans and Hemel Hempstead with Centre 33 chairman Peter Graham

A SLIMMING group have shed pounds to raise pounds for a St Albans' drop-in centre for homeless people.

The Sandpit Lane's Slimming World group embarked on a 12-week sponsored slim to raise money for Centre 33, the homeless drop-in centre on Spicer Street.

Between the 60-70 members, they managed to lose 1,500lbs and raise £500 for the charity.

Liz Kay, Slimming World consultant for St Albans and Hemel Hempstead, said the group had outdone themselves in their quest to help an inspiring and vital charity. She said: "Once we'd

raised the money, everyone wanted to know how else we could help Centre 33 and the charity gave us a list of food they use and everyone raided their cupboards and gave their all.

"We plan to adopt the charity in any future fundraising we do, because they are so important and they do such a great job.

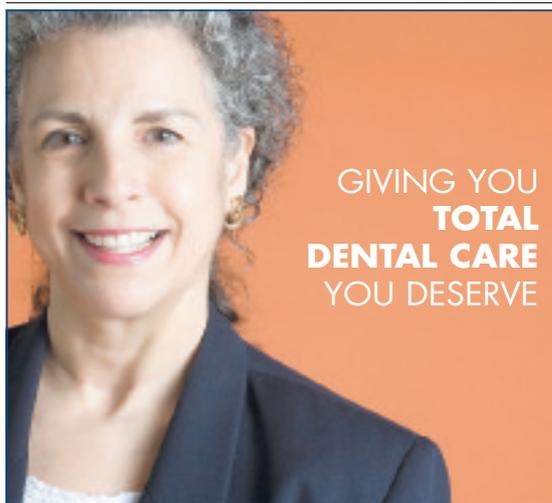
"I've lived in St Albans for 30 years and it's only now that I've become aware of the work that Centre 33 do and it would be great if more people were made aware and did what they could to support the charity."

Centre 33 provides a year round drop-in cen-

tre for socially disadvantaged and homeless people in St Albans.

It opens every day, including holidays, and provides hot meals, drinks, shower facilities - providing towels and toiletries - and some second-hand clothes and blankets. It's staffed and run by volunteers and aims to provide a warm and welcoming place for some of St Albans' most deprived citizens.

Centre 33 is looking for volunteers to help for a couple of hours on weekday mornings or evenings. If anyone is interested in helping out, please contact the centre on 01727 830901.



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# Haulage firm fined £12,000 for health and safety flaws

Aimee Brannen

[aimee.brannen@hertsad.co.uk](mailto:aimee.brannen@hertsad.co.uk)

A HAULAGE and demolition firm based in St Albans has been fined nearly £12,000 following serious health and safety breaches which included the release of more than half a tonne of gas.

Kane Haulage in Porters Wood also carried out work while electricity supplies to the buildings undergoing demolition work at the Oldfield Trading Estate in Sutton remained live.

The company had been contracted to carry out the work in preparation for the construction of a new self storage facility on the site and, although some work had been undertaken by the utility companies EDF Energy and Scotia Gas



Networks (SGN) to disconnect the electricity and gas supplies, neither had completed the process.

City of London Magistrates Court heard that EDF engineers were called to the site on a number of occasions between May and July 2009 as a result of damage to live cables and had warned Kane Haulage not to continue with work until all the electricity supplies had been

disconnected.

But despite this warning, demolition work continued and the electricity provider made a complaint to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) when it was again called to the site on September 15, 2009.

And two days prior to that, a resident of Oldfield Road reported the smell of gas in his garden and garage to SGN and the source was traced to the demolition site where up to 20 severed live gas pipes were found.

The polyethylene pipes had been bent over and tied with wire or duct tape, releasing gas at full pressure when they were untied. Steel pipes had been filled with mud which had dried out and cracked allowing gas to escape.

Kane Haulage pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and was fined a total of £11,700 and ordered to pay costs of just over £6,935.

Speaking after the prosecution, HSE Inspector Loraine Charles said: "It is almost miraculous that there were no injuries, given the level of risk generated by the unsafe way in which Kane Haulage carried out this demolition in relation to the live electricity and gas services.

"Despite repeated warnings that both gas and electricity supplies to and through the site remained live, Kane Haulage proceeded with demolition works, thus exposing workers on the site, residents of the surrounding properties and users of the busy A217 dual carriageway bordering the site to very serious risks."

## IS MEDIATION THE SOLUTION TO FAMILY BREAKDOWN?



The Government has recently introduced a change in family rules which could affect you, or someone you know. If you want to start court proceedings against your ex in respect of financial, property or children issues you have to first of all attend a Mediation Information & Assessment Meeting.

For some, this will prove a valuable experience, giving them a final chance to resolve matters amicably with their ex and save on the time and expense of pursuing the matter through court. However, as David Allison, Chair of Resolution (the national body of family solicitors) points out "mediation is not suitable in all cases."

There is an alternative - the collaborative approach. Everything is discussed at round table meetings where you and your ex each have a collaboratively trained lawyer representing you. You keep control of what is on the agenda, how long the meeting lasts, and how quickly the next

meeting is set. The lawyers help you and your ex understand the issues and the various options available to resolve them.

The lawyers can also bring in other collaboratively trained professionals to help the process run smoothly - financial neutrals to advise on pension, tax and valuation matters and family consultants to help with the emotional problems and issues affecting children. Their input can ensure the meetings are helpful and move matters forward, rather than leaving you or your ex unready to make decisions or unable to understand fully the options on offer.

The result in the vast majority of cases is a written agreement which can usually be approved by a court without anyone attending to make it completely binding on you both. This leaves you and your ex able to move forward - both practically and emotionally. Further, you have the

reassurance this was achieved by you and your ex working together.

The collaborative process requires commitment from you and your ex, but can provide a very real alternative for couples who are genuinely seeking to resolve their differences quickly and amicably so they can move forward.

For more information about collaborative law in your local area or to contact a collaborative professional look at our website [www.hertsfamilylaw.co.uk](http://www.hertsfamilylaw.co.uk) or contact one of the local professionals listed below.



Marilyn Bell  
SA Law  
Solicitors  
St Albans  
01727 798000

Emma Bugg  
Focus  
Family Mediation  
Hemel Hempstead  
01908 231132

Richard Gilbert  
Debenhams  
Ottaway  
Solicitors  
St Albans  
01727 735643

Aileen Harnett  
Taylor Walton  
Solicitors  
Harpenden  
01582 765111

Mary McEvoy  
Neves  
Solicitors  
Harpenden  
01582 725311

Dennis Sheridan  
DR Sheridan &  
Co.  
Solicitors  
Bushey  
020 8950 6768

David Shiebert  
Photiades  
Solicitors  
St Albans  
01727 833134

Ben Twitchen  
Taylor Walton  
Solicitors  
St Albans  
01727 818518

Helen Young  
Debenhams  
Ottaway  
Solicitors  
St Albans  
01727 738212

Nicolette Zarka  
Adams Moore  
Solicitors  
Luton  
01582 481555

Martin Gorvett  
Provisio Wealth  
Financial Neutral  
Letchworth  
01462 687337

John Sheehan  
WKH Chartered  
Accountants  
Financial Neutral  
Letchworth  
01462 687333

Cheryl Willis  
Birchwood  
Investment  
Management Ltd  
Welwyn  
01438 840888