

## Restaurant reopens after revamp

A POPULAR restaurant has reopened after a month long top to bottom refurbishment. The Wooden Fender, in Colchester Road, Ardleigh, reopened to the public at a special launch night for regulars. Rich Prior and Dan Rout have been running the business for three years. Mr Prior said: "The refurb has done everything from top to bottom. "We have repainted the pub, installed new signage, put in new flooring, replastered and re-done the car park. "It has been done to a high standard but still in keeping with the country dining theme and style we have at the Wooden Fender. "We have built up the reputation by keeping the standards high and hopefully this will help us further that."

## Bouncing into fun

AN inflatable fun and soft play day has been organised in Wix. The indoor event, which will be held at the Wix Village Hall, in Harwich Road, Wix, will take place on February 20 between 11am and 3.30pm. There will be stalls, cakes, sand art, and a free craft area where children can make their own natural bird feeder. To book in advance visit [ticketsource.co.uk/bouncebounce](http://ticketsource.co.uk/bouncebounce).

## Business network

BUSINESS professionals can meet to network over a lunchtime drink. Colchester Professionals Network will hold the meeting at the Slug and Lettuce, in High Street, Colchester, at 12.30pm on March 6. Sponsored by Ellisons Solicitors, the event is one of four held every year, giving professionals the chance to meet like-minded individuals. To book a place, call Kirsty Warby on 01206 934950 or email [copn@mw-w.com](mailto:copn@mw-w.com).

## Support group for MS

A GROUP set up to support people with multiple sclerosis is hosting a fundraising event. The Clacton branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society will hold a crafts and collectables fair in St James' Church, in Tower Road, Clacton, on March 28.

# POLICE CHARGE MAN, 41, AFTER DAD DIES ON FRIDAY NIGHT

# Village murder probe after fatal collision



■ Evidence - markers laid out at the scene



■ Crime - forensics were brought in to assist the investigation

A MAN has been charged with murder after a dad died.

Dean Clark, 41, from Little Clacton, died after an incident in the village on Friday night.

Essex Police were called to The Street, in Little Clacton, just before 11pm on Friday.

Officers were told a man had been involved in a collision with what was described as a silver or grey Ford Transit van.

According to reports, the incident followed a fight which had broken out near the Blacksmith Arms pub.

By **GEORGE KING**  
[george.king@newsquest.co.uk](mailto:george.king@newsquest.co.uk)

Paramedics rushed to the scene, but despite their best efforts, the victim, Mr Clark, died at the scene.

On Saturday morning, Essex Police launched a murder investigation and cordoned off an area between the pub and Firs Caravan Park, in London Road.

Forensic scientists were at the scene searching for evidence to piece together what had happened.

Craig Garton, 41, of Upper

Branston Road, Clacton, was arrested a short time after the incident and was yesterday charged with murder.

He was due to appear at Chelmsford Magistrates' Court today.

It is understood Garton and Mr Clark knew each other.

Officers have also recovered a van matching the description of the one believed to be involved in the incident.

Residents living near the scene spoke of their shock after hearing what had happened in what is usually a quiet village.

A couple, who live in Holland Road near the pub, but asked not to be named, said they were stunned to find out a man had died following an incident so close to their home.

"It is scary, especially seeing as we have three small children who go to the school just up the road from where it happened," one said.

"It is not nice for something like this to happen so close to home, it is just such a shame.

"It is such a beautiful village and everyone is so friendly.

"It is just so out of character for this area and Little Clacton."

A homeowner who lives near the caravan park, said she has been in the Blacksmith Arms pub on several occasions.

She said: "It is really shocking to hear because nothing like this ever happens around here.

"I have lived here for four years and there has never been any trouble down this road.

"Whenever I have been in the pub it has always been a nice place to go - it is not somewhere you would associate with any trouble."

Another resident, who did not wish to be named, said she knew of Mr Clark as he lived not far from her relatives.

She said: "I felt absolutely sick when I heard about what had happened.

"I think he has children, which is just awful - I can't believe it."

I felt sick when I heard about what had happened. I can't believe it



■ Scene - a murder investigation was launched by police

## Murder detective: We're making good progress

THE detective heading up the murder investigation has said he and his team are "making good progress".

Dean Clark, 41, was pronounced dead on Friday following a fatal collision with a van in Little Clacton.

One man has already been arrested, but Detective Chief In-

spector Stuart Truss, from the Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate, said the moments leading up to the incident are still being pieced together.

He has also appealed to members of the public who may be able to assist the investigation or hold vital evidence.

"Our investigation into Dean's

death is in its early stages, but we are making good progress and are building up a picture of what led up to it," said Mr Truss.

"I can confirm that Dean and the man arrested knew each other and that no-one else was injured during the incident.

"My officers remain at the

scene carrying out enquiries and you're likely to see a police presence in the area.

"If you were in the area and saw something or have dash cam or CCTV footage I need you to contact my team."

If you have any information call Essex Police on 101 quoting incident 1341 of 7 February.