

Stoke-on-Trent

ISSUE 21: MAY 2011

OUR City

Olympic Torch Relay honour

London 2012 Games Flame to be
carried through The Potteries

SEE PAGE THREE



Council will respond to the needs of its residents

By City Council Leader
Councillor
MOHAMMED PERVEZ

DURING the campaign leading up to the local elections I asked residents to give clarity on which of the three main political parties they wanted to be led by.

They have given that clarity and clearly spoken that they want our city to be led by Labour.

We now have four years to work and deliver on their behalf.

The creation of new wards and the reduction in the number of councillors representing them marks the start of an exciting new era for the council here in Stoke-on-Trent.

These are challenging times but I am confident that with focused political leadership to guide our teams across the council, we can make the headway we need to build and promote a more vibrant, successful, go-getting city.

It is a challenge I relish and one which we must all meet together.

We have already set priorities of tackling the culture of dependency by creating a working city with more jobs and more opportunities.

We will continue to raise standards in education and increase people's aspirations... as a city we must all aim higher.

Above all, we will aspire to be a council that is responsive to the needs of residents, and is admired by the public and by its partners. I would like to thank everyone who helped shape the city's future by turning out to use their vote on 5 May.

Every resident has a part to play in our city's future. As well as appreciating those people who voted, we also thank the thousands of people who told us of their concerns and aspirations for the future.

That information is vital as we plan ahead to provide the services the people of Stoke-on-Trent need.

I pledge to lead the council in a responsible manner and I will put together a cabinet of councillors who will use their energy, experience, enthusiasm and vision to work hard for the future of Stoke-on-Trent.

I will seek unity, as we all work together to bring about the many improvements we need in our city. To that end, I will work with elected members across the council chamber to provide responsible leadership.

We promise that the new council will listen, act on the public's views, and work tirelessly, operating within its means, to achieve its goals.

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TELLING IT HOW IT IS...
Council Leader Councillor Mohammed Pervez and Deputy Leader Councillor Paul Shotton, are interviewed by Stuart George on BBC Radio Stoke's breakfast programme.

Labour take control of council after historic all-out election

LABOUR took control of Stoke-on-Trent City Council in the first Local Government Election after the biggest shake-up of ward boundaries in the city in living memory.

The Labour Party took 34 of the 44 seats up for grabs, with seven independents, two conservatives and one unaffiliated councillor winning the remaining contests.

History was made as the number of wards in the city was increased from 20 to 37 after efforts to make politics in the city more effective.

But the number of councillors representing Stoke-on-Trent's communities has been reduced from 60 to 44, ensuring an

exciting night at the count on 5 May. 31.11 per cent of voters turned out to have their say in the election, with votes being cast at polling stations in schools, community centres and other council buildings across the city.

Councillor Mohammed Pervez, representing the Moorcroft Ward, will continue as Council Leader, with Councillor Paul Shotton, of the Fenton East Ward, as Deputy Leader.

Exciting campaign

As *Our City* went to press, Councillor Pervez was finalising the details of the Cabinet members who will work with him to develop and run council services in the city.

He said: "It has been an

exciting election campaign and a tense night as the votes were counted.

"Now the winning candidates have had their chance to celebrate and it is now time to put in the hard work that is required to represent the people who live in their wards and rise to the challenge of driving this great city forward.

"Stoke-on-Trent has been through very difficult times, but we will be pressing the Government for the support we need to boost employment, education, housing and a host of other issues affecting the city.

"The hard work has already started and we will not rest until we see the results the people deserve."

History was made when 19-year-old Jack Brereton won

one of three seats representing the Baddeley, Milton and Norton ward, making him Stoke-on-Trent's youngest ever city councillor.

Conservative Councillor Brereton, who has lived all his life in Baddeley Green and is studying Politics and International Relations at Keele University, said he hoped his election would inspire other young people to get involved in Local Government.

Up-to-date

He said: "I want to bring a more youthful flare to the council chamber.

"I think the views of a young person will help bring the council more up-to-date."

● **For a round-up of results, please visit stoke.gov.uk**

Live webcast of full council meetings

MEETINGS of the full council can now be viewed online. To see and hear the debates and decisions which affect life in Stoke-on-Trent, visit stoke.gov.uk and click on the council meeting webcast button. A list of dates and times of council meetings and committee meetings can be found on our website at stoke.gov.uk/meetingdates

Give us your feedback on this issue of **Our City** by emailing ourcity@stoke.gov.uk or write to: FREEPOST *Our City*.



Opportunity for city to bask in Olympic Torch glory

THE Olympic Flame is coming to Stoke-on-Trent. Following extensive national consultation, the city has just been named as a successful location to become a "Host Community for the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay" and will take part in the build up to next year's Games.

John van de Laarschot, the city council's Chief Executive, said: "This is fantastic news for Stoke-on-Trent and a wonderful opportunity for us to shine as the eyes of the world look on."

City council Leader Councillor Mohammed Pervez said: "I am delighted we are hosting the Torch Relay it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to take part in such an historic event."

The Torch arrives in the city on Wednesday, 30 May 2012 and will be paraded by a team of yet-to-be chosen Torchbearers, who will carry it for at least 300 metres each.

It will also form the centrepiece of a spectacular, free, two-hour evening show designed to inspire a new generation of young people to embrace the Games while fostering the Olympic values of respect, excellence and friendship.

Community contribution

A team of up to 350 crew will accompany the Torch on behalf of official Torch Relay partners Coca Cola, Lloyds TSB and Samsung. It is due to spend the night in The Potteries before moving on to its next location.

More details on the route will emerge in the coming months but nominations are already being taken for the privilege of becoming a local Torchbearer.

Nominees will have to be aged 12 or over and must demonstrate that they have achieved their personal best in making a contribution to their community. The Games' organising committee has pledged to make sure half of those chosen are aged 12 to 24.

Eight thousand people are due to carry the Olympic Torch around the UK in a 70-day celebration before it heads to London on 21 July ahead of the Games' Opening Ceremony on 27 July.

Elite athletes from Stoke-on-Trent are continuing their preparations to try and qualify for both the British Olympic and Paralympic teams while excitement is



Gymnasts create the shape of an Olympic cauldron and flame at the first photocall to publicise the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay which will be coming to Stoke-on-Trent.

mounting for hundreds of children at 80 city schools, who have been taking part in the Get Set London 2012 educational programme.

At least two schools, St Peter's High and Hillside Primary, qualified to join a

nationwide network of schools taking part in the programme, which means they will benefit from receiving some of the 100,000 free Games' tickets being distributed by organisers.

Down Your Way

News from the Neighbourhoods

▶ CARMOUNTSIDE:

Resurfacing work has been carried out on Leek Road between Woodhead Road and Carmountside Crematorium. The essential repairs were completed over three evenings as part of a plan to minimise traffic disruption. The work is part of a wide-ranging council programme to ensure roads are safe for motorists and traffic flows easily.

▶ HANLEY:

The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery has been voted one of the top six in the country. It saw off nearly 100 competitors to land the top spot in *The Guardian* Family Friendly Museum Awards 2011 for the way it encourages and welcomes families. The museum was nominated by the public and judged by a panel including Jenny Abramsky, who is chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund.

▶ SANDYFORD:

The Earl of Wessex was given a guided tour of a state-of-the-art community fire station before officially opening the building. He met pupils from local schools, residents' associations and a group who use the station's gym every week. Speaking as he unveiled a plaque, Prince Edward said: "I've been to a number of fire stations, but nothing quite like this one."

▶ ABBEY HULTON:

Children from Abbey Hulton Primary School have unveiled their designs for the future of the city as part of a special project. Year two and four pupils transformed their library as part of a scheme with the charity Partners in Creative Learning. Pupils explained their designs to Lord Mayor Denver Tolley when he visited.

▶ NORTON AND BALL GREEN:

Two children's centres have received Parent Charter awards in recognition of their support for parents. Centre users at Norton and Ball Green were interviewed by staff from Voluntary Action Stoke-on-Trent as part of the awards process.

How to nominate someone to become a bearer

FOR more information on the Torch Relay, the evening show in the city and the nomination procedure for the chance of becoming a Torchbearer, go to stoke.gov.uk or www.london2012.com



Lord Coe, left, Chair of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and Minister for Sport Hugh Robinson hold the 1948 London Olympic Torch at the event to promote the 2012 Torch Relay.





Solar power panels light up Civic Centre

HI-TECH solar panels installed on the roof of the Civic Centre will pay for themselves and generate savings and income for the council over the next 25 years.

As part of the move to promote a zero carbon city, committed to renewable energy, 198 photovoltaic (PV) panels are now generating electricity every day.

As well as saving £3,000 a year off the building's £140,000 electricity bill, they will also attract around £9,500 each year from the Government's feed-in tariff, which pays out for 25 years with index linked increases.

Energy efficiency measures

The panels, which convert sunlight into electricity and even work on a cloudy day, are situated on the Civic Centre's south and south west facing roof space.

Neighbourhood Renewal Manager Phil Dawson said the installation of the panels was part of a citywide programme of energy efficiency measures.

Neighbourhood Renewal Manager Phil Dawson and one of the photovoltaic panels. The solar power arrays can be seen on the roof of the Civic Centre in the background.

He said council buildings were being assessed to identify the best ways to save energy, from renewable installations like the PV panels to low energy lightbulbs and better insulation.

Phil explained: "We want to be at the forefront of energy efficiency initiatives and with the income from the feed-in tariff over the next 25 years this is really a great example of investing to save, where in addition to

the free electricity the investment in PV panels is actually generating a bigger return than if it was invested in a bank."

The amount of energy being generated by the huge solar panel array will be displayed at three locations throughout the Civic Centre and the council intends to make the information public, possibly through a display in the Civic Centre reception or even in real time on its website.

● Last year 54 council properties in Chell Heath were fitted with solar panels and there are plans in the pipeline to install them on 1,000 more homes. The green energy installations follow a ground breaking agreement signed with energy giant E.ON last year.

Millions of pounds of investment made in the city by a range of other major energy companies will see more green energy technology introduced throughout Stoke-on-Trent in the near future.

family Information Service

Your local Family Information Service provides free, friendly and impartial information, advice, assistance and signposting on a wide variety of subjects including:

FREE Support and advice for families

- **Childcare** – we can support you through the whole process of choosing a childcare provider that is right for the needs of you and your family.
- **Family friendly financial benefits** – including what is available to help with childcare costs.
- **Parental rights and entitlements.**
- **Signposting** – advice on the many support services available across the city and much, much more.

So if you are responsible for a child or young person aged 0-19 and are struggling to find the answers to your questions, please call us free or email us at: fis@stoke.gov.uk



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Scott Johnson, left, and Robert Meyrick of the council's Environmental Services Team, tidy up the A500.

Massive clean up tidies D-road

25 tonnes of rubbish removed by dedicated teams

A massive council clean up has been carried out along a three-mile stretch of the A500 corridor through Stoke-on-Trent.

Slip roads were the main focus for the three-week long project as environmental services teams worked their way up from Hanford roundabout to the Etruria junction and back down the other side.

More than 350 bags of rubbish were collected along with 25 tonnes of other material dumped along the main gateway route into and out of the city.

The council's Environmental Manager Andy Chesworth worked alongside Highways Agency contractor Amey to manage the traffic as four team leaders and 20 Future Jobs Fund staff completed the clean up.

Carol Gibbs, the council's Environmental Services Manager, said: "We're delighted with how it went and pleased the main

arterial route through the city now looks more presentable.

"Last year our teams picked up more than 100 bags of rubbish from the main carriageway, which was a phenomenal amount, but we never really concentrated on the slip roads until now.

"It was something we really needed to do and something we plan to continue with to make sure the people of Stoke-on-Trent live in a clean and green city."

Enthusiasm

The project gave valuable work experience to the Future Jobs Fund staff involved as they worked within Health and Safety guidelines during the daytime operation, which included clearing of the grass verges.

They all had the chance to apply for permanent and summer jobs at the council afterwards. Four secured permanent employment and another 10 were successful in getting temporary posts.

One of those is married father of three Robert Meyrick, 25, who had been unemployed for about a year. With two girls aged six and three and new four-month old baby Connor the latest addition to the family, he was particularly happy to land a permanent contract with the ground maintenance team.

He said: "I was over the moon. I can support my family much better now. We were just scraping by before and it was hard."

Scott Johnson, 23, from Longton, is on a temporary contract and also tackles litter picking, grass cutting and street cleansing. He had been out of work for about two years and said: "It's been brilliant.

"The pay's a lot better so it's making a big difference in my life."

More A500 deep cleans are now scheduled for later in the year on top of the routine litter picking done by council teams. Squads of five already carry out monthly checks on both the A500 and the A50.

A judge has praised residents who worked with the council and police to secure an Antisocial Behaviour Order (ASBO) against a man who terrorised their neighbourhood.

Matthew Hancock, 19, made life hell for members of the Fegg Hayes community by swearing, shouting, making racial comments and by throwing stones, snowballs, bricks and mud.

He also drank in public, entered other people's garden without permission, made threats to kill and intimidated people if they dared to come forward.

But fed up locals plucked up the courage to work with



Matthew Hancock, 19.

Judge pays tribute to public in ASBO success

Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership Officers and Staffordshire Police to gather evidence on his unacceptable behaviour and to make statements.

It meant evidence on 17 different allegations were brought against Hancock, of Cumberbatch Avenue, Fegg Hayes at Fenton Magistrates Court.

District Judge David Taylor described the incidents that led to the application as "a catalogue of dreadful acts" and went on to praise members of the community for coming forward and giving statements to help the order be secured.

He also put an infinite time on the order expiring, as normal ASBO orders expire after two years.

Council Director of Adult and Neighbourhood Services Tony Oakman said: "The ASBO granted means that he can no longer subject people in the community to the type of behaviour he was engaged in beforehand.

"This is an excellent example of how the council, the police and the community can all work together to address an issue that has a direct, adverse effect on people's lives."

Inspector Mark Hardern from Tunstall Neighbourhood Policing

Unit said: "I very much welcome the order. My officers have spent a great deal of time supporting the community affected by his behaviour.

"The antisocial behaviour order gives the local neighbourhood officers more powers to deal with Mr Hancock if he continues to cause alarm and distress to local residents."

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Big change heralds a new era of working together for the city

By City Council Chief Executive
John van de Laarschot



THE council has changed since the last issue of *Our City*, with a new group of councillors working alongside our revised management structure.

Our new system of four directorates has reduced duplication and repetition in many of our teams and we are now operating more efficiently when it comes to working with our communities.

We are demonstrating better value for money and improving services.

As a result of the intervention, projects that have been looking at how to improve services across the council over the last few months, customers can now walk into any one of our offices and have access to a wide variety of up-to-date information quickly.

Teams are learning different ways of working and how to make better use of their resources.

This is an ongoing project and, already, the skills that have been developed are being passed on to other colleagues.

In all of this, the work of the council is member led, and I speak on behalf of all our officers in welcoming the 44 newly elected members who will govern our great city over the next four years.

Strong political leadership will be essential for Stoke-on-Trent to flourish and I would urge you to work with your ward councillor to highlight issues that need addressing in your area and to take an active part in improving Stoke-on-Trent so that, together, we can create a city of which we can all be really proud.

A major part of that improvement will be the new East West Shopping Precinct and the new bus station, which will form the foundations of a revitalised city centre.

With planning permission granted earlier this year, work has now started on site, and soon we will be able to see the new developments take place.

Creating and enabling major developments like this will allow Stoke-on-Trent to bring new investment and business to the city, helping to grow our economy and creating a long term sustainable plan for Stoke-on-Trent.

China Tales

By Placer

How a film premiere in Burslem 'turned out nice again' for George

THIS year is the 50th anniversary of the death of George Formby, pictured right, the ukulele-strumming entertainer whose distinctive style of comedy and music made him a British film superstar and a national treasure.

Fans from throughout the UK and around the world will be descending on Blackpool – the seaside town where Wigan-born George and his wife and business manager, Beryl, made their home – for a series of conventions celebrating his life.

Songs like *When I'm Cleaning Windows*, *Leaning On A Lamp Post* and *With My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock* will be reverberating around the Imperial Hotel – and, no doubt, there will be a few impersonators trying to replicate George's trademark toothy-grin and catchphrase "turned out nice again".

Blackpool was George's spiritual home, but – perhaps not a lot of people know – he also had a special affinity with Stoke-on-Trent. One reason for this was that back in 1934 his film career was launched at the Palladium Cinema in Waterloo Road, Burslem.

George's first movie, a low-budget production entitled *Boots! Boots!*, had its premiere at the Palladium – and it wowed the local audiences who danced and sang in the aisles.

John Walley, a North Staffordshire based founder member of the George Formby Society, told me: "News of this tremendous response to the film and box



office success quickly spread to executives at Ealing Studios in London – and the rest is history, as they say. He always had a soft spot for The Potteries and returned many times to perform at the Theatre Royal and Victoria Hall."

George's other big connection with Stoke-on-Trent was his long-standing friendship with soccer legend Sir Stanley Matthews. The two met when Stan was playing for Blackpool and George was regularly starring in the theatres along the Golden Mile. "They were my two big heroes – and I saw them both in person for the first time on the same day," recalls John.

The occasion was the FA Cup 5th Round Proper on the 20 February 1954 – Port Vale versus Blackpool at Vale Park. George was appearing at the Victoria Hall and Stan invited him and Beryl to be his guests at the game, which was played in front of a 42,000 capacity crowd with another 8,000 outside the ground listening to a relayed commentary.

"My father was lucky enough to get two tickets and we sat at the back of the Bycars End," said John, a life-long Vale supporter. "I was 11-years-old – you can imagine my excitement when I saw George a few yards in front of me in the crowd. Seeing him and watching Stan play – superstars of their day – was unforgettable."

And, of course, the day got even better for young John. Vale's local lads overcame a mighty Blackpool side, packed with internationals – pulling off a famous 2-0 victory.



Stanley Matthews leaves the pitch at the end of the 1954 FA Cup tie at Vale Park.

Tweet treat for eagle-eyed election fans

A LITTLE bird tells me election watchers in Stoke-on-Trent were in for a special tweet in the early hours of 6 May this year.

Hawk-eyed souls who use the social network Twitter were given a blow by blow account of dramatic events at this year's historic local election count by regular bite-sized updates from the

council's communications team.

The regular tweets, each less than 147 characters long, were continued throughout the night until results were declared in the early hours.

● More events in the future will be covered on Twitter. Anyone can keep up with the latest news from the council on twitter.com/SoTCityCouncil



Budding gardeners Kenzie Evans (left), aged four, Kai Heath, three, and Sophie Rushton, four, who all attend Eastwood Neighbourhood Nursery, are busy in the Trent Mill Nature Park.

Tiny tots help the garden grow

LITTLE green fingers in Joiners Square are doing their best to help Stoke-on-Trent turn silver into gold at this year's Britain in Bloom awards.

Tiny tots at Eastwood Neighbourhood Nursery and older children from Waterside Primary School have been working hard at the nearby Trent Mill Nature Park.

The park, which has been transformed from an overgrown site into an urban oasis by a newly formed Friends organisation, was part of a citywide silver gilt winning entry last year.

But the Friends are going it alone this year and, with strong community backing, have entered the Large Village category. More than a hundred people turned up to the launch event.

Children, relatives and volunteers have set about making sure the site is at its blooming best for the judges when they arrive in July.

Youngsters from Waterside Primary School built bird and bat boxes. Little ones as young as two from the nursery have planted an urban orchard as well as flowers and hedges at a compound in the park built by volunteers from the Princes' Trust. Artwork for a special notice board at the nature park has been produced by the City Kids

Admiring the flowers in the nature park is two-year-old Taylor Fisher, who also goes to the nursery.



After School Club, which is based at the nursery.

A pond has also been cleared and winning wildflower meadows from last year are making a comeback. The Friends have been supported by Andy Campbell, a council Countryside Worker.

Val Platt, Nursery Manager and Chair of Friends of Trent Mill Nature Park, said: "We were really pleased with the turnout at the launch event and want as many people as possible to get involved. It's brought the whole community together and is fantastic for the

children. It's lovely to see them out in the fresh air with their plastic trowels, forks and rakes learning about nature. I'm a passionate believer that there's nothing like being out in the real world doing practical things."

For more information about the Friends group or to find out how you can help the community go for gold, contact Val at Eastwood Neighbourhood Nursery on 01782 283222 or email enquiries@eastwoodnursery.com

Thousands of visitors to watch two top cycling events

THOUSANDS of visitors are set to flock to the city when two top national and international cycling events return.

Some of the UK's best cyclists will take to the streets of Stoke-on-Trent when the Halfords Tour Series takes place for the third year running in June.

And in September, 100 of the world's top riders will take part in the local stage of the Tour of Britain, once again putting the city on the global sporting map.

The elite Halfords Tour Series, which is televised on ITV4, will



The Tour Series route in the City Centre is marked in purple.

see 10 teams of five cyclists battle it out over eight stages to see who is the overall team winner.

The riders arrive in Stoke-on-Trent on Thursday 7 June and the city will also host a stage of the Johnson's Health Tech Women's Grand Prix series, a race for top-class female cyclists including local team Horizon Fitness Racing, who boast World Champions Dani King and Joanne Rowsell on their roster.

A whole host of activities and entertainment has been planned for the day, with events taking place from 8am in the city centre. There will be some diversions in place on certain roads but the city will be accessible all day long.

Lord Mayor Denver Tolley said: "We are delighted that we are hosting both these top class cycling events. The past two years has seen thousands of people packed in the city centre watching fantastic athletes battle it out.

Thrilling concept

"This event is also on ITV and puts Stoke-on-Trent on the map. I know there are also rides for school children and veterans being planned and all sorts of entertainment throughout the day. It will be a good day for the city."

In the men's race Stone-based team Motorpoint will be one of the favourites, after their victory in the city last year, when over 10,000 people turned out to watch.

Race director Mick Bennett said: "The Halfords Tour Series is a unique and thrilling concept. We are looking forward to coming to Stoke-on-Trent."

Jon Johnston, MD of Trentham-based Johnson Health Tech UK, said: "It is great for



Greg Henderson wins last year's Tour of Britain stage in the city.

women's cycling, and with the Olympics just around the corner, and the ongoing focus on sport, health and wellbeing, we hope that the Grand Prix series will inspire more people to get on their bikes, especially in the city we call home."

Meanwhile the Tour of Britain cycling race will see the cream of the world's cyclists taking part in a gruelling 150 kilometre stage on 13 September, which starts at Trentham Gardens and finishes in the City Centre. It is the fourth year running that the city has hosted a stage of the race, which receives global TV coverage.

Amateur cyclists will once again have the opportunity to take on the challenge of the Stoke-on-Trent stage and raise money for The Prostate Cancer Charity a week after The Tour comes to town.

The Charity Tour Ride takes place on Sunday 25 September and gives cyclists from the UK the chance to take on the challenge of comparing themselves against the professionals.

For details of the event, please go to stoke.gov.uk/tourseries2011

Down Your Way

News from the Neighbourhoods

► **NORMACOT:** Queensberry Youth Centre has reopened after a £53,500 re-vamp incorporating design suggestions from young people in the area. Four themed rooms are based around space, nightclub, beach and graffiti. New facilities include a pool room, flat screen televisions and an IT suite. The council's Capital Investment Programme contributed £32,500 to the scheme. Increased opening times now include Fridays and Saturdays.

► **TRENTHAM:** Doorstep crime is being tackled with the launch of another No Cold Calling Zone. Warning signs have been put up in Eastwick Crescent, Werburgh Drive, Bainbridge Road, Delamere Grove, Wessex Drive and Craven Close. Residents have also been supplied with information packs as well as door and window stickers. It comes after several reported incidents in the area.

► **SNEYD GREEN:** Another Respect Week has been staged to target issues like antisocial behaviour, litter and fly tipping. Activities centred around the Community Centre in Ralph Drive and the church hall in Noblett Road included free dance sessions, life-style health checks, a community speed watch initiative to tackle speeding motorists and a tidy-up of the area by Community Payback teams.

► **NORTHWOOD AND HANLEY:** Two CCTV cameras are now operating on Upper Huntback Street and in Havelock Place to monitor antisocial behaviour. One covers the area around Hanley Jobcentre Plus where an alcohol restriction zone is also in operation. Police say both cameras are already having a beneficial effect.

► **TRENT VALE:** Essential repairs have been carried out over three weeks on footpaths in St. John's Avenue. Badly aligned and damaged kerbing was renewed during the work. Access for residents was maintained throughout the extensive renovations.

Fostering

A career that changes lives in Stoke-on-Trent

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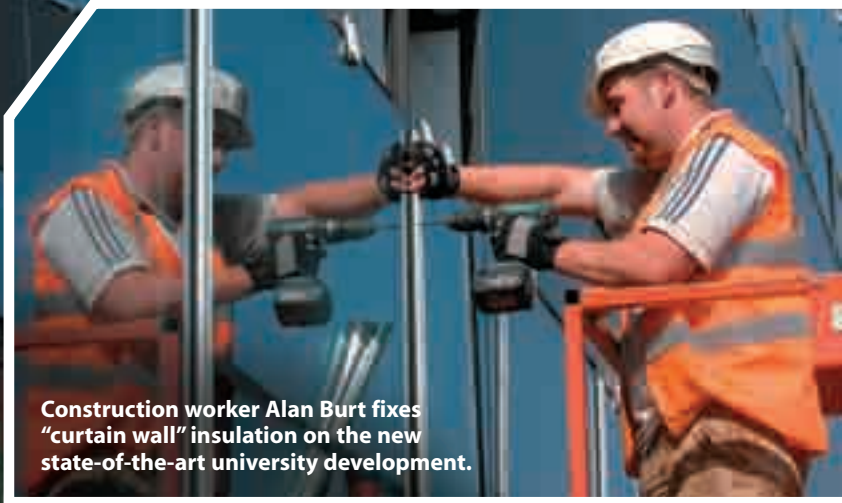


Construction sites are springing up all over the Stoke-on-Trent landscape as work starts on an exciting package of flagship projects designed to regenerate the city and boost its economy.



Council Leader Mohammed Pervez breaks the ground to mark the start of construction of the City Centre's long-awaited new bus station.

Work moving forward quickly on Staffordshire University's £30 million Science and Technology Centre.



Construction worker Alan Burt fixes "curtain wall" insulation on the new state-of-the-art university development.

Design students' street art hits the road in style



Graphic Design Student Helen Player with the plaque she designed in Thornton Road.

NOT many artists have the chance to put their work on public display – but that's what happened to 15 graphic design students from Staffordshire University.

They unveiled their unique street designs in the heart of the University Quarter (UniQ) as part of a street art project in Thornton Road that symbolises the strong links between the university's sites in Leek Road and College Road and the neighbouring Sixth Form College and Stoke on Trent College.

Thornton Road has been revamped with innovative swirling designs within the road surface together with 15 special floor plaques designed by the students to depict life in the community.

They feature images such as a tree, which morphs into a community group, and inspirational text. The plaques are linked with coloured asphalt and can be changed at a later date to showcase further designs if necessary.

First year graphic design student Helen

Player, who was chosen to design one of the plaques, said: "I saw this project as a great opportunity to see a piece of my art work displayed in public. I regularly walk along this road to get to the Leek Road campus and was excited about the prospect of seeing the street more visually exciting to walk down."

The project was funded by Renew North Staffordshire with support from the council and the university.

Joanne Tyzzer, the council's Assistant Director of City Regeneration, said: "This is a fantastic example of the work Renew North Staffordshire has achieved to help improve city spaces and create innovative public areas."

University Vice Chancellor Paul Richards said: "The project plays a significant part in improving pedestrian access between university and college sites and transforming the streetscape. We are delighted that our student artworks are such an integral part of this transformational project."

GENERATION We have LIFT OFF

A £1 million piledriving machine lays the foundation for the new CoRE Training Centre at Longton in front of historic bottle ovens which will be restored and form part of the building.

E DUCATION, housing, transport, health and retail are among the sectors that will benefit from a massive programme of investment aimed at transforming the face and fortunes of the city.

Some projects are already taking shape thanks to the efforts of the council and its partners in the public and private sector, working together to attract inward investment, improve services and create thousands of new jobs.

Hardial Bhogal, the council's Director of Place, City Renewal Services, said: "The new buildings already taking shape are a clear signal that despite one of the worst global recessions, the regeneration of Stoke-on-Trent is making good progress.

"This has been made possible in these difficult times by taking great care in how we manage our assets."

Work has started on the City Centre's new state-of-the-art bus station – expected to be completed by summer 2012 – as the first phase of the long-awaited £350 million redevelopment of the East West Shopping Centre. The 650,000 sq ft prestige complex will include a new department store, a range of shops, a hotel, multi-screen cinema, cafes, restaurants, vibrant public spaces and improved parking.

Cutting edge

The East West redevelopment is designed to revitalise the City Centre by tempting shoppers back from Manchester and Birmingham, and everything is being done to ensure the 2,000 or so jobs created by the shopping centre will go to local people.

Another proposed major city centre development – the Central Business District on the site of Unity House and surrounding land – will dovetail perfectly with the East West shopping and leisure zone and ultimately create thousands of jobs in years to come.

The district, which will be delivered in phases over the next 10 to 15 years, will

eventually provide one million square feet of business space, as well as leisure and retail, a hotel, apartments and high quality open space.

Outline planning consent has been secured for an initial 540,000 sq ft and the developer is preparing a detailed planning application for the first 107,639 sq ft phase with a view to starting on site early in 2012.

Education is being transformed by the multi-million pound Building Schools for the Future programme that will benefit every secondary and special school in the city. Meanwhile, construction of Staffordshire University's £30 million cutting edge Science and Technology Centre on the Leek Road site is progressing well.

As a vibrant part of the University Quarter, the new centre due to open in the autumn of 2012 will have a huge impact in equipping local people with the skills needed for the area's science-based industries. It will also be used by science students from the City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College and Stoke on Trent College, encouraging their progression to higher levels of study.

Job creation

Work has started on the first phase of a revolutionary scheme to transform the former Enson pottery works at Longton into a Centre of Refurbishment Excellence (CoRE). The skills and learning facility will teach new methods of refurbishment and construction as part of the Government's aim to achieve an 80 per cent reduction in UK carbon emissions by 2050.

CoRE is a collaboration between the council, Stoke on Trent College and the Building Research Establishment.

It is envisaged 700 people a year will enhance their skills, and once the project is up and running it will help create around 400 jobs a year in the region.

Summer 2011 sees the opening of the £14 million Cobridge Health Centre, which will bring together two local GP practices and a wide range of services

including a pharmacy, chest clinic and outpatients services, physio, occupational and speech therapists, district nurses, health visitors and an integrated sexual health unit.

In autumn 2011 the new £4.5 million Tunstall Primary Care Centre opens its doors on the former Alexandra Pottery site on Scotia Road, offering many different services such as two GP practices, a dental access centre, diabetes and heart failure clinics, and physiotherapy for children.

On the housing front, work is due to start shortly on 100 new homes in the Canal Quarter of Hanley once the shortlisted developer has been chosen. Linking in to the retail, leisure and commercial developments in the city centre, the Canal Quarter will provide high quality accommodation for those looking for a city living environment.

In addition around 160 council-owned and privately rented homes in Morton

Street, Maddock Street and Woolrich Street at Middleport have benefited from a £1.2 million refurbishment programme. Up to £7,000 from the Housing Market Renewal Fund has been spent on each property to install new doors, windows, walls and drains as needed.

The council is pleased that the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) has agreed to prioritise the Etruria Valley as the first Enterprise Zone (EZ) in the next phase and the expression of interest will now go to the Government.

Hardial Bhogal said: "By working together with our partners we are minimising the effects of the economic down-turn to ensure the regeneration that has already started in Stoke-on-Trent will continue at an exciting pace and that people in this city can look forward to high quality services, the best educational and employment opportunities and an enjoyable standard of life." ■



An artist's impression showing how the finished scheme will look.

Summer holiday fun on Meir sands!

OH I do like to be beside the seaside, I do like to be beside the sea – only the lovely beach in this picture is nowhere near the coast.

In fact, this stretch of golden sand being enjoyed by three-year-olds Noah



Childcare Assistant Dominne Podmore joins in the beach play.

Chiaramonte, Ellie Wilton-Trotter, and Freya Cope is the latest outside play facility at The Crescent Children's Centre in Meir.

Parents came up with the idea for a community discovery area six months ago. The seaside in The Potteries contains 95 tonnes of sand, boulders and rocks, a waterfall feature, three little beach huts, bamboo, a pagoda and some comfortable seating.

The natural textures and colours are designed to stimulate all five senses and encourage the imagination while aiding children to develop their balance, co-ordination, stamina and strength.

Older children can enjoy deep digging and building, which encourages mathematical thinking as they explore quantities and problem solving.

The beach enhances children's personal, social and emotional development as they improve their speech and language skills and build



their confidence.

City council Project Officer Ian Barber, who volunteers with the Dads Group at the children's centre, said: "I've been at the council for 28 years.

"This is the first time I've built a beach and it's turned

out to be an amazing beach.

"I've had a tremendous amount of fun over-seeing the project."

Tracy Jackson, Children's Centre Locality Manager, said: "It's turned out exactly as we wanted it to. It's great to see children playing on it.

"They are able to play in a safe and unrestricted way and it helps with their physical development and motor skills while also stimulating their creative senses."

Parents and staff are already working on their next idea – a forest.

Changes to your Local Housing Allowance – does it affect you?

There are changes to the amount of money that you will receive for your Housing Benefit if you are in receipt of LHA. You may have, or will be receiving a letter telling you the date of the change. If you have any queries regarding this, or any other Housing and Council Tax Benefit query, please contact us on **01782 232982** or visit us at any of the listed local centres:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Abbey Hulton 11 Abbots Road	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments				
Bentilee Neighbourhood Centre	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments
Blurton 111 Finstock Avenue	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments				
Burslem 15/21 Brickhouse St	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments				AM - Drop in PM - Appointments
Chell Heath Cornhill Road		9-10AM - Drop in After 10PM - Appointments			
Hanley 32/34 Old Hall St	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments
Longton 1 Commerce St	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments
Meir 737-730 Uttoxeter Rd			AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	
Stoke South Wolfe St	Drop in and appointments all day	Drop in and appointments all day	Drop in and appointments all day	Drop in and appointments all day	Drop in and appointments all day
Tunstall High St	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments	AM - Drop in PM - Appointments



Our local centres are open:
Monday to Thursday: 9am – 5pm and Friday: 9am – 4.30pm



If you require an appointment, or would like to find out more, please call us on **01782 232982**

Councillors' budget funds community police post



PC Claire Crank outside Norton Police Post.

FOUR officers are spending more time in the patch they serve now a police post has been opened in Norton.

Based by the Post Office on Knypersley Road, the facility has been partially paid for from ward budgets.

Regular police surgeries and partnership meetings are staged there while local community groups have also been encouraged to make use of the building and pick up crime reduction advice.

The post's neighbourhood officers, two police constables and two police community support

officers, serve Norton, Ball Green and Norton Green.

Chief Inspector Adrian Roberts from Stoke-on-Trent North Local Policing Team, said: "This new facility reinforces our commitment to neighbourhood policing and maintaining a visible frontline presence, which is accessible to our communities."

"Officers are spending more time carrying out high-visibility patrols and talking to local residents now they use the police post as a local base. They are out and about even more, helping to keep the community safe and providing reassurance."

Down Your Way

News from the Neighbourhoods

► **TUNSTALL:** The first No Cold Calling Zone specifically for a sheltered housing complex has been launched at Lily Gertrude Simister Court in Wesley Street. It protects the residents of 29 flats after they reported traders trying to sell items like dishcloths and kitchen utensils at inflated prices. Signs have been posted in the area while security packs and stickers have also been handed out.

► **SHELTON AND HANLEY:** Two residents' associations are planning to keep their community centres alive. A sub group of Upper Shelton Residents' Association has formed a management committee and wants to sign a lease deal with the city council for the Rectory Road Community Centre. City Waterside East Residents' Association want to do a similar deal for their centre in Hanley.

► **TRENTHAM:** Competition uniforms for championship winning Trentham Brass Band have been paid for with £1,150 from the ward budget. The band, crowned North East Midlands Brass Band Association 4th Section Champions earlier this year, attracted 26 new players to form a beginners group. For further information about the band visit their website www.trenthambrass.co.uk

► **CITY CENTRE:** Pupils from St Dominic's Priory School at Stone have recreated the famous Battle of Hatfield Chase as they learned about The Staffordshire Hoard at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery. They used over 100 miniature soldiers in a game designed to bring Anglo Saxon history to life and explain some of The Hoard finds like sword pommel caps and fragments of helmet.

► **BIRCHES HEAD:** New security gates and car parking spaces have been installed at the Birches Head Road Allotments. About £5,000 from ward budgets was spent on the improvements at the site, which is home to 38 plots. The site is padlocked, with one key for all the gardeners. If you are interested in allotments please call 234234.

Top officer's beat goes out on the buses

Sandford Hill resident Mick Salt enjoys a chat with Inspector Elliott Sharrard-Williams on the No. 26 bus.



THE man with his hands on the multi-million pound purse strings of Staffordshire Police has taken to the buses in Longton to hear what people really think about the police service.

Director of Resources Graham Liddiard was on a visit to the town's police station when he and Inspector Elliott Sharrard-Williams took a ride on the No. 26 for a spot of no-nonsense feedback.

They listened to the views of around a dozen people as the service travelled from

Longton to Normacot, on through Meir and then to Parkhall. Passengers raised various concerns, among them the issue of antisocial behaviour in Weston Coyney.

The Stoke-on-Trent South Local Policing Team Inspector, said: "It was good for Graham to get a feel for how people value our service."

"On the subject of antisocial behaviour, I was able to say that we were taking out ASBOs against two teenage boys who had been causing a considerable problem in the area."

"Generally the feedback was very positive

and it was nice to hear we're doing a good job."

It is the second time Inspector Sharrard-Williams has used public transport to hear what people want from their police service. He and a team of PCSOs, beat officers and response officers, have already spent a week on various buses to get a feel for what people are thinking. More are planned.

He said: "People feel comfortable on a bus so it's a great way to talk to the silent majority, you know those people who would never just wander into a police station to give you an opinion."

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► Report a housing repair:
stoke.gov.uk/housingrepair

Big top stories bring circus fun to libraries

ROLL up, roll up for the greatest show on Earth at Stoke-on-Trent's libraries this summer.

Circus Stars is the free-to-join summer reading challenge for children where the books take centre stage. Running from 2 July until the middle of September, children will be invited to read at least six books to win stickers featuring various performers including tightrope walkers and



jugglers. They can also have fun doing Circus Stars activity sheets.

Youngsters who sign up will receive a 3-D circus stage for their stickers and a moving image membership card. When they finish they will get a wristband, a certificate and a yo-yo.

Simply call in at your library for more information, visit stoke.gov.uk/libraries or call Jayne Stanley on 01782 238496.

Bookings taken for 'the Mitch'

BOOKINGS are now being taken at the Mitchell Arts Centre as the Trustees plan a packed programme of shows after its £4.3 million revamp.

Around a dozen events are already pencilled in at the state-of-the-art City Centre venue during June, July and August.

Marketing Director Jonathan Cliffe said: "We've got off to an excellent start with bookings and we're looking forward to a future as a celebrated arts centre."

"We're carrying out final checks at the moment and plan to show people around during the early summer. The centre is being relaunched with a clear vision to provide creative opportunities for young people."

The transformed centre now boasts state-of-the-art lighting and sound systems, dance studios, dressing rooms, a new balcony, a strengthened stage and a roof terrace.

There is also a glass-fronted café designed to echo the contours of a Spitfire wing in tribute to Reginald Mitchell.

Hunt is on for young poet laureate



The *Veil of Time*, written by Stoke-on-Trent's Young Poet Laureate Dan Tatton, pictured above.

Last Monday, last Tuesday
They cease to be again,
Last Wednesday, last Thursday
In the category of "then".

9am, 10am
A moment saved in time,
5 past, 10 past
We're forever on the climb.

For little do we notice
That what has been has gone
And together we stride forwards
As the future must go on...

BUDDING poets aged 11 to 19 are being urged to put pen to paper now the search is on for Stoke-on-Trent's next Young Poet Laureate.

Entrants have to submit four poems including one about the city to the competition, which is being funded and run by the city council's library service.

Short-listed contenders will perform their work before an audience of family, friends and judges later this year. The winner receives £100 in prize money and their poetry will be published as a postcard.

The current and first Young Poet Laureate is 17-year-old Dan Tatton from Smallthorne who took up writing poetry in 2006 when he realised he had nothing to read before going to bed.

The City of Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College student said: "I wrote two poems and showed them to my English teacher at Haywood Engineering College and she was very positive.

"Since then I've written about 70 poems and I've self-published two books of my work with the help of my neighbours Alan and Margaret Knight who covered the printing costs. I sell them at craft fairs and events.

"I love poetry because it's a great way of expressing yourself. I was shocked but incredibly grateful when I became Young Poet Laureate and would encourage everyone else to go for it."

His busy year has included writing poetry for the city council's corporate Christmas card and he has staged poetry workshops in schools.

Work for this year's competition should be typed and include a name, age and contact details. Entries can be emailed to jayne.stanley@stoke.gov.uk or posted to her at the City Central Library, Bethesda Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3RS. The closing date is 17 September 2011.



Apprenticeships



North Staffordshire 2011

Friday 3 June 1pm-7.30pm – King's Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

Interested in an Apprenticeship?

Meet training providers and employers and talk to actual apprentices to gain an insight of what being an apprentice involves.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is hosting this event to showcase apprenticeships, adult learning and employment opportunities across North Staffordshire.

For further information about this event, please contact **Katie Archer** on 01782 238196, email: katie.archer@stoke.gov.uk or **David O'Connell** on 01782 233494, email: david.oconnell@stoke.gov.uk

Skills Funding Agency



Learn 4 Work



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Modern family homes at affordable prices

Do you want to own your own home but think you can't afford? **Think again!**

Show home now open:
Every Wednesday 1pm - 4pm

Call to register or book an appointment on 01782 854738 or email ingestre@aspirehousing.co.uk

OPEN DAYS

Sun 29th May
10am - 1pm

Sat 18th June
9.30am - 1pm



'...we are confident that Ingestre Square will be a popular and vibrant location for years to come...'

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LOVE
FOOD
hate waste .com



Technical Support Officer James Barker.

Food diary bears fruit

KEEPING a two-month Love Food Hate Waste diary was time well spent for James Barker and his housemates who recorded everything they threw away.

Keen cook James, a Technical Support Officer in the council's Waste Management Team, kept a note of every item of food discarded in the Basford house he shares with Adam Priekulis and James Mann.

James, who feeds his mates signature dishes like chilli, curry and lasagne, said: "Keeping the diary has taught us to make better use of food. For instance we turn stale bread into bread crumbs which go in the freezer, and chicken carcasses make excellent soup and stock.

"We are also using more frozen vegetables – they taste just as good as fresh veg, but there's no waste as what you don't use goes back in the freezer."

The special diary and lots of recipe ideas can be downloaded from www.lovefoodhatewaste.com

He said: "We've certainly thrown away a lot less food as a result of keeping the diary. It's amazing how many leftovers can be put to good use – and it's also saved us money. We certainly won't be reverting back to our old ways."



Jason Sarginson training with pupils at Bursley Primary School. Pictured left to right are Hollie Middleton and Matthew Stubbs, eight, Shana Pemberton, nine and Holly Tomkinson, eight.

Volunteering pays off with a job

AWARD winning Jason Sarginson has netted a job at Port Vale after volunteering for the StreetGames project delivered by the council.

This time last year, the 24-year-old was unemployed and living in a hostel in Hanley after coming to The Potteries from Cannock. It was a low point in a life that had already seen him moving through 15 care homes in 14 years.

Then volunteering came to his rescue as he built his confidence and skills delivering sports activities for eight to 18-year-olds as part of the council's StreetGames programme to tackle antisocial behaviour.

His selfless work saw him named the city's Young Volunteer of the Year, an award

presented to him by Stoke City player Ryan Shotton. And all his hard graft and commitment paid off when he landed a job, through the Government's Future Jobs Fund, as a coach with Port Vale Football Club's Football in the Community programme.

Landed a job

He said: "I'd seen StreetGames on the internet and called to ask about opportunities. I really enjoyed volunteering and was happy when I learned I'd won the award. I didn't think I'd win. Then I got the job at Vale. I do a minimum of 25 hours a week coaching and I've got my own flat now so that's great. My life's 100 times better than it was. I can really see a future."

Port Vale Community Manager Jim Cooper said: "He's a really good lad and is always

prepared to go that extra mile. It's nice to support people and give them a chance."

StreetGames Officer David Hardwick, who works in the council's Sports and Leisure Services Division, said: "Jason is extremely enthusiastic and passionate about sport and this showed in his volunteering. He always showed a positive attitude and that, in turn, had a positive effect on young people in the sessions.

"He's able to form a good rapport with young people of all ages and from all walks of life and embodies the spirit of volunteering. We're delighted the skills he learned with us have helped him get a job at Port Vale."

■ **For more details call 01782 235001, visit the StreetGames Stoke-on-Trent Facebook page or email streetgames@stoke.gov.uk**

Hub brings important facilities to heart of community



Hub committee members, left to right, Derek Ecclestone, Muriel Warrillow, Christine Pratt, Alex Fagan and Dave Jones.

NEW community facilities are opening in Blurton as part of a £7 million regeneration project.

The purpose-built Blurton Community Hub in Ingestre Square is home to a police post and library.

The WRVS will run services two days a week for older people while JET will offer employment and training advice.

The centre has an IT training suite and rooms available for public hire.

The centre opens on Saturday 2

July with invited guests shown around from 11am to 12.30pm.

The doors will be opened to the public for three hours from 2pm as taster sessions are staged of the services on offer.

It is the first phase of regeneration in the area and includes three retail units and a range of social housing. There are plans for more retail units and housing.

For more information about the centre call Blurton Farm Residents' Association on 07798 892908.

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Successful apprenticeship scheme provides key to finding permanent employment

Pathway to a promising career with the council

MEET two of the hundreds of people who have been put on the path to a promising career with the help of Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Apprenticeship Scheme.

Carl Twigg and Lucie Blakeman have landed permanent jobs with the council, thanks to the programme that trains young people and older jobseekers.

The successful scheme for apprentices is currently recruiting another 100 people. All learners are expected to achieve an NVQ Level 2 or 3, a technical certificate related to their specific career goals and Key Skills in communication.

At the moment an impressive 93 per cent of those taking part are achieving this target – compared to the national average of 89.7 per cent.

Carl Twigg, aged 24, left Trentham High School in 2003 keen on sport but not sure what he wanted to do with his life. He joined the council's Apprenticeship Scheme and during the following 12 months enjoyed valuable experience as a lifeguard and recreation assistant at community leisure and sporting venues such as Fenton Manor Sports Complex, Dimensions and Northwood Stadium.

After 12 months, Carl completed his relevant NVQ Level 2 framework qualifications, then enrolled at Stoke on Trent College where he gained his national Gym Instructor qualification, and achieved Level 3 in Personal Training.

While studying, Carl carried on working in various roles at Fenton Manor Sports Complex. He progressed from there to mentoring and supporting

apprenticeship learners. This gave him the opportunity for his current position as a Tutor Assessor with the council's City Renewal Directorate.

Carl tutors on sports programmes tailored to the individual needs of organisations such as schools and local authorities as well as Stoke City Football Club. As a fully qualified tutor, he also passes on his expertise to other aspiring trainers.

Carl said: "Without the Apprenticeship Scheme I doubt I would have ever developed my passion for sport into an interesting and rewarding career. I did not want to enter full-time further education, and being an apprentice meant I was able to work and learn at the same time."

Different directorates

Lucie Blakeman, aged 18, left Painsley Catholic College in Cheadle two years ago with 12 GCSEs and ambitions to be a teacher. However, after starting a further education course Lucie decided that a teaching career was not for her.

Lucie applied to join the apprenticeship scheme after attending an apprenticeship day at Port Vale. She was accepted for a place as an apprentice administrator and in the following 12 months worked in many different directorates across the council. Then she successfully applied for a full-time position as Business Administrator in Business Services. Lucie, who achieved NVQ Level 2 and is currently studying a Level 3 in Business Administration alongside her job, said: "The scheme was a brilliant opportunity. I learned so much from moving around a lot in the council.

"The apprenticeship was a real



Former apprentice Lucie Blakeman now has a permanent job as a Business Administrator in the council's Business Services Division.

advantage when I applied for my job because my experience of how council departments work helped me to gain the knowledge and experience I needed in the job role and be more confident for the interview."

Lucie added: "From not being sure what I wanted to do, I now look forward to a Local Government career that offers opportunities for promotion and fresh challenges."

Dawn Hewins, Assistant Director of HR and Transformation, said: "The apprenticeship scheme has so far yielded a fantastic success rate, our best yet. We have received positive feedback from apprentices who are currently on the scheme and from those who have completed it.

"It's an important part of our workforce planning and shows that the city council encourages people into work and they learn skills that they can use throughout their careers."

Former apprentice Carl Twigg has realised his ambition to work full-time as a Learn 4 Work Tutor.



Stoke on Trent City Council's Employment & Skills team will be hosting an event to showcase opportunities within adult learning, apprenticeships and employment opportunities across the city. For further information about the event please contact Katie Archer on 01782 238196 or email katie.archer@stoke.gov.uk or Duncan.Gilchrist@stoke.gov.uk

New state-of-the-art dental surgery opens offering full-range of NHS services

A new dental surgery for 3,000 patients has opened in Stoke.

Two dentists and a team of nurses are offering a full range of NHS services, from simple check ups to a full course of treatment, at The NHS Liverpool Road Dental Practice.

The state-of-the-art surgery has been

set up in a converted former pub, the New Phoenix, and is being run by Primecare Oral Health Services Limited.

It opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. Principal Dentist Jabbar Hussain said: "It is a great pleasure to be providing NHS treatment to people in Stoke-on-Trent and the nearby area. As

well as providing excellent care, the dental practice has extended opening times, making it easier to book a convenient appointment."

Jeanette Sims, NHS Stoke on Trent Planning Manager, said: "Stoke-on-Trent has one of the worst rates for decayed teeth in the West Midlands region so we

need to do all we can to improve people's access to NHS dentistry in the city. The new practice in Stoke will help us do that."

Patients can register by telephoning 0330 123 9134 or calling into the practice on Liverpool Road to speak to a member of the team.

Grandmother, aged 64, loses seven stone in a year

THE 5,000th patient to take part in a programme in Stoke-on-Trent to help people combat obesity is celebrating losing seven stone in just over a year.

Joyce Conway, 64, weighed in at 19 stones when she first met Lifestyle Coach Yvonne Rowland... for a conversation which would start to change the Hanford resident's life.

Joyce's weight meant she was struggling with mobility and did very little exercise. From then on it was all change. A personal health plan was drawn up including 20 weeks' free membership at the Shapes gym in Fenton and 12 weeks' free membership of Slimming World.

She started swimming and working out in the gym twice a week, and has now signed up as a member at Shapes Gym at Fenton Manor Sports Complex. Her sessions at Slimming World were such a success she was named Slimmer of the Month every month since she started, and has been nominated to be the national organisation's Woman of the Year.

Very encouraging

After a year of fewer snacks and more healthy fruit and vegetables, Joyce now weighs 12 stones, has much better mobility and feels fitter and healthier.

She said: "I couldn't have done it without the support of the Lifestyle Programme – in fact, if it wasn't for the programme I'd probably be in a wheelchair by now. Yvonne was very encouraging and made me believe in myself and that I could succeed."

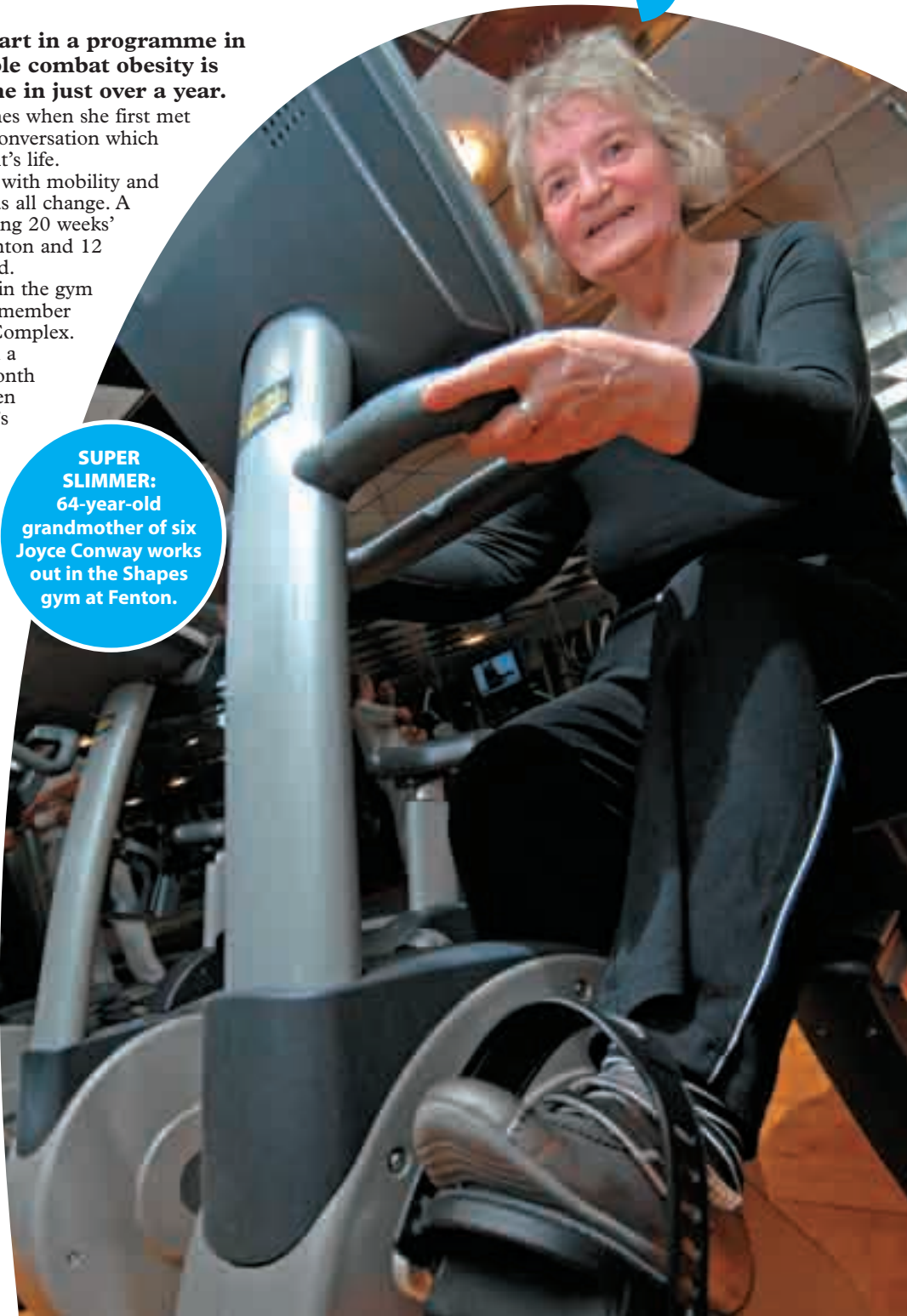
Anyone in the city who is overweight or obese, but who also has conditions such as diabetes, can be referred to the Lifestyle initiative – which was supported with £500,000 worth of funding from Sport England – by their family doctor or other NHS professional.

Dr Ruth Chambers, a family doctor from Tunstall, said: "We are lucky to have such a great support programme in Stoke-on-Trent."

"Lots of my patients have gone along and we are now seeing them with lower blood pressures as they exercise much more and their excess weight has dropped off."

People who are worried about their weight should speak to their family doctor who will explain the options open to them, as not everyone will be eligible to take part in the Lifestyle programme. Residents can also access tips for staying healthy at the website www.nhs.uk/change4life

SUPER SLIMMER:
64-year-old grandmother of six Joyce Conway works out in the Shapes gym at Fenton.



New challenge to drive through sweeping new health reforms

THE man in charge of health services in the city has now taken on an expanded role in managing and improving the NHS throughout the entire county.

Graham Urwin, pictured right, has been appointed Chief Executive of the Staffordshire Cluster – a new organisation which brings together NHS Stoke on Trent, NHS North Staffordshire and NHS South

Staffordshire. He took up his new post in April, following a five-year spell as Chief Executive of NHS Stoke on Trent. His new role will involve him driving through sweeping health reforms announced last year.

In March, West Midlands primary care trusts were grouped together into five management clusters – including Staffordshire. The aim is for them to work together to

reduce costs and to improve quality, innovation, productivity and prevention techniques in the NHS.

Mr Urwin said: "I am very pleased to have taken on this role at a time when the major reform programme presents us with a great opportunity to put firm foundations in place for a new local NHS."

"I feel we can build on the hard work that has already been



undertaken to drive up the quality of patient care and services, support GPs and make sure the NHS spends its money as effectively as possible."

Down Your Way

News from the Neighbourhoods

► **BLURTON FARM:** Steps have been taken to tackle the build up of traffic near Sutherland Primary School at dropping off and home time. A new car park has been built in nearby Allendale Walk to try and alleviate the problem. Parents who are unable to use the facility are being reminded to park considerately in the streets around the school, and to avoid parking on the zig-zag lines at the entrance, to cut the risk of accidents.

► **MILTON AND BADDELEY GREEN:** Antisocial behaviour in the area is being tackled now a six-month Dispersal Order is in force. It covers 14 streets as well as a path to a disused railway track and gives police the powers to disperse groups within the designated area and to return any persons under 16 to their place of residence. Posters and leaflets have been distributed detailing the area covered.

► **COCKSTER BROOK VALLEY:** More than 100 new trees have been planted to further enhance the beauty spot and 14 welcome signs are planned for the entrances. The Woodland Trust donated the trees to the Cockster Brook Valley Community Association, who have staged a spring clean in the area and plan a fun day in July. For more information or to get involved call 01782 237870.

► **FENPARK:** Two Respect Days of Action have been staged to address a variety of issues highlighted by residents. The community came together to help paint play areas while also clearing rubbish and pruning trees. The police maintained a presence and the children of Clarice Cliff Primary School took part in a litter pick on Foley Fields.

► **FENTON:** Work has been carried out to improve the Manor Street allotments site. New fencing means better security and the pathway alongside the site has been resurfaced. A plot has been renovated for the use of children at Christchurch Primary School. If you are interested in allotments please call 234234.

Building sites are to become a valuable live learning resource

Building Schools for the Future (BSF) construction contractors will be working with teachers to create a unique learning resource for students.

The building sites for the new academies and schools will be used for study projects covering numerous subjects on the curriculum from science and mathematics, engineering and design to English and the performing arts.

"It is a marvellous opportunity for the pupils to gain practical experience for their coursework," said BSF Project Director Tracy Penrose.

"Obviously great attention will be paid to Health and Safety issues, but construction sites can be seen as science laboratories and live learning resources.

"For instance, bringing concrete on to a site involves chemistry, maths and logistics – it is a multi-faceted operation to get the concrete where it should be, at the right time and in the right condition.

Study Project

"Following the 'life of steel' from its manufacture to final installation in a building could impact on project work in several curriculum areas.

"The construction of the learning tower at Hayward Engineering College would make an ideal study project for engineering students. The list goes on – there will be a myriad of learning opportunities.

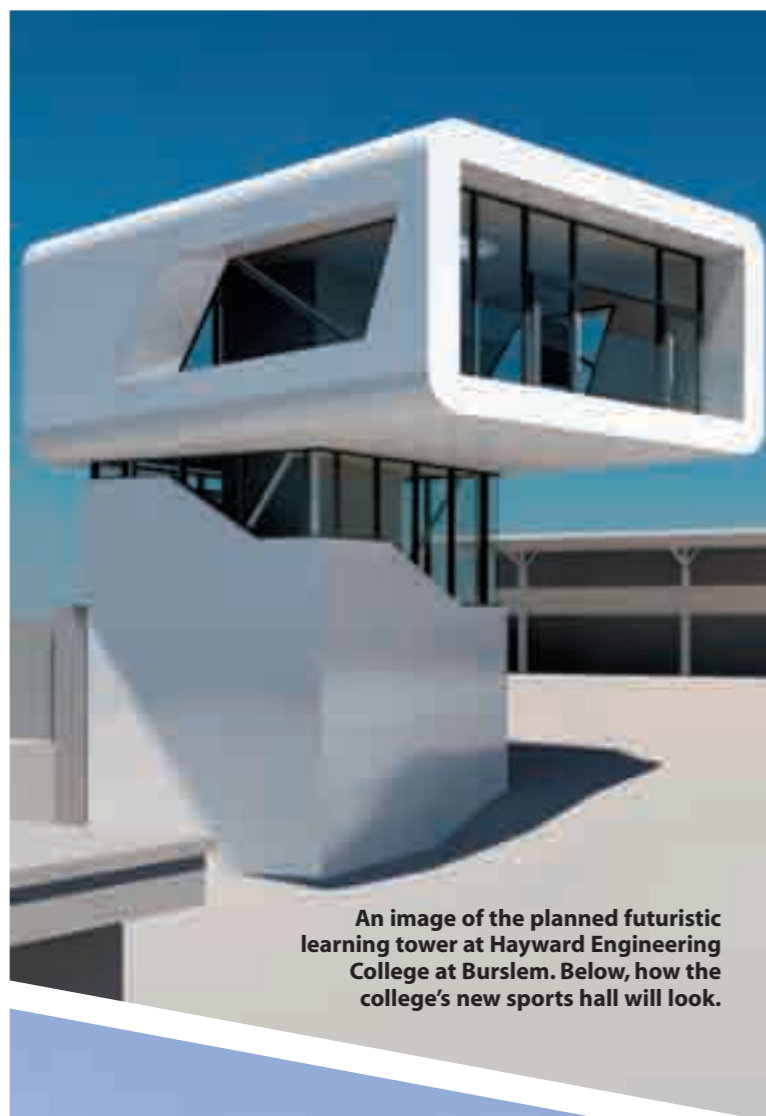
"The huge earth works raise environmental issues and energy efficiency planning covers renewable technologies. At the Co-operative Academy at Burslem there will be rainwater harvesting and solar panels will be providing electricity."

The idea for the building sites study projects was developed at the "Meet the Employer" event when representatives of the construction companies met with school staff, governors and career advisers.

"There was great enthusiasm from both sides to take this forward," added Tracy. "Ultimately the winners will be our students. They will be part of an exciting period change in the city, and by working together, our schools and contractors can help them achieve their goals and aspirations and maximise the opportunities for them to realise their potential."



An artist's impression showing how the new Thistley Hough Community School in Penkhull will look.



An image of the planned futuristic learning tower at Hayward Engineering College at Burslem. Below, how the college's new sports hall will look.



Transforming schools and boosting local economy

THE biggest ever school building programme in Stoke-on-Trent will create around £100 million worth of work for local companies and contractors.

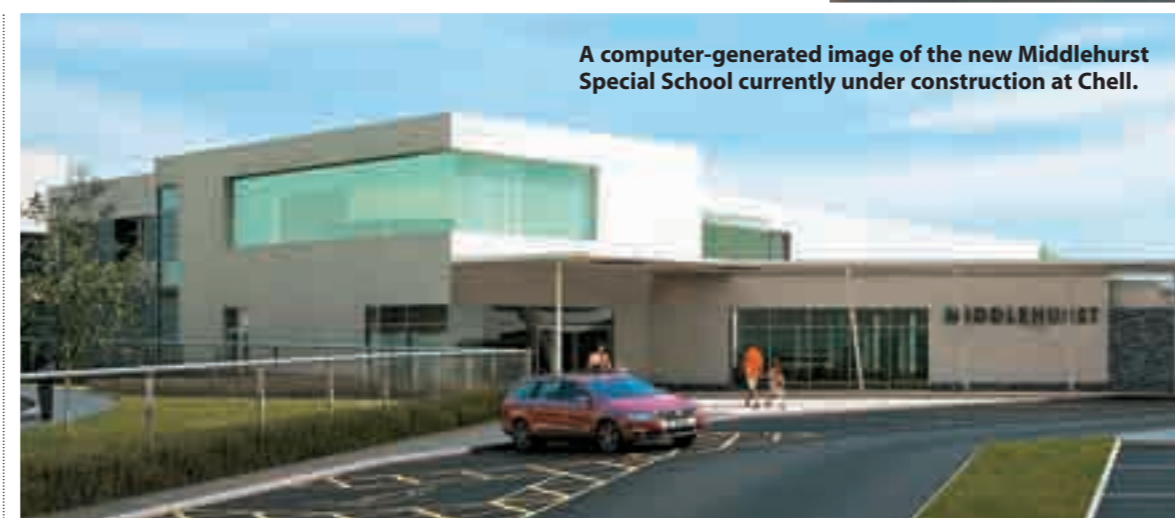
The estimate comes as the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme gathers momentum with construction well underway on seven of the multi-million pound secondary and special school schemes.

Building is due to begin in August on two more projects – the new Thistley Hough Community School in Penkhull and the new Middlehurst Special School in Chell. And by January work will be underway on all the schemes with a total spend of £213 million.

BSF Project Director Tracy Penrose said: "Over the next few months people will see building work getting into full swing. As well as transforming the city's educational infrastructure and bringing facilities right into the 21st Century, BSF will play a significant part in the city's regeneration.

"Modern new school buildings will boost the image of Stoke-on-Trent and a huge amount of money will be pumped into the city's economy. Latest estimates are that approximately £100 million of the work will go to local companies and contractors, which will help to create and safeguard jobs."

New build projects that are



A computer-generated image of the new Middlehurst Special School currently under construction at Chell.

already underway are the Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy, Blurton; the Co-operative Academy, Burslem; and the Reach Pupil Referral Unit, Trent Vale. In addition, refurbishments and extensions are being carried out at Hayward Engineering College, Burslem; Trentham Foundation; Birches Head Foundation; and Aynsley School, Blythe Bridge.

Between September and January work will start on the remaining nine schemes including three new academies – the Ormiston Horizon, Chell; the Discovery, Bentilee; and St Peter's on the former Sixth Form College site at Fenton – and the new Kemball School at Blurton.

Also, refurbishments and extensions are being done at Holden Lane High, Sneyd Green; St Margaret Ward High, Tunstall; St Thomas More College, Longton; St Joseph's College, Trent Vale; and Abbey Hill School and Performing Arts College, Bucknall.

As part of the Government's comprehensive spending review, the council were ordered to find savings on the original BSF budget. Economies totalling £10.3 million were achieved and, on that basis, ministers have given the go-ahead to all the schemes.

The savings were achieved in a range of ways including reducing floorspace, cutting high specification energy efficiency



Construction work on the Reach Pupil Referral Unit at Trent Vale is well underway.

“”
We have succeeded in making the necessary financial savings without diminishing the overall quality of schemes

BSF PROJECT DIRECTOR TRACY PENROSE



Major ground works are being carried out on land adjacent to the existing Co-operative Academy in Burslem in readiness for the start of construction of the new buildings.

Residents and businesses help to shape The Strand

RESIDENTS and businesses have had a big say in a scheme to part-pedestrianise The Strand in Longton as part of the regeneration of the historic town centre.

The Strand has been closed to all vehicles except buses between the hours of 10am-4pm for a six month trial period. If it is a success, the possibility of making the area completely free of traffic in future will be explored.

Hundreds of people responded to consultation questionnaires and 71 per cent were in favour of the trial scheme – designed to boost local businesses by making Longton a more attractive place to shop. Similar schemes in other towns have opened up opportunities to create a pleasant environment of trees, seating areas, pavement cafes and other amenities.

Some of the suggestions made by people who took part in the consultation have been incorporated into the initial Longton scheme by the council. They include:

- The proposed mini-roundabout at the junction of Heathcote Road and Gold Street has been replaced with an alternative traffic management layout to allow funeral vehicles to continue to park outside St Gregory's Church.



Traffic congestion in The Strand before the pedestrianised zone was introduced.

- Transport Lane will not now be within the partial pedestrian zone. Instead it's proposed to make the road open to two-way traffic up to The Strand in order to provide shops and Longton Market with access for delivery vehicles.

- Heathcote Road, up to the junction with The Strand, is no longer proposed to be within the pedestrian zone, and will become "two-way" rather than the current one-way.

- Additional signage to give drivers

plenty of warning they are approaching the pedestrian zone.

Pete Price, Assistant Director Technical Services, said: "The initial consultation was well received and, having listened to suggestions made, the revised proposals were drawn up.

"It's important that residents and traders who use the town are able to shape its future. I urge people to consider the revised plans and let us know if they feel they will create a positive scheme for the town."



Pete Price, Assistant Director Technical Services, unveils a partial-pedestrian zone sign at The Strand.

Families benefit from Partnership campaign success

FAMILIES at Longton are celebrating the success of a 10-year campaign for play, leisure and recreational facilities to help keep children and young people out of trouble.

There has already been a dramatic reduction in levels of antisocial behaviour and vandalism thanks to the efforts of Chad Park Partnership – formed by local parents, grandparents and young people to provide the facilities and foster a shared community spirit between the two residential areas separated by the main Anchor Road highway.

First, with Play Builder Fund money secured by the council, a natural play area for three to eight-year-olds was opened at Handsacre Park in 2010 – and on the same site a play facility for eight to 13-year-olds will be opened in July this year in time for the school summer holidays.

Also on the same site, run down tennis courts are being resurfaced and trees cleared to create a Multi Use Games Arena (MUGA) with ward budget funding of £11,000 secured by the Chad Park Partnership, topped up by Comic Relief funding. It is also scheduled to open in July.

Last year the area's first MUGA was built adjacent to the new Gladstone Primary School after the Partnership submitted a successful bid for £14,000 funding from Youth Opportunities.

Huge Success

This was matched by the contractors who built the new school and £5,000 was donated by local councillors from ward budgets.

The MUGA has been a huge success, with weekly bookings from local football teams, community groups, youth services and StreetGames, and after consulting with young people about what further facilities they would like on the site, the Partnership is now seeking funding for a BMX track.

Partnership Chairperson Sue Rammell said: "The vast

reduction in antisocial behaviour and vandalism since these facilities were introduced proves that most children and young people don't get into trouble if they have somewhere to play or just meet up and chill out together.

"The Partnership has received brilliant support from ward councillors, our MP and council staff, and we have been successful in bringing the communities either side of Anchor Road together to promote the interests of all residents in the area and encourage a sense of belonging."



Celebrating the new play facilities at Handsacre Park are Chad Park Partnership Chairperson Sue Rammell, right, and committee member Mandy Arnott with Bridget Arnott, aged 10, second left, and nine-year-old Eve Emberson.

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Narina Stead with some of the information leaflets she hands out to support families of children with special needs.



Follow up interviews to check accuracy

INTERVIEWERS have started visiting selected households to ask residents about their understanding of the 2011 Census questionnaire.

The Census Quality Survey will evaluate the information people provided and assess their understanding of the questions. It will also help confirm that the information held by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) is as accurate as possible.

Each interview will cover questions contained in the Census questionnaire and record responses. The interviewers will not have access to the information entered on the Census questionnaires but will ask very similar questions on their visit.

Interviews have now started and will continue up until Friday 19 August. Selected households will be contacted by letter in advance, and all interviewers will show residents their ID cards, which carries their name, photo and Census and ONS logos.

Members of the public who are unsure about the legitimacy of the interviewer are urged to call the ONS survey helpline on 0800 298 5313 to verify their identity.

New system to improve health visits

STOKE-ON-TRENT has been chosen to pioneer a new health visiting system aimed at improving the health of children and families.

Health visiting teams will be working together to plan a new way of offering more flexible services at times and places which suit the local community from April 2012.

Mandy Donald, Managing Director of Stoke on Trent Community Health Services, said: "We're delighted that Stoke-on-Trent has been chosen as one of the sites as it will allow us to share best practice and expertise which can only be good for families in the city."

Network of advisers offer vital support to families

VOLUNTEER Narina Stead enjoys supporting the families of children with special educational needs through the education process so much that she now helps train those who want to follow in her footsteps.

The mum-of-three gives up about five hours a week to work for the Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service, a city council funded organisation, which has given confidential advice to over 3,000 families since 1999.

And she gets so much out of her work that she is now urging others to sign up to the latest 11-week training programme for would-be Independent Parental Supporters.

The course, staged for three hours a week at the Queensbury Citywide Training Centre in Normacot, equips volunteers with the knowledge they need to enable families to make the most informed decisions they can

about their child or young person's educational options.

It covers a range of issues from the law and disability to local authority policies.

Volunteers also learn how to support families through potentially stressful meetings and form filling and help them understand school and statutory documentation.

Parent Partnership Training Officer Emma Walton said: "We're an arms-length organisation dedicated to giving impartial and independent advice so families can make informed decisions for their child's education.

Enthusiasm

"We also signpost families to other useful support groups like the Citizens Advice Bureau, children's centres or organisations specialising in conditions like autism. Our volunteers are very, very important in helping us to support families. The Parent Partnership Service wouldn't be able to offer the level of

one-to-one support for parents without them. Feedback from our volunteers is that it's an extremely rewarding role. They get a lot of satisfaction from seeing a family through the system and helping them make informed choices."

Narina, 35, had already completed a youth work course and took her Independent Parental Supporters course in 2009. She said: "It was very enjoyable with lots of information so you have to be committed but I like being challenged. The case work is fabulous and it's so fulfilling. I feel like I make a difference because quite often you're helping people who might be at their wits end. I'd recommend it."

All potential volunteers must be over 18 and willing to undergo a Criminal Record Bureau check. To sign up for the course or to get more information on volunteering, call 01782 234701, email parent.partnership@stoke.gov.uk or download a form from www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk

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Funding to help preserve natural habitats

CONSERVATION work at a Potteries beauty spot has been given a £123,800 boost now the site has won funding for the next decade.

Natural England will pump more than £12,000 a year into Berryhill Fields Local Nature Reserve to protect the site and pay for planned improvements.

Helen Meharg, the Stoke-on-Trent City Council Countryside Team Leader responsible for the 68-hectare reserve, said: "I'm absolutely ecstatic. It means we can go ahead with plans which will turn it into an even lovelier site for the people of Stoke-on-Trent to enjoy."



The Higher Level Stewardship funding will help manage meadow and lowland heathland, which is home to birds like snipe and short-eared owls.

It will help protect the moated site of a former 13th century manor house and pay for work on five meadows to encourage flowering plants like yellow rattle.

Three temporary ponds will be created and existing reed beds improved to create a better wetland habitat as part of plans to encourage more migrating birds like curlew and sedge warblers to over-winter at Berryhill.



Government spending cuts may have put the brakes on the CycleStoke initiative – but the project will leave a lasting legacy and many of the measures will continue. Here, *Our City* celebrates the initiative's work and its lasting legacy for cycling in Stoke-on-Trent...

Safe lessons wheeled out to children

HUNDREDS of school children have taken cycling to their hearts thanks to the work of two dedicated Bike It officers from national sustainable transport charity Sustrans who were funded by CycleStoke.

Jennie McGeoch and Steve Dyster work intensively with 27 schools across the city to help youngsters improve their cycling skills through several schemes. These include:

Biker's Breakfast – a healthy start to the day for children, parents and teachers cycling to school together.

Dr. Bike – cycle maintenance workshops to help teach basic safety checks how to carry out minor repairs.

Bikeability Training – basic skills.

Be Bright, Be Seen – road safety lessons.

Bike Security Marking.

Fun Rides.

Help For Teachers – to launch cycling related lessons.

Help For Schools – to help schools develop their cycling, scooting, walking policies.

Children have taken part in challenges including the National Virtual Bike Race, which saw Stoke-on-Trent stage The Big Pedal.

Nineteen schools took part in the 2011 event, completing 7,000 cycle journeys to school in three weeks.

Schools will continue to promote cycling thanks to the Bike It officers who have trained Cycling Champions in each school to drive forward skills and travel to school plans.



All smiles as Millie Smallman, four, Myles Hubbard, aged five, and Lucy Statham, four, take part in an Easter egg hunt at Christ Church Primary School in Fenton.

£5m project puts cycling on route to success

CYCLING received a massive boost when, in June 2008, Cycle City status saw £5million made available for projects designed to improve people's health and the environment in Stoke-on-Trent.

The city boasts a 159-kilometre cycle network, half of which is off-road, including traffic free paths along greenways as well as canals and rivers. The new network includes 11 cycle greenways and cycle paths, nine new routes, 10 cycle gates and new signs to help people navigate routes for bikes. Cycle parking has also been provided to over 30 schools.

As well as delivering infrastructure improvements, CycleStoke also produced maps, leaflets and guides to help people cycling around the city using the

new routes and the existing road network. They include quieter routes, which are more bike friendly, as well as work and school routes using the greenways that criss-cross the city.

Safety training has been provided for 8,633 children and adults since the project started and one-to-one sessions were provided near people's homes and workplaces.

Developing skills

Fifteen training sessions were staged as part of the Stoke City-supported Spoke City scheme to help people learn to ride, develop their skills and understand bike maintenance.

CycleStoke staff held a total of 63 leisure rides during 2010 alone, including match day rides involving Port Vale Football Club and a Bottle Kiln tour ride.

Cycle challenges included Bike to Work, which saw cyclists from 12 workplaces clocking up more than 4,250 miles over two weeks.

More than 7,400 children joined in the month-long Bike 'n' Hike Challenge. Schemes have encouraged university students to take up cycling while 32 "Be Seen Cyclist Pitstops" in 2010 fitted lights, locks and high visibility vests to more than 1,170 residents as part of an initiative to improve safety on winter nights.

Bike giveaways were given to cyclists and several were also won through competitions.

John Nichol, Strategic Manager for Transportation and Engineering, said: "CycleStoke has invested millions of pounds over the last three years to create a cycle network the city can be proud of. We now have more miles of cycle paths than ever before,

and projects with schools and the wider community have encouraged thousands more people to ride a bike. It is particularly pleasing to see how many young children have embraced our cycling projects, and hopefully they will continue to ride, with confidence, in the future.

"The response from all of the community, from children, students, commuters and people simply wanting to discover the city's hidden charms on leisurely rides, has clearly demonstrated that Stoke-on-Trent is a cycling-friendly city. We want to see this to continue into the future."

Training to continue

CYCLE training in the city has been given a big boost now the Department for Transport is continuing to fund the Bikeability programme.

Bikeability lessons for children are to carry on until at least 2015 with £110,000 available to fund them in 2011 alone. Around 80 schools and 3,000 children will benefit.

Also continuing in the city are Confidence Camps for adults and children, with 50 already scheduled for this year.

Trained volunteers across the city are ensuring that the work of CycleStoke staff in organising leisure rides will go on with 10 already planned this year.

Maps and information still available to cyclists

CONTINUED support is available for cyclists on-line and through material produced by CycleStoke.

The 2011 Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme Cycling Map and Guide was distributed with the last issue of *Our City* though thousands of copies remain available.

Three new routes have been added to the latest Leisurely Cycle Ride route map, which now carries 11 routes to be explored across the city. Some existing routes have been revised to incorporate recent improvements in the cycle network. There are suggested shortcuts for people who tire and routes can be linked together.

A new *Get Cycling* magazine offers hints and tips on a number of issues like getting started, choosing and buying a bike, how and where to ride, cycling with children, cycling in older age, cycle security, what to wear and confidence training.

A handy pocket-sized Bike Maintenance card helps people keep their bikes roadworthy at all times.

■ These resources are still available to get you onto two wheels. For more information go to www.cyclestoke.co.uk or call 01782 238692.



Cycling on the Trent & Mersey Canal towpath are, left to right, Strategic Manager John Nichol, Cycling City Project Manager Emily Robinson and Cycling Development Officer Stuart Aldridge.

Special report on recycling and composting



New wagon hits city streets

DEDICATED collection vehicles are now collecting the growing amount of organic waste being recycled in the city.

These vehicles make the collection and processing of garden, card and food waste materials more efficient.

The vehicles collect lawn clippings, weeds, leaves, hedge clippings, cut flowers, tree bark, plants, twigs, small branches, old compost, food and cardboard.

But residents are asked not to include waxed packaging like milk and fruit juice cartons, cat and dog mess, disposable nappies, plastics including bin liners, carrier bags, plant pots or heavy items such as soil, stones, rubble, fencing or posts.

The contents of the brown bin are shredded and rotted down to make award-winning compost.

Other facilities able to recycle separated garden waste, cartons and card and many other items include the two Household Waste and Recycling Centres at Federation Road in Burslem and Campbell Road near Hanford.

Charge Hand Gary Valentine collecting organic waste in Abbey Hulton.

Growing effort boosts recycling drive

MORE and more residents are making the most of a revamped recycling service which takes away their garden waste and makes environmentally-friendly compost.

Almost one in five residents whose homes are covered by the collections uses the service which helps the city meet recycling targets set by the Government.

And by making sure their garden and organic waste is recycled into award-winning compost (see below) they are doing their bit for the environment by reducing the amount of rubbish sent to landfill sites.

The latest figures show 17.76 per

cent of people in the areas covered by the brown bin recycling service are using special wheelie bins to recycle clippings, trimmings, weeds and compost from the garden.

That represents an increase of almost one per cent on last year's figures and is a step in the right direction as the city becomes a more environmentally-friendly place to live.

The kerbside collection service was launched to add another recycling option to reuse more of the 80,000 tonnes of rubbish the people of Stoke-on-Trent place in their wheelie bins each year.

It covers almost 80 per cent of domestic properties in the city – a total of 88,231 homes.

Initially the fortnightly collections ran from March to October, but in

winter 2010 the scheme ran continuously.

Senior Waste Services Manager Nigel Trueman said: "Residents asked us for improved recycling facilities, including a kerbside collection for green garden waste."

"New laws also mean that more biodegradable waste has to be recycled and not sent to landfill where it can cause harmful pollution."

"If we don't change the way we manage the waste produced in our city we risk being heavily fined by the Government."

"The kerbside recycling service will help the environment and also help us manage our rubbish in a sustainable way, in order to preserve our planet for future generations."

● The latest figures show Stoke-on-Trent recycled 40.48 per cent of its waste in 2010/11... an increase of almost 3 per cent on the previous year.

These improvements are needed if the city is to hit a target set by the Government of recycling half its waste by 2020.

Nigel Trueman said: "The improvement shows people in the city are joining in with recycling to create a cleaner, greener Stoke-on-Trent and with their help we will continue to move towards and beyond the 50 per cent target."



Nursery Assistant Margaret Ball planting a peace lily into some Vital Earth compost.

Our compost scoops award

COMPOST made from garden waste collected from homes in Stoke-on-Trent has won a prestigious gardening accolade.

The compost, made by Ashbourne-based Vital Earth, has won the Association for Organics Recycling (AFOR) Jim Balance Compost Marketing Award for the second time in three years.

Vital Earth Managing Director Steve Harper said: "This is great news. It is recognition of the fact that we can produce a viable, high quality 'professional' growing media allowing growers to switch to peat-free with confidence."

Vital Earth processes some 85,000 tonnes of green waste at its £12 million Ashbourne plant each year, including thousands of tonnes of waste collected from residents in The Potteries.

Special home insurance gives peace of mind to tenants

PEACE of mind comes at an affordable cost for council tenants and leaseholders who can protect their possessions with home contents insurance arranged by the authority.

Some residents may not be aware that they need to take out their own household insurance.

Protecting themselves by using the council's special service could not be easier.

Cover is provided through Aviva Insurance against a whole range of eventualities such as fire, storm, flood, theft and vandalism and even includes theft of keys and contents of freezers. Most home contents are covered on a "new for old" replacement basis.

The minimum contents value that can be insured under the council scheme is £10,000 (a weekly premium of just £1.73), while for people over 60 the lowest amount that can be insured is £8,000.

Policyholders have an option to top up the policy with accidental damage cover for a slightly higher premium.

More detailed information is available in a helpful and easy to understand booklet that includes a policy application form and a chart that helps residents to carry out their own do-it-yourself valuation of their home contents.

The home contents insurance booklet is available from the city council's local centres where customer service staff will help residents to complete the form if necessary. Advice is also available from the council's Home Ownership Team on 01782 235540.



Tenant Involvement and Home Ownership Manager Emma Fear with the leaflet promoting the home insurance package for council tenants.

Emma Fear, Tenant Involvement and Home Ownership Manager, said: "Most people find that their household contents are worth much more than they think, so it's important to protect them with insurance. In addition some residents in rented council-owned properties wrongly believe that their contents are automatically covered as a condition of their tenancy, so they stand to lose a lot of money if their possessions are damaged,

destroyed or stolen."

Emma added: "The council scheme's premiums are competitively priced in order to ensure that all our tenants can take advantage of this protection against the unexpected."

Homeowners, who are not applicable for the council scheme are advised to insure their homes and property. A range of competitive options are available through banks and online sites.



Writing a monthly budget is a big help.

Handy tips for a debt free 2011

■ **Make a budget and stick to it.** After listing all of your income and spending, look honestly at where you can make savings

■ **Stop using credit NOW. You'll never get rid of that debt if you keep adding to it. Start cutting up your credit cards to avoid any further temptation.**

■ **Prioritise your debts** (mortgage, rent, council tax, child maintenance, utilities) and pay them first. Don't pay whoever shouts loudest.

■ **Beware of "short-cuts". Don't borrow money to pay off your debt. Beware of lenders who knock on your door offering small loans. You could easily be paying back huge sums of interest.**

■ **Think before you buy.** Whatever the deal, think twice, don't buy from unauthorised traders and lenders. The initial savings and convenience may prove to be a false economy.

■ **Staffordshire Credit Union and Moneyline offer affordable loans and savings accounts.**

■ **If you think you have financial problems don't panic or ignore the problem.**

Easy guide to help beat financial jargon

Here is a guide to some common terms and jargon often used when discussing money matters:

APR: stands for Annual Percentage Rate – the cost of a loan, taking into account the interest you pay. For example, a loan with an APR of 15 per cent is more expensive than one with an APR of 11 per cent

Bankruptcy: a court order that you can apply for if you are in

debt. An official receiver takes control of your money and property and deals with your creditors.

Credit: if your bank account is in credit, it means you have money available to spend.

Credit Union: a financial co-operative owned and controlled by its members. They offer savings and low cost loans as well as other services.

Interest Rate: the percentage

that is paid on savings or loans. A savings account offering eight per cent would give you a better return than one offering five per cent.

Non-priority debts: those where non-payment will not usually result in the loss of your homes, a prison sentence, essential goods or services.

Priority debts: debts that carry the strongest penalties if payment is not made – for

example eviction from your home, disconnection of gas or electricity or imprisonment for non-payment of court fines or council tax.

Secured loan: money borrowed from a lender, using your property as a guarantee of repayment.

Unsecured loan: money borrowed from a bank, which is not secured against your home or any other asset.

Debt will not go away on its own... so take action now!

THE worst thing anyone in debt can do is to ignore the problem, sweep it under the carpet and hope it will go away... because it won't!

People having trouble managing their finances should not be tempted to ignore calls or letters from those they owe money to. It's a much better idea to contact creditors and explain the problem.

The next step should be to seek advice from an experienced debt advisor – and follow the simple steps in this self-help guide.

STEP ONE: Make a list of your debts

For each debt make sure you have the name and address of the creditor, account or reference number and the amount you owe. Decide on "priority debts" that need to

be dealt with first. These include unpaid court fines, mortgage, rent, council tax, child maintenance and income tax or VAT arrears.

Non-priority debts include benefits overpayments, bank overdrafts, unsecured loans, credit card accounts, catalogue debts and money borrowed from family and friends.

STEP TWO: Work out your budget

List all household income and expenses. Income should include earnings of you and your partner, benefits, contributions from family or lodgers and pension.

Expenses should include all spending such as mortgage or rent payments, secured loans, council tax, housekeeping, utility charges, TV licence, travel expenses

(public transport or running a car), insurance and childcare costs.

Think about ways to reduce expenditure – like eating out less, saving energy by switching off unnecessary lights and reduce satellite or cable TV subscriptions, magazine subscriptions and gym membership.

Remember to put aside a small amount to cover special occasions like birthdays.

STEP THREE: Tackle your priority debts first

After working out how much you have left over after paying expenses, contact each of your priority creditors, show them your budget and try to arrange to pay back what you owe at a rate you can reasonably afford.

STEP FOUR: Sort out your non-priority debts

You may be able to make an offer to creditors, or seek help from a free specialist debt advice service to make offers on your behalf and discuss the possibilities of making pro rata payments.

Specialist advisors will also help you to make a court application for an Administration Order or arrange an Individual Voluntary Arrangement.

If you really have no money or saleable assets and your financial situation is unlikely to improve, your only options are to offer small token payments such as £1 a month, ask creditors to write off the debt, apply for bankruptcy or for a Debt Relief Order (DRO).

Special report on recycling and composting



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But residents are asked not to include waxed packaging like milk and fruit juice cartons, cat and dog mess, disposable nappies, plastics including bin liners, carrier bags, plant pots or heavy items such as soil, stones, rubble, fencing or posts.

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Charge Hand Gary Valentine collecting organic waste in Abbey Hulton.

Growing effort boosts recycling drive

MORE and more residents are making the most of a revamped recycling service which takes away their garden waste and makes environmentally-friendly compost.

Almost one in five residents whose homes are covered by the collections uses the service which helps the city meet recycling targets set by the Government.

And by making sure their garden and organic waste is recycled into award-winning compost (see below) they are doing their bit for the environment by reducing the amount of rubbish sent to landfill sites.

The latest figures show 17.76 per

cent of people in the areas covered by the brown bin recycling service are using special wheelie bins to recycle clippings, trimmings, weeds and compost from the garden.

That represents an increase of almost one per cent on last year's figures and is a step in the right direction as the city becomes a more environmentally-friendly place to live.

The kerbside collection service was launched to add another recycling option to reuse more of the 80,000 tonnes of rubbish the people of Stoke-on-Trent place in their wheelie bins each year.

It covers almost 80 per cent of domestic properties in the city – a total of 88,231 homes.

Initially the fortnightly collections ran from March to October, but in

winter 2010 the scheme ran continuously.

Senior Waste Services Manager Nigel Trueman said: "Residents asked us for improved recycling facilities, including a kerbside collection for green garden waste."

"New laws also mean that more biodegradable waste has to be recycled and not sent to landfill where it can cause harmful pollution."

"If we don't change the way we manage the waste produced in our city we risk being heavily fined by the Government."

"The kerbside recycling service will help the environment and also help us manage our rubbish in a sustainable way, in order to preserve our planet for future generations."

● The latest figures show Stoke-on-Trent recycled 40.48 per cent of its waste in 2010/11... an increase of almost 3 per cent on the previous year.

These improvements are needed if the city is to hit a target set by the Government of recycling half its waste by 2020.

Nigel Trueman said: "The improvement shows people in the city are joining in with recycling to create a cleaner, greener Stoke-on-Trent and with their help we will continue to move towards and beyond the 50 per cent target."



Nursery Assistant Margaret Ball planting a peace lily into some Vital Earth compost.

Our compost scoops award

COMPOST made from garden waste collected from homes in Stoke-on-Trent has won a prestigious gardening accolade.

The compost, made by Ashbourne-based Vital Earth, has won the Association for Organics Recycling (AFOR) Jim Balance Compost Marketing Award for the second time in three years.

Vital Earth Managing Director Steve Harper said: "This is great news. It is recognition of the fact that we can produce a viable, high quality 'professional' growing media allowing growers to switch to peat-free with confidence."

Vital Earth processes some 85,000 tonnes of green waste at its £12 million Ashbourne plant each year, including thousands of tonnes of waste collected from residents in The Potteries.

A four-page *Our City* special report

THE Safer City Partnership is working closely with a Staffordshire prison to help prevent inmates re-offending when they are released.

HM Dovegate Prison, near Uttoxeter, holds 1,100 male category B prisoners serving sentences that are four years or longer. They also provide a remand service for Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court.

Although the overriding priority is to ensure public security and safety, officers also work with outside agencies to provide inmates with the best possible chance when they have served their sentence.

The prison liaises closely with organisations such as the Safer City Partnership to ensure offenders have the opportunity to learn new skills, receive financial advice, keep in touch with families and maintain good health.

Not only is this provided while they are in prison but continues after inmates have completed their sentence to ensure they steer clear of a life of crime and drug misuse.

Trevor Williams, who is the prison's Assistant Director, Reducing Re-offending, said: "We use a seven point assessment tool to help assess an inmate's risk of re-offending and to develop appropriate programmes.

"The seven factors are access to accommodation; education, employment and training, finance benefits and debt; mental and physical health; drugs and alcohol; children, family and domestic situation and attitude and behaviour.

"These are very important factors in evaluating the chances of re-offending. For instance,



Dovegate Prison inmate Tony takes part in an art class as part of a drive to teach new skills and reduce re-offending.

Close work with prisoners reduces re-offending

having stable accommodation reduces the chance of returning to crime by one fifth.

"Nationally, half of inmates have a literacy level which is below that of an average 11 year-old. This, in turn, will have a knock on effect on education, training and employment opportunities.

One-to-one sessions

"So we look at each offender and tailor programmes to their length of stay in prison and their specific needs."

He added: "Other things to bear in mind are that around 90

per cent of prisoners have some mental health or substance misuse issues, between a quarter and a third have debt problems and approximately half have lost contact with their families."

Based on this profile and information, prisoners are engaged in training tailored to their needs and where necessary, are engaged on drug and alcohol misuse courses. The prison also strives to keep inmates in touch with family, works to ensure accommodation is available when they leave and provides financial and employment help.

Trevor added: "Many organisations work with us in the prison to ensure offenders are given the best help available. These organisations range from charities to statutory bodies.

"The idea is that by working in partnership at this stage it ensures when the men leave prison they can continue to work with these organisations and do not feel isolated.

"Providing this kind of bridge, and by working hand-in-hand with the community, we can really help to reduce the chance of re-offending."

Quality of life is improved

ANTISOCIAL behaviour has been slashed and quality of life improved for communities thanks to a multi-agency approach spearheaded by the Safer City Partnership.

The latest figures show that there has been a 15.5 per cent decrease in reports of antisocial behaviour in the city over the last year. This being 2,636 fewer reported incidents.

Graeme Drayton, Neighbourhood Justice Co-ordinator for the Safer City Partnership, said: "We are confident that the downward trend in the number of incidents reported to police is directly affected by the measures taken by the Partnership, in conjunction with other agencies, and our close links with residents.

"By liaising closely with communities and listening to concerns we have been able to act quickly and effectively to clamp down on nuisance behaviour."

The Partnership has tools at its disposal including ASBOs, Antisocial Behaviour Injunctions, Acceptable Behaviour Agreements for adults, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for youngsters, Premises Closure Orders and Alcohol Restriction Zones.

A key factor has been the willingness of residents to play their part in tackling problems in their neighbourhood. Many have helped to gather evidence, give statements or appear as witnesses in court in order to solve an issue.

Graeme said: "Our team of Safer City Partnership Officers works with residents and provides vital back up and support for those who come forward as witnesses.

"We work in liaison with organisations such as Staffordshire Police, the Youth Offending service, landlords, residents associations, and mediation services to build up evidence that allows us to take swift action leading to permanent solutions to the problems."

Posters highlight links to alcohol

A CAMPAIGN has been launched to highlight the links between alcohol and the victims of domestic violence.

High impact posters have been appearing on billboards, in bars and taxis encouraging victims to come forward.

The posters carry a stark visual image, a former victim's message and contact details for support. These were devised following discussions with a focus group.

Safer City Partnership Alcohol Programme Lead Suzie Kelly said: "People don't tend to make the link between alcohol and the victims of domestic violence but victims may turn to alcohol as a way of dealing with the distress of the situation.

"The posters not only encourage victims to come forward but also carry vital information that make it easy for them to get in touch."

Soccer stars light up campaign against grass fires

STOKE City and Port Vale football stars have appeared in eye-catching posters with the goal of spreading a vital fire safety message.

The posters featuring some of the biggest names at the clubs have been produced to help prevent grass fires in the city and explain why the blazes can have deadly implications.

During spring and summer school holidays, the number of grass fires significantly increase. Last Easter alone (2010), half of the 154 blazes of this kind in North Staffordshire were within the city boundaries. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service say the large majority are set deliberately and are often caused by boys aged between eight and 17.

Julie Tanner, the Service's External Communications and Engagement Manager, said: "Often young people see

grass fires as harmless fun and victimless crimes because usually no one is hurt and no property is damaged.

"We are asking young people to think for a moment - if our firefighters are busy putting out grass fires they can't also attend a life-threatening fire or serious road traffic collision. What if while they're starting grass fires, somebody they care for has a house fire and people are trapped?"

To help combat the problem, Stoke's Rory Delap and Asmir Begovic and Vale's Louis Dodds and Anthony Griffith appear on the posters which explain the dangers of setting grass fires.

Julie added: "We are delighted that both clubs have embraced the campaign in this way. Because many boys of this age see professional football players as aspirational figures, we hope they will listen to their advice."



Port Vale midfielder Anthony Griffith at James Brindley Science College, Chell, where he spoke to Year 9 pupils about the dangers of grass fires.



Reporting back to you on a year of progress

Antisocial Behaviour



JANUARY 2011

The Street Pastor project aimed at reducing antisocial behaviour among revellers. Pictured are Street Pastors Andrew Tesla and Sarah de Costobadie chatting with teenagers Kate McGing, left and Beth Reid in the city centre.

- Between April 2010 and March 2011 there were 2,655 fewer reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB) than during the same period in 2009/10 – a 15.5 per cent decrease
- 21 Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) were issued during the 10-month period (April 2010 to February 2011)
- A target was set to ensure that at least 30 per cent of people are satisfied with Staffordshire Police and the city council in tackling ASB. By April 2011 satisfaction rating stood at 45 per cent
- A total of 41 projects (including education, prevention, enforcement and reassurance initiatives) have been successfully delivered through the ASB plan
- Over 3,000 children and young people attended personal safety events focussed on antisocial behaviour prevention and fire safety promotion
- Outreach workers engaged with 627 young people, signposting them into positive activities
- A team of 10 Safer City PCSOs have been deployed in antisocial behaviour hotspot areas to stop the behaviour and reassure residents
- A total of 1,807 young people were helped to take part in a range of diversionary activities such as football classes and youth clubs

Alcohol

- The target to reduce the rate of increase in alcohol-related hospital admissions has been surpassed. The rate of alcohol related admissions nationally increased by 9 per cent between quarters one and two 2009/10 and the corresponding quarters in 2010/11. In Stoke-on-Trent the rate of alcohol related admissions during this same period decreased by 6 per cent
- Twice as many higher risk drinkers are now accessing structured support
- Twice as many dependent drinkers are now receiving supported detoxification
- More than twice as many people are now accessing residential rehabilitation
- Safer City Partnership received a National Award for commissioning of alcohol treatment services from Alcohol Concern
- Primary care staff are carrying out alcohol-related screening and offering alcohol-related advice to patients. As a result there has been a notable improvement in primary care referrals to structured treatment (from 14 per cent of all referrals from primary care in 2008/09 to 25 per cent in 2010/11)
- A total of 3,973 people have been screened by the brief interventions team and offered advice.
- There are now no waiting times to access alcohol treatment services
- Peer mentors have been introduced into treatment services to help promote recovery and support service users achieve their identified goals



MARCH 2011

A new resource pack called Your Child and Alcohol has been produced to help parents understand how drinking can affect their children.

Re-offending

- Re-offending across the West Midlands region has reduced by 14 per cent and Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership has contributed to this regional reduction
- An excellent working relationship has been developed with prisons (Dovegate, Drake Hall, Foston Hall and Styal) who accommodate people from Stoke-on-Trent enabling after care arrangements to be put in place prior to a person's release from prison
- A mentored work placement scheme has been established supported by links made with city employers. A total of 143 referrals have been made to the scheme resulting in both temporary and permanent employment placements
- Workers have been recruited to provide support for families affected by offending behaviour. The support involves advice on education and employment opportunities, finance, debt management, domestic violence, housing and parenting skills
- In 2010/11, 440 offenders successfully completed the Offender Management programmes provided by Staffordshire & West Midlands Probation Service.
- The Prolific and Other Priority Offender Scheme has continued to deliver targeted interventions covering; prevent and deter, catch and convict and rehabilitate and resettle elements in Stoke-on-Trent. This work has assisted in reducing the rate of re-offending by those responsible for committing the highest proportion of offences in the city
- Drug and Alcohol services were provided throughout the criminal justice system. These included assessment and support at the point of arrest, at court appearance and when leaving prison and targeted court orders for drug and alcohol-related offences. This has successfully identified and engaged drug and alcohol users in treatment and support services, helping to break the link between offending and substance misuse
- A one-stop shop for women offenders was opened providing comprehensive and easily accessible services for those in need. This has reduced the rate of re-offending amongst women offenders



JULY 2010

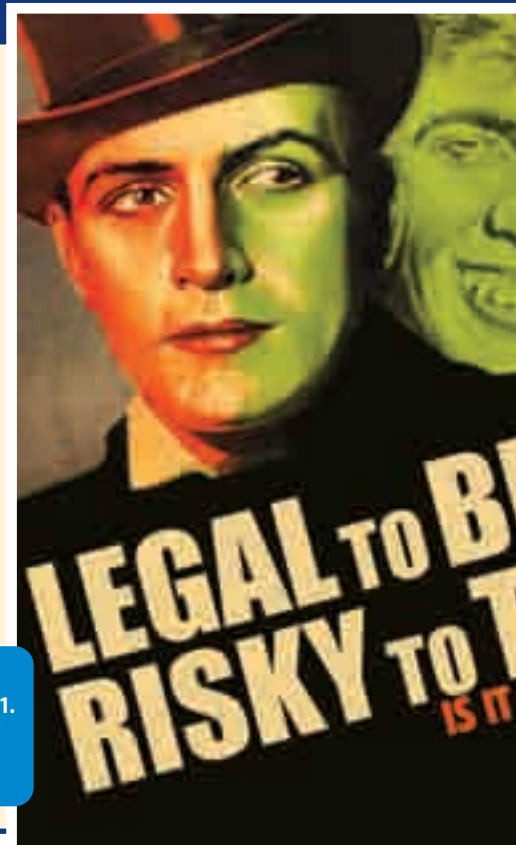
The City Break project was set up to give people leaving prison training, work experience, employment and self confidence, and ultimately reduce the chance of re-offending. Ex-offender Steve Wilshaw, pictured, secured a painter and decorator job with construction company Seddon.

Adult Drug Service

- There has been an increase in the number of problem drug users (people using crack and opiates) in effective treatment. This has risen from 1,467 in March 2010 to 1,529 in February 2011
- Treatment benefits include reducing crime and improving health and social functioning. For every £1 spent on treatment, it is estimated that £4.79 is saved in other costs
- 100 per cent of people accessed drug treatment within three weeks, in line with national guidelines
- A service to test drug users for Hepatitis C and provide treatment if necessary began operating in July 2010. By January 2011, 46 people had started treatment – none have dropped out
- A fourth service base, opened in the north of the city in November 2010, will make it easier for people in the area to access drug treatment
- A total of 91 per cent of problem drug users, new to treatment, were retained in treatment long enough for positive improvements to be made
- Payments by results contracts are now in place with all drug services to ensure best value for money

JANUARY 2011

A campaign to raise awareness of the danger of taking legal highs was launched in February 2011. Posters alert people to the risks to health and of prosecution for possession as they often also contain illicit drugs.





Young People



SEPTEMBER 2010

Bar staff at city centre pub Varsity helped to promote a scheme to clamp down on violence during the World Cup by wearing t-shirts carrying hard-hitting messages. Pictured is Safer City Partnership Officer Jennifer Lawson, second left, special constable Nathan Wallbanks and bar staff, left to right, Hayley Mandley, Matt Coles, Stuart Davison and Nicole Dale.

- We have reduced the number of Most Serious Violent offences by 22 per cent (68 offences)

- There has been a 20% reduction in violence in the City Centre in 2010/11 when compared to 2009/10. Some of the projects that have assisted in achieving this were the Taxi Marshalls who direct revellers to safe transport away from busy night time areas, the Street Pastors who provide advice and guidance to promote a safer night time environment in the City Centre and the Night Time Initiative

- In the past year the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) have supported more than 200 high-risk victims of domestic violence through the criminal court process and there has been a reduction of unsuccessful outcomes from 34 per cent in 2008/09 to 27 per cent in 2009/10

- There has been a 45 per cent increase in reporting of hate crime to PARINS/Challenge

North Staffs during 2010/11 compared to 2009/10

- 60 new hate crime reporting centres opened in 2010/11

- 79 men and boys affected by sexual violence have been supported over the last year by Savanna

- ARCH have seen a 10 per cent increase in domestic violence referrals in 2010/11 compared to the previous year

- The domestic violence helpline received 1,297 calls (end of Feb11) in comparison with 1008 (end of Feb10)

- There are a number of other projects which have gone towards reducing violence across the city including: Crash Course road safety scheme, Stoke-on-Trent Business Crime Initiative in the City Centre and the Women's project where 11 women have been supported to safely exit sex work

- 47 schools have been supported by the Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Consultants to update their drug policies

- 44 schools have been supported with the development and delivery of their Drug

and Alcohol Education Programmes by the Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Consultants

- Over 3,200 young people have received drug and alcohol awareness sessions/advice from the Young People's Drug Project



NOVEMBER 2010

Support for young people who witness crime was stepped up with the launch of an information campaign including posters, leaflets, novelty USB memory sticks and pens featuring the safety message.

- Over 145 young people have received a range of targeted education and support services from the Young People's Drug Project for their own or family substance misuse issues

- Over 230 goals were achieved by young people receiving support for complex drug and alcohol issues from the T3 service. Improvements were achieved in their physical/mental health, social networks and levels of drug/alcohol use

- More than 5,600 young people were engaged as part of Youth Crime Action Plan activities. These include After School Patrols, Street Based Teams, Youth Offending Service Reparation activities and Community Resolution Surgeries

RESPECT

SEPTEMBER 2010

Katie Ashley, with her terrier, at a free of charge dog chipping event held during the Norton Estate Respect Week. The scheme promoted responsible dog ownership.



- 12 Respect weeks and nine Respect days were conducted in priority neighbourhoods across Stoke-on-Trent, i.e. areas with higher than average crime and antisocial behaviour rates

- 532 tonnes of rubbish was removed, 218 trees pruned, 629,000 square metres of grass cut, 315 overgrown sites and play areas improved

- Police spent 893 hours (37 days) on the Community Bus at prime locations within communities, recording crime and providing crime prevention advice; PCSOs conducted over 4,000 hours of visible patrol

- Over 3,500 crime prevention packs were issued, including personal attack alarms, window alarms, bike locks and bogus official packs

- Over 400 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued to motorists for parking offences, speeding, etc. These totalled over £13,000

- Over 700 victims of crime were visited and provided with advice and reassurance

- Fire security checks have been completed on 400 homes and 425 fire hydrants have been checked

- 420 dogs were micro chipped
- Twelve No Cold Calling Zones were launched to prevent the incidences of bogus callers

- Other activities carried out included drug and alcohol outreach work, fayres, youth service and street games activity, talks in schools, benefits and pension advice

Serious Acquisitive Crime

MARCH 2011

A new scanner and software for a property marking scheme has helped to combat theft of valuable items – particularly among students.



- There were 770 fewer offences of serious acquisitive crime in 2010/11 than in 2009/10 (down 21.8 per cent)

- There were 303 fewer burglary dwelling offences in 2010/11 compared to 2009/10 (down 22.6 per cent)

- There were 47 fewer personal/business robbery offences in 2010/11 compared to 2009/10 (down 15 per cent)

- There were 260 fewer thefts from a motor vehicle in 2010/11 compared to 2009/10 (down 20 per cent)

- There were 168 fewer thefts of a motor vehicle in 2010/11 compared to 2009/10 (down 28.5 per cent)

- Homes have been made safer, preventing burglaries, by targeting the fitting of both window and door locks

- 750 vehicle number plates have been secured with replacement screw kits to prevent them being stolen

- Safer City Partnership PCSOs undertook high visibility patrols in and around Central Forest Park in response to a high incidence of personal robberies, leading to significant reductions in that area

- Crime prevention advice has been provided to vulnerable/potential victims of distraction burglaries to prevent offences occurring/re-occurring

- High profile publicity campaigns on sneak-in burglaries highlighted their opportunist nature, and advised people about keeping windows and doors closed and the importance of safeguarding valuables in the home

- Use of innovative, dedicated web-based property registration system for mobile telephones, MP3 players, personal computers etc. To assist in the prevention and detection of personal robberies and the successful return of any property stolen to owners



Creating a healthier and safer city



PCSO Jenny Ludlow-Smith talks to Blurton Resident Chris Mason about home safety as part of the campaign.

Warning over sneak thieves

A PUBLICITY campaign is helping to warn people about the threat of sneak-in burglaries.

In the spring and summer months, more residents tend to leave windows and doors of their homes unlocked or even open.

Unfortunately, this is just the opportunity burglars need – particularly if they can see valuables such as car keys, cash or bank cards lying about in the property. The Safer City Partnership is trying to combat the problem by handing out informative posters and leaflets to residents in Stoke-on-Trent.

Safer City Partnership Neighbourhood Justice Co-ordinator Graeme Drayton said: "Over the last year there has been an emerging trend for sneak-in burglaries and as the warm weather approaches we need residents to be more on their guard and think about the safety of their

property. Unlocked doors and windows can be an open invitation to burglars."

He added: "Over the years enormous strides have been taken to reduce the number of house burglaries through members of our communities taking heed of crime prevention advice and installing hardware such as alarms and improved door and window locks.

"But no manner of hi-tech equipment will stop a burglar if someone leaves the door unlocked or open."

The campaign not only highlights the problem of sneak-in burglaries but also highlights vulnerable points in people's homes that could be targeted.

● **For more information – or to request a copy of the poster – contact the Safer City Partnership team on 01782 235708.**

Support pulls alcoholic back from brink

REFORMED alcoholic Andy Hammond once thought there was only one way to combat the depression and physical problems he was experiencing... to drink even more.

The 42-year-old from Chell Heath had hit rock bottom, drinking at least eight to 10 cans of strong lager and a bottle of vodka in one sitting.

Everything was spiralling out of control for Andy who had lost his job. It was driving a wedge between himself, his girlfriend and his six-year-old daughter.

He had no energy and couldn't get out of bed. His liver was in a terrible condition and his blood pressure was extremely high.

Fortunately, with his life in the balance, he was introduced to BAC O'Connor, the Staffordshire-based organisation, which provides rehabilitation and support to people with drug or alcohol misuse problems.

He enrolled on an 18 week comprehensive residential rehabilitation course based at its North Staffordshire centre and has come out the other end a different person.

He said: "For a while my life was pure torture. I had definitely given up. I was stuck in a vicious circle of drinking more and more. I couldn't see any way out and it was tearing my life apart.

"I can't thank the people at BAC O'Connor enough. They have changed everything for me. Mentally and physically I feel like a different person. I now know I don't need alcohol and that was a big admission."

Andy is now reaffirming his relationship with his family and has also got a job lined up at a local taxi firm. "Things are really changing for me," he said. "I even went on a short holiday to the Welsh seaside with my family. That was unthinkable a few months ago – I couldn't even get out of bed."

Andy completed a two week home detoxification, supported by a specialist nurse, before starting his residential treatment. He now receives aftercare support and has a mentor who is available 24 hours a day.



New lease of life... Andy Hammond at BAC O'Connor.

"It is great to know that support is in place and I can call on back up if I need it. I am determined to see things through and make the most of the new lease of life I have been given."

Karen Wilde, of BAC O'Connor, said: "The aim is to show people who are on the programme the road to recovery from the very beginning.

"As well as helping them to overcome their addiction we also provide them with skills such as help in getting a job, debt counselling and helping them to enrol on

numeracy and literacy courses.

"It is a holistic approach which looks at the mental and physical wellbeing of people and provides valuable aftercare and stability in their lives."

● **Stoke-on-Trent Safer City Partnership funds a range of services to support people wishing to reduce their alcohol intake or become abstinent. To access any of these services mentioned, please contact Adsis on 01782 271096.**

Fire safety lessons learned

YOUNGSTERS have been learning about fire safety in the home as part of an innovative project.

Groups of children, aged five to 11, were given expert advice about what to do in an emergency, how to devise an escape plan and how to spot potential fire risks. They also enjoyed fascinating tours of fire stations in the city. The scheme, which is run in school holidays, was organised by DREAMS Support, as part of the Young People's Drug Project working in partnership with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Team Leader Gemma Newitt said: "It's really about providing young people with support and helping improve confidence."

"The support includes a number of safety awareness schemes, such as a basic first aid course aimed at children and teenagers.

"The idea is the young people who take part in the course will learn vital skills that will stay with them for life.

"We also hope they will be encouraged to return home and discuss fire safety with family members and friends."

The children also took part in a celebration event at Sandyford Fire Station where they had a great day meeting Welephant, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's mascot, playing games and learning about fire safety. The event was very successful and more are planned for the future.

Advice group seeks new members

A GROUP set up to help family members of drug and alcohol misusers is looking to recruit new members.

ASSIST was set up a decade ago to offer informal and confidential help for those coming to terms with substance misuse. The group meets on Monday nights and is facilitated by the Adult Community Drug Service, based in Hope Street, Hanley.

The current group chair, Les Wade, has first hand experience of the problems ASSIST help with.

He said: "My son was involved in substance abuse and it was a terrible time in my life. It was driving a wedge between my wife and I. We felt isolated

and didn't know who to turn to. Then we found out about ASSIST.

It was a way of offloading our feelings and discussing them with people who shared similar experiences in an informal and totally confidential way.

Family Support Worker Laraine Ratcliffe said: "The ASSIST sessions offer valuable advice and a sounding board for families. We also organise speakers and weekend breaks which offer much-needed respite."

● **For details about joining the group call the Adult Community Drug Service on 01782 219777 and speak to Laraine.**

Funding for team tackling environmental crime

AN injection of £226,000 has safeguarded the future of Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Environmental Crime Unit for at least another year.

The council funding means the team can continue the work it began when it was set up in September 2010 to tackle problems like litter, fly tipping, dog fouling and people dropping cigarette butts.

In the first six months, 450 fixed penalty notices were handed out for littering with 20 cases of non-payment of fines submitted for prosecution. The team dealt

with 1,400 reports of illegal activity and carried out 1,200 site inspections.

Legal notices were also delivered, 200 people were invited to interview under caution and 34 "Stop and Search" investigations were carried out in partnership with Staffordshire Police over fly-tipping and trade waste licences.

Patrols have been carried out across the city and dedicated enforcement events have been staged after specific complaints from the public.

Principal Enforcement Officer Sarah

Gray said: "The team are delighted with what they've accomplished and are keen to add to that success."

Jane Forshaw, Assistant Director of City Services, said: "It's a small team but the work they have done over the first six months proved both their effectiveness and justifies the funding we have provided for the next year."

The team is now deciding its priorities for the year ahead but is already planning to further target fly tippers and check trade waste licences.

Relaunched scheme offers quality home pledge

A scheme which aims to improve the quality of homes available for rent in Stoke-on-Trent is being relaunched with more tenant-friendly features.

The Landlord Accreditation Scheme, which was established across North Staffordshire in 2003, promotes good quality properties which are soundly managed.

Landlords who register with the scheme must demonstrate the properties they have available for rent are of a certain standard and meet all legal requirements.

It also publicly recognises those landlords who provide housing which meets or exceeds the standard, as well as giving the public the choice of renting a good standard of accommodation.

The scheme – a partnership between Stoke-on-Trent City Council, its neighbouring local authorities and the North Staffordshire Landlord Association – currently has 530 landlord members in the city, between them renting out 2,444 properties.

Setting the standards

The relaunch aims to provide even more information to potential tenants on the properties available, including a revamped website, better information literature and a directory of accredited landlords.

A landlord development training course is being launched to raise standards of management of rented properties, while tenants will be encouraged to help 'police' the scheme by reporting on the quality of the accommodation they rent and the service they receive from landlords.

Carmen Muir, Strategic Manager for the council's Housing Standards Team, said: "The scheme was set up to improve the physical and



Trentdale Investments Housing Manager Dawn Berrow, right, with tenant Joy Powell outside her home in Trent Vale.

management standards of the private rented sector in North Staffordshire.

"In setting the standards for rented properties in the city, it provides a whole range of benefits both to the landlords who sign up as members and to the tenants who rent their properties."

Phil Mellor, Managing Director of Stoke-based Trentdale Investments, joined in 2003 and has over 100 homes registered on the scheme.

He said: "It's very important that we are part of the scheme as it allows us to advertise properties and services as a landlord of some standing.

"The fact that we are in the scheme has enabled us to build

a good relationship with the council. We meet them regularly and they give us good advice and notice of any changes of legislation.

"Although I have been in the business for 40 years, I still obtain useful new information and advice from the scheme. This enables us to provide an excellent, up-to-date service to our tenants.

"Our tenants can be assured that Gas Safety checks are carried out annually by Gas Safe registered staff and their deposit is secure with the independent Deposit Protection Service."

Mr Mellor said unfortunately in most cities there were issues with poor quality rented accommodation, especially from

absentee landlords, and that the Landlord Accreditation Scheme was a stamp of quality for tenants who wanted to make sure of what they were renting.

He added: "In the past landlords signed up to the scheme have been able to secure grant aid specifically to improve their properties.

"I would urge any landlord in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire to join and help promote quality rented accommodation in the city."

Landlords and tenants who want to find out more about the Landlord Accreditation Scheme can visit www.landlordaccreditation.co.uk

JUSTICE SEEN JUSTICE DONE

Our City reports back on convictions secured to make Stoke-on-Trent safer for us all...

ABBEY HULTON:

DNA evidence trapped burglar Stewart Garner after he broke into a 93-year-old woman's bungalow while she slept. The 46-year-old from Blakelow Road, Abbey Hulton, took cash and jewellery worth nearly £2,000. Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court heard how the victim woke to discover the break-in and was so traumatised she wanted to move out. Garner, who has 42 previous convictions, pleaded guilty to burglary and asked for a further two to be taken into consideration. He was jailed for three-and-a-half years.



FENTON:

Robber Martin Sigley has been locked up for 25 months in a young offenders' institution after stealing bikes and mobile phones from two boys. He and an accomplice threatened their 14 and 15-year-old victims at Hanley bus station. Sigley, 18, of Duke Street, Fenton, later burgled a flat in Stoke while the occupants were at home. He admitted two robberies and contempt of court but denied the burglary.



HANLEY:

Jail terms totalling five years have been given to two burglars for a string of break-ins at homes and a business. Both Kelvin Sargeant, 34, of Ogden Road, Hanley and 25-year-old Samantha Lear, from St. Johns Place, Biddulph, admitted burgling city centre personnel offices. Sargeant pleaded guilty to burglary at a flat nearby and Lear to a similar offence at a house. She asked for a further two break-ins to be taken into consideration. They were each given two-and-a-half year sentences after Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court heard they had previous burglary convictions.



STANFIELDS:

Axe-wielding Michael Hemmings left a woman fearing for her safety when he lost control and attacked her door. The 46-year-old, who has a record of 119 previous offences, hacked away after a row over money. He made no comment during police questioning. Hemmings, of Crossley Road, Stanfields, admitted having the axe in a public place when he later appeared at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court. He was given an eight-month prison sentence and ordered to forfeit the axe.



FEGG HAYES:

Dubbed dangerous by a judge, robber Michael Bibby has been sent down for six years after he threatened shop workers and a taxi driver with a toy handgun. He fled from an off-licence in Tunstall when a panic alarm was activated and later robbed a cabbie of £130. Bibby, 36, of Withington Road, Fegg Hayes, pleaded guilty to robbery, attempted robbery, two counts of possessing an imitation firearm, four offences of theft from shops, possession of a knife and disorderly behaviour. He will be on licence for four years when he is released.



Neighbourhood Policing Contact Details

Stoke-on-Trent Central Local Policing Team (LPT)

Bucknall Police Post, Ruxley Rd, Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent ST2 9BG
Tel: 0300 123 4455
Email: stokeontrentpolice@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

LPT Inspector

LPT Inspector 3734
Chris Harrington

LPT Inspector 3509
Shaun Kerrigan

LPT Commander

Chief Inspector 4119
Jeff Moore

Sergeants

Sgt 4438
John Buchan

Sgt 3851
Dave Fenton

Sgt 4151
Brevic Jones

Sgt 4425
Phil White

Sgt 4777
Jon Ward

Abbey Hulton & Townsend

PC 0975
Nathan Ames

PC 4727
David Tams

PCSO 16933
Emma Casey

PCSO 16295
Steven Cowan

PCSO 16934
Tracey Robinson

Eaton Park

PC 4867
Nick Bolam

PCSO 8983
Rob Guthrie

Eturia & Hanley

PC 5164
Natalie Ball

PC 4528
Darren Belford

PC 0817
Kerry Grant

PC 4871
Lucas Hackney

PC 0726
Claire Harrison

PC 5445
Greg Hill

PC 4149
Jason Howell

PC 0400
Di Hoyle

PC 0605
Nicola Humphries

PC 4092
Carl Kelsall

PC 4644
Rob Kelsall

PC 4634
Lee Robinson

PC 4133
Craig Russel

PC 5410
Steve Smith

PCSO 16293
Mel Bartholomew

PCSO 8516
Andrea Bolam

PCSO 16935
Daniel Boote

PCSO 16936
Matthew Harrison

PCSO 8955
Chris Hill

PCSO 8457
Simon Holmes

PCSO 16227
Daniel Nettleton

PCSO 8830
Chris Stone

Birches Head & Central Forest Park

PC 0848
Ruth Barlow

PC 0805
Kate Beardmore

PC 5373
Julie Clarke

PC 3829
Ian Martin

PC 0806
Amanda White

PCSO 8979
Michelle Chadwick

PCSO 16225
Adrian Hemmings

PCSO 8987
Liz Old

PCSO 8984
Rebecca Simon

PCSO 8831
Kate Sullivan

PCSO 9045
Sue Wall

Boothens & Oak Hill

PC 4433
Andy Birchenhall

PC 4990
James McMillan

PCSO 8825
Karen Billings

Hanley Park & Shelton

PC 5246
Dave Beardmore

PC 5588
Lynn Callaghan

PC 4483
Keith Emery

PC 4139
Dave Marshall

PC 4389
Guy Wain

PCSO 16299
Katie Brickley

PCSO 8985
Lucy Slater

PCSO 16230
Victoria Lacey

Hartshill & Basford

PC 0991
Terry Dunn

PCSO 16852
Yvonne Klebukowski

Joiners Square

PC 4867
Nick Bolam

PCSO 8980
Charlotte Barker

PCSO 8983
Rob Guthrie

PCSO 17023
Nia Nokes

Penkhull & Stoke

PC 4913
Barry Joynson

PCSO 16939
Katy Thorneycroft

Springfield & Trent Vale

PC 4964
Andrea Oaks

PC 3684
Neil Russell

PCSO 17020
Fraser Glen

Stoke-on-Trent North Local Policing Team (LPT)

Bucknall Police Post, Ruxley Road, Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent ST2 9BG
Tel: 0300 123 4455
Email: stokeontrentpolice@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

LPT Commander

Chief Inspector 3747
Adrian Roberts

Sergeants

Sgt 3615
Paul Clarke

Baddeley, Milton & Norton

PC 4383
Andy Baddeley

PC 0865
Clare Bowker

PC 0877
Claire Crank

PC 4020
Neil Whitmore

PCSO 16932
Jessica Edge

PCSO 16853
Simon Jones

PCSO 16940
Blaine Williams

Ford Green Smallthorne

PC 3911
Keiron Edridge

PCSO 16235
Sarah Wood

Goldenhill & Sandyford

PC 4733
Glyn Talbot

PCSO 8986
Andy Wootton

Great Chell & Packmoor

PC 4969
Sam Bray

PCSO 6513
Sarah Bowen

PCSO 16941
Jon Steventon

Bradeley & Chell

PC 3745
Nick Palmer

PCSO 6616
Sally Wright

Burslem Central

PC 0447
Claire Jervis

PC 4912
Mick Jones

PCSO 6628
Tich Nyamayaro

PCSO 8959
Helen Rowley

Burslem Park

PC 3822
Rob Thomas

PCSO 16233
Hannah Mayer

Residents in Stoke-on-Trent are safer and are feeling safe in their communities after yet another year of crime reduction across the city.

In the last year crime was driven down with 2,352* fewer victims than the previous year. With the ongoing partnership work in tackling antisocial behaviour resulting in 3,421* fewer complaints that's down nearly 20 per cent.

All this is helping residents feel safe with 98 per cent* of people surveyed across Stoke-on-Trent

are also telling us that they feel safe in their community.

The reductions show the determination to continue to tackle those involved in crime and to protect the front-line policing with helps to protect and reassure local residents.

To support this we have now changed the way we support

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL OFFICER It's easy to keep in touch with your Local Officer. Simply dial 0300 123 2345, listen to the instructions and

Information on police officer contacts was correct at the time of going to press.



Stoke-on-Trent South Local Policing Team (LPT)

Bucknall Police Post, Ruxley Road, Bucknall, Stoke-on-Trent ST2 9BG
Tel: 0300 123 4455
Email: stokeontrentpolice@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk

LPT Inspector

LPT Inspector 0465
Elliott Sharrard-Williams

LPT Commander

Chief Inspector
3565
Peter Hall

Sergeants

Sgt 5100 Rob Bateman
Sgt 4336 Craig Burton
Sgt 4089 Andy Duffin

Bentilee & Uubberley

PC 4953 Angela Broadhurst
PC 5183 Natalie Lugg
PC 4632 Andrew Mander
PCSO 16226 Rachel Knight
PCSO 6612 Andy Meakin

Hanford & Trentham

PC 4034 Malcom Ford
PC 0540 Nerine Forrest

Hollybush & Longton West

PC 0873 Kate Rushton
PCSO 16855 Charlotte Abbots

Blurton East, West & Newstead

PC 4822 Sean Woodward
PC 5504 Lee Tatton
PCSO 16855 Charlotte Abbots
PCSO 6607 Phil McGlynn

Meir Hay

PC 0760 Lisa Joynson
PC 5378 Lucy Maskew
PC 4991 Steve Meigh
PCSO 16856 Keith Mellor

Broadway & Longton East

PC 5094 Adam Rushton
PCSO 16854 Sarah Cartilidge

Meir North

PC 5222 Matt Hope
PC 5274 James Ibbs
PCSO 16937 Steve Lomas
PCSO 16635 Emma Richards

Dresden & Florence

PC 3862 Tony Godwin
PC 5169 Toni Sunderland
PCSO 16240 Leanne Sharratt

Fenton East, West & Mount Pleasant

PC 4129 Scott Bradbury
PC 4959 Kerrie Mayer
PC 0905 Rob Mountford
PC 4475 Ivor Owens
PCSO 8827 Scott Holland
PCSO 6443 Rachel Mountford
PCSO 16229 Wendy Rogers

Meir Park

PC 4603 Neil Day
PC 4090 Russ Elliott
PCSO 16635 Emma Richards
PCSO 6500 Mark Simon
PCSO 8892 Andy Spooner

Meir South

PC 4090 Russ Elliott
PCSO 16635 Emma Richards
PCSO 6500 Mark Simon

Sandford Hill

PC 5378 Lucy Maskew
PC 4991 Steve Meigh
PCSO 16854 Sarah Cartilidge
PCSO 16856 Keith Mellor

Weston Coyney

PC 4837 Dylan Morrey
PCSO 16937 Steve Lomas
PCSO 6603 Gemma Price

Lightwood North & Normacott

PC 5020 Jonathan Ash
PC 3862 Tony Godwin
PC 5169 Toni Sunderland
PCSO 16232 Andy Alcock
PCSO 6433 George Bould
PCSO 16240 Leanne Sharratt

LPT Inspector

LPT Inspector 0465
Martin Brereton

Little Chell & Stanfield

PC 5055 Dan Marsh
PCSO 8841 Andy Pryce

Moorcroft

PC 4210 Les Bertolone
PC 4260 Mark Trafford
PCSO 17016 Matt Boyles
PCSO 8957 Justine Marsh

Sneyd Green

PC 0886 Sarah Griffiths
PCSO 16634 Charlotte Bryan

Tunstall

PC 4938 Jamie Burton
PC 4835 Adam Edwards
PC 5738 Darren McGrath
PCSO 8954 Rich Farrar

To find out more about your
Neighbourhood Policing Team
visit www.staffordshire.police.uk
or telephone **0300 123 44 55.**



those front-line local officers.
The city has now been divided into three large Local Policing Teams, headed up by a Chief Inspector and Inspector who oversees all the issues affected the local communities.

Whilst the local commanders have changed for some, where possible you still have the same neighbourhood police officers and community support officers in the same communities as before.

In the last year over 1,000 public meetings were held to seek your views and to respond to local issues. On these two pages you can see who your local officers are and how to contact them.

Remember to visit our web site, www.staffordshire.police.uk to find out what we are doing in your community to keep you safe and reassured.

*Figures based on comparison year ending Feb 2011 compared to same period ending Feb 2010.



New face of campaign

A 60-year-old from Packmoor has become the new face of a campaign to help raise awareness of prostate cancer. Norman Boughey, pictured above, is fronting a campaign called *Get Checked Today to Enjoy Tomorrow* to encourage more men to go to their doctors if they have symptoms of prostate cancer.

Early diagnosis of the disease can help save lives and give a better prognosis.

Norman was diagnosed with prostate cancer four years ago after contacting his doctor and has urged other men to make sure they are checked if they have any concerns.

Norman said: "I knew I had to get myself checked out by my doctor as soon as I realised I was getting up several times a night to go to the toilet.

"An examination took seconds and confirmed that my prostate was enlarged. After further tests and a biopsy, it was confirmed that there was cancer in my prostate.

"I still have regular checks but it is now four years since my surgery.

"I know if I hadn't gone to see my doctor straight away it could have been a completely different story."

Right Royal welcome awaits long-serving Glenys

Receptionist's public work rewarded with invite to Palace garden party

As a long serving receptionist in the busy foyer of Stoke-on-Trent's Civic Centre, Glenys Walker meets and greets hundreds of visitors to the building every week.

However on 29 June it will be Glenys's turn to be greeted – by The Queen and other members of the Royal family.

For the woman, who is one of the familiar and friendly front-line faces of the city council, has been invited to attend this year's annual Buckingham Palace garden party.

"I still can't believe it – it's like a dream come true because I love the Royal family," said Glenys who has worked for the council for 33 years, mostly as a receptionist.

Glenys was nominated for her big day at the palace by Stoke-on-Trent South MP Rob Fello in recognition of her dedicated public service in Stoke-on-Trent over many years.

It will not be her first brush with Royalty. In 2010 she was one of a small selection of council staff who spoke to Prince Charles



Glenys Walker at work on reception at the Civic Centre.

“““

I regard the invitation to Buckingham Palace as an opportunity to represent the city.

GLENYS WALKER

when he and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, visited Stoke Town Hall during a Royal visit to mark the centenary of Stoke-on-Trent's federation of the six towns.

A few months later Glenys went on a public guided tour of Buckingham Palace as a 65th birthday treat organised by daughter Julia – and they were also entertained at the House of Commons by Rob Fello, who knows Glenys from the frequent visits he makes to

the Civic Centre on constituency business.

Glenys joined the council in the Audit Department, issuing permits for boating, angling, bowls and tennis. She was also on reception in the former salaries department and six years ago transferred to the Civic Centre front desk and switchboard to help out for three months – and stayed.

As *Our City* was going to press, Glenys, whose husband Colin died five years ago, was planning

to hang up her smart black and white uniform and retire on 27 May to do voluntary work as a receptionist for the Douglas Macmillan Hospice.

Just over a month later Glenys will attend the Royal Garden Party accompanied by daughter Julia, aged 45.

Glenys said: "It's like a bonus retirement present. I have loved my time with the city council and I regard the invitation to Buckingham Palace as an opportunity to represent the city."

For all city council services contact 234234



YOUR HEALTH CENTRES

ABBEY HULTON (Main)	0300 123 0976
Children and Adolescents	0300 123 0987
Mental Health Service	
BENTILEE	01782 231300
BLURTON (Main)	0300 123 0971
Children and Adolescents	0300 123 0977
Mental Health Service	
BURSLEM	0300 123 0979
WHITFIELD VALLEY	01782 425720
FENTON	01782 743100
HANFORD (Main)	0300 123 0974
Children's Airway	0300 123 0977
Support Team	
HANLEY	0300 123 0980
LONGTON	0300 123 0993
LONGTON COTTAGE HOSPITAL	0300 123 0993
MEIR	01782 425676

NORTON	01782 534599
PACKMOOR	01782 794600
PICCADILLY CENTRE (Main)	0300 123 0985
Sexual health helpline	0300 123 0970
SMALLTHORNE	0300 123 0982
STOKE	0300 123 0986
Out of Hours District	0300 123 0989
Nursing Service	
TRENT VALE	01782 425260
TUNSTALL (Main)	0300 123 0972
Dental Advice Line	0300 123 0981

For more information and advice on health issues please call NHS Direct – 24 hrs a day **0845 46 47** or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk or www.nhs.uk

Fire & Rescue contact numbers

EMERGENCY RESPONSE MANAGER Wayne Bowcock 01785 898894	LONGTON STATION MANAGER Rich Williams 01785 898594	SANDYFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-ORDINATOR Pete Hall 01785 898886
PREVENTION AND PROTECTION MANAGER Rebecca Bryant 01785 898542	SANDYFORD STATION MANAGER Glynn Luznyj 01785 898693	RISK REDUCTION CO-ORDINATOR Rehana Iqbal 01785 898891
RISK REDUCTION MANAGER Mick Daniels 01785 898927	HANLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-ORDINATOR Mick Warrilow 01785 898902	SAFER CITY PARTNERSHIP OFFICER Donna Broadhead 01785 898904
HANLEY & BURSLEM STATION MANAGER Ian Read 01785 898591	LONGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD CO-ORDINATOR Tracey Cresswell 01785 898951	

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 999 AND ASK FOR THE FIRE SERVICE

To book your home fire risk check ring: 0800 0241 999



Your Councillors

Baddeley, Milton and Norton



JACK BRERETON
(Conservative)
07855 916134
jack.brereton@stoke.gov.uk



ANDREW LILLEY
(Labour)
07949 115878
andrew.lilley@stoke.gov.uk



DUNCAN WALKER
(Labour)
(01782) 912422
duncan.walker@stoke.gov.uk

Abbey Hulton and Townsend



GWEN HASSALL
(Labour)
(01782) 263166
07851 751813
gwen.hassall@stoke.gov.uk



ADRIAN KNAPPER
(Labour)
07714 334453
adrian.knapper@stoke.gov.uk

Birches Head and Central Forest Park

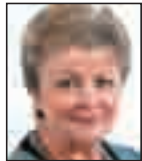


PAUL BREEZE
(Unaffiliated)
(01782) 279684
paul.breeze@stoke.gov.uk



MARK MEREDITH
(Labour)
07918 911042
mark.meredith@stoke.gov.uk

Blurton East



GLENYS WARD
(Independent)
(01782) 312670
07922 909545
glenys.ward@stoke.gov.uk

Bentilee and Uubberley



SHEILA PITT
(Labour)
07957 948896
sheila.pitt@stoke.gov.uk



ALISON WEDGWOOD
(Labour)
07968 477901
alison.wedgwood@stoke.gov.uk

Birches Head and Central Forest Park



PAUL BREEZE
(Unaffiliated)
(01782) 279684
paul.breeze@stoke.gov.uk



MARK MEREDITH
(Labour)
07918 911042
mark.meredith@stoke.gov.uk

Blurton East



GLENYS WARD
(Independent)
(01782) 312670
07922 909545
glenys.ward@stoke.gov.uk

Blurton West and Newstead



NEIL DAY
(Labour)
(01782) 417196
07796 040002
neil.day@stoke.gov.uk

Boothen and Oakhill



ANDY PLATT
(Labour)
07919 660221
andy.platt@stoke.gov.uk

Bradeley and Chell Heath



GURMEET SINGH KALLAR
(Labour)
07900 604232
gurmeetsingh.kallar@stoke.gov.uk

Broadway and Longton East



TOM REYNOLDS
(Labour)
07850 828717
tom.reynolds@stoke.gov.uk

Burslem Central



ALAN DUTTON
(Labour)
(01782) 824051
07802 714112
alan.dutton@stoke.gov.uk

Burslem Park



JOY GARNER
(Labour)
(01782) 768846
07986 442770
joy.garner@stoke.gov.uk

Dresden and Florence



SHAZAD HUSSAIN
(Labour)
07899 771815
shazad.hussain@stoke.gov.uk

Eaton Park



TERRY CROWE
(Labour)
(01782) 269422
07818 044755
terry.crowe@stoke.gov.uk

Etruria and Hanley



MAJID KHAN
(Labour)
07989 441707
majid.khan@stoke.gov.uk

Fenton East



PAUL SHOTTON
(Labour)
(01782) 434445
paul.shotton@stoke.gov.uk

Fenton West and Mount Pleasant



KAREN CLARKE
(Labour)
07914 723653
karen.clarke@stoke.gov.uk

Ford Green and Smallthorne



MATT WILCOX
(Labour)
07810 825600
matt.wilcox@stoke.gov.uk

Goldenhill and Sandyford



MARTIN GARNER
(Labour)
(01782) 768846
07759 863615
martin.garner@stoke.gov.uk

Great Chell and Packmoor



JANINE BRIDGES
(Labour)
(01782) 851842
07989 385631
janine.bridges@stoke.gov.uk

Hanford and Trentham



ANN JAMES
(Independent)
(01782) 836766
ann.james@stoke.gov.uk

Hanford and Trentham



TERENCE FOLLOWS
(Independent)
(01782) 318127
07944 055379
terence.follows@stoke.gov.uk

Hanford and Trentham



PETER HAYWARD
(Independent)
(01782) 644052
07906 055609
peter.hayward@stoke.gov.uk

Hanley Park and Shelton



AMJID WAZIR
(Labour)
07747 830461
amjid.wazir@stoke.gov.uk

Hartshill and Basford



SHAUN PENDER
(Labour)
(01782) 632104
07825 142327
shaun.pender@stoke.gov.uk

Hollybush and Longton West



KATH BANKS
(Labour)
(01782) 399759
kathleen.banks@stoke.gov.uk

Joiner's Square



ALASTAIR WATSON
(Labour)
07736 837822
alastair.watson@stoke.gov.uk

Lightwood North and Normacot



BAGH ALI
(Labour)
(01782) 343246
07973 848428
bagh.ali@stoke.gov.uk

Little Chell and Stanfield



DAVID CONWAY
(Independent)
(01782) 790922
david.conway@stoke.gov.uk

Meir Hay



MUHAMMAD AUMIR
(Labour)
07886 581082
muhammad.aumir@stoke.gov.uk

Meir North



RUTH ROSENAU
(Labour)
(01782) 501940
07870 503575
ruth.rosenau@stoke.gov.uk

Meir Park



ABI BROWN
(Conservative)
07793 844169
abi.brown@stoke.gov.uk

Meir South



DEBBIE WHEELDON
(Labour)
(01782) 595043
07870 777807
deborah.wheeldon@stoke.gov.uk

Moorcroft



MOHAMMED PERVEZ
(Labour)
(01782) 232468
07919 917632
mohammed.pervez@stoke.gov.uk

Penkhull and Stoke



RANDOLPH CONTEH
(Independent)
(01782) 256869
randolph.conteh@stoke.gov.uk

Sandford Hill



OLWEN HAMER
(Labour)
07538 697712
olwen.hamer@stoke.gov.uk

Sneyd Green



DEBRA GRATTON
(Labour)
07748 251695
debra.gratton@stoke.gov.uk

Springfields and Trent Vale



SARAH HILL
(Labour)
(01782) 845044
07584 607624
sarah.hill@stoke.gov.uk

Tunstall



LEE WANGER
(Independent)
07971 303729
lee.wanger@stoke.gov.uk

Weston Coyney



MATTHEW FRY
(Labour)
07583 762950
matthew.fry@stoke.gov.uk

FORTHCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, STOKE:

- Full city council meeting 26 May at 11am.
- Cabinet meeting is scheduled for 30 June at 5.30pm.
- Full city council meeting 7 July at 2.30pm.

For more information on your councillors go to stoke.gov.uk/councillors

Dancers tap into funding to relaunch city ballroom

DANCING is back at Stoke's iconic Rialto Ballroom after two fleet footed local entrepreneurs tapped into council funding.

The Church Street venue first opened in 1929 and after its heyday during the war years was used as a cinema, shopping arcade, restaurant and The Conservative Club.

It fell into decline after closing in 1998 but has now been brought back to life by business partners Kieran Kelly and Gerry Dee with the help of Enterprise Coach Gayle Jessiman at Business Enterprise Support.

They wanted to expand their highly successful K-Dee-K Danceworks dance school nearby and knew the ballroom on their own doorstep was ideal so Gayle helped them access £5,000 from the City Wide Grant Fund.

That paid for a new ballroom floor and the business partners pumped in another £15,000, spending 10 weeks putting the sparkle back into the derelict first floor ballroom, installing chandeliers, mirrors, a state-of-the-art sound system and completely re-decorating.

Kieran, a qualified dance teacher who has represented his native Ireland at Ballroom and Latin competitions around the world, remembers dancing at the original Rialto back in the early 90s when Stoke was a training mecca for the country's best ballroom talent – including current *Strictly Come Dancing* professional Darren Bennett.

"Most of our new customers are gob smacked when they come into the Rialto for the first time. They can't believe what they see when they get here," said Kieran.

"We are very proud of what we have achieved and could not have done it without

the help of so many people. Friends and customers were very kind and lent a hand. There was a real community spirit surrounding the work here.

"None of this would have been possible without all of Gayle Jessiman's help and advice and ultimately her helping us secure a business expansion grant from Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Former glory

"We are indebted to her and the council for their foresight and trust in these difficult economic times. With cutbacks all around, we feel very lucky to have received the help and support of the council in creating this wonderful amenity for the local community and bringing this very historical building back to its former glory."

More than 200 people attended the launch event, including former customers who remembered it during the war years. Enterprise Coach Gayle Jessiman, who helped it all happen, was also there.

She said: "It was absolutely fabulous. I'm a 'Strictly' fan so it was nice to see the Rialto back as a ballroom and being used for what it was originally intended.

"Kieran and Gerry were referred to me by Kevin Bell, the Stoke Regeneration Manager. We do help existing businesses as

well as people planning start-ups, so I was able to signpost them to the City Wide Grant Fund and support them during the application process."

The Rialto Ballroom now offers a wide variety of dance classes for all ages and abilities. The venue also hosts regular tea dances and social nights while top dancers from around the country use it as a training base.

RIALTO RETURNS...

Dance partners Matthew Coombes and Helen Morris trip the light fantastic in the ballroom which has been restored with the help of a council grant.



If you think you might benefit from the advice of an Enterprise Coach call Gayle Jessiman on 07969 557915 or email her on gaylej@enterprisesupport.org or go to www.enterprisesupport.org For more information about The Rialto go to www.rialto.ballroom.co.uk or call 01782 414115.

Colourful festival set to draw thousands to museum

THOUSANDS of visitors will flock to the 18th annual Canals Festival at Etruria Industrial museum on 4 and 5 June.

As well as old favourites like the museum's historic engine Princess in full steam, there will be live music, stalls, traditional canal boats and a parade by huge, colourful figures called the Chester Giants.

Dozens of brightly-decorated canal boats will give a flavour of Britain's waterway tradition at one of the city's biggest community events.

Museum Manager Clodagh Cherry said: "We are looking forward to a great weekend again this year and hope to welcome everyone who came last year and many new visitors. It's a great way to spend time with the

family with lots of exciting activities for visitors to see and take part in.

"This festival has attracted people to Stoke-on-Trent from all over the country and hopefully we can have another high turn out for what is now the eighteenth Canals Festival."

● For more information or to book a stall please contact Etruria Industrial Museum on 01782 233144.

Flashback to last year's canals festival.



Our City is published by a partnership of Stoke-on-Trent City Council, NHS Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and Jobcentre Plus

