

our city



Victory dash

TOUR OF BRITAIN
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TRIUMPH FOR CITY
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Hotline rolls out red carpet for business

SEE CENTRE PAGES

Council will roll out the red carpet to attract new investment



By City Council Leader Councillor **MOHAMMED PERVEZ**

NEWS that Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire will not have their own Enterprise Zone was received by many as another kick in the teeth for the city from Government.

Of course it was disappointing, especially since David Cameron had raised the area's hopes during his visit to Stoke-on-Trent earlier in the year.

But the fact remains that – with or without an Enterprise Zone – we are the ones who must sell our city and we are the ones who must do all we can to attract the investment and jobs which will drive our city forward.

We outlined this commitment when we launched our four year Mandate for Change programme to the business leaders and employers, and I am delighted to say the feedback has been positive, with many public and private partners joining our efforts.

Together we will make Stoke-on-Trent an even greater place to live and work, with a stronger economy and better prospects for our children and young people.

Our city has selling points and strengths that some of the UK's new enterprise zones could only dream of... tremendous communications through the road and rail network, prime sites of land available for development, a hard-working population and of course you: the people who have made our city great.

Hundreds of millions of pounds invested in new schools, training and skills are building a workforce ready to fill new vacancies for new employers. Our city has so much to offer, and we are doing all we can to attract the investment it needs.

We have also outlined how we will roll out the red carpet to attract the kind of investment we need to create new jobs, build businesses and boost our economy.

This includes offering:

- A single point of contact for investors.
- Streamlined planning processes.
- Tailored solutions for business growth.
- Guidance on funding.
- Access to supply chains, labour markets and networks.

We can deliver big solutions for big businesses and provide local support for local companies. Then we can let the private sector get on with creating the jobs and wealth that will make Stoke-on-Trent thrive.

- See Mandate for Change Feature on pages 16 and 17.



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Green energy vision boost for homes and business

A ground-breaking vision to generate Stoke-on-Trent's own power and slash energy bills for homes and businesses has captured the nation's imagination.

National newspaper coverage hailed the city's bold idea to become carbon neutral and reduce its reliance on gas and electricity utilities as "Power to the People."

And a website giving details of 16 schemes from other councils saw Stoke-on-Trent's imaginative ideas soar to the top of the leader board for the most hits.

Under the scheme, energy efficiency measures and innovative ways of heating and powering homes and businesses would remove the impact of fluctuating and rising energy prices, tackling fuel poverty and attracting companies to invest in the city.

Ways it would help citizens and businesses in Stoke-on-Trent include:

- Tapping into national initiatives like Green Deal which help people insulate their homes and install new boilers, paid for by the savings they make in their bills.
- Innovative projects to share surplus heat power from big buildings. For instance, heat and power that Michelin does not need could be used to power the Civic Centre, Penkhull flats and developments at the former Spode site.
- Using tens of thousands of pounds worth of organic waste currently made into compost to make environmentally-friendly biogas.
- Using dried wood chippings from trees which fall down, have to be cut down or may even be specially grown to heat and power a care home and a sports centre.
- Further investment in renewable energy sources like solar panels. A massive array on the roof of the Civic Centre is generating power for the building, feeding surplus energy into the National Grid and will pay for itself within 10 years and is already performing 30 per cent above target. A new initiative has already been launched to install solar panels on 4,000 council homes in the city.
- Ambitious plans to pump warm water which could be as hot as 45 degrees centigrade from deep beneath the former Chatterley Whitfield pit which could be used to heat buildings.

A move to become a carbon neutral city would lead to training and employment services, especially since a major part of the initiative would be to refurbish people's homes with better insulation and heating, or even renewable energy like solar power.

Jane Forshaw, the council's Assistant Director City Services, said the city's power generation needs were around 600 megawatts a year – the equivalent of half the output of a large coal-fired power station, but energy efficiency measures could bring this requirement down, making self sufficiency a more realistic goal.

She said: "We want to offer people living in Stoke-on-Trent, existing businesses and new investors an opportunity to benefit from being

in a carbon neutral city. Energy sharing works in other parts of the country, and we are one of only three places in the UK which have the geological conditions to pump hot water from deep beneath the ground. The Chatterley Whitfield link has a lovely irony – giving Stoke-on-Trent a carbon free legacy out of its fossil fuel history."

She added that everyone could play their part in reducing the amount of energy the city uses, and it was hoped the exciting plans for the future would spur the public on to do their bit.

Jane said: "We hope the vision we are announcing will inspire and encourage members of the public and employers to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient."



HISTORIC MINE WITH A 21ST CENTURY USE:

Councillor Mark Meredith, Cabinet Member of Economic Development, and Councillor Gwen Hassall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhood, at the former Chatterley Whitfield coal mine which is a centre of ambitious plans to pump warm water which could be as hot as 45 degrees centigrade from deep beneath the pit – which could be used to heat buildings.

Hot advice for home warmth

NORTH Staffordshire Warmzone can offer advice and assistance to help people make their homes affordably warm and energy efficient. The five-year partnership which includes Stoke-on-Trent City Council has access to funding and grants for loft and wall insulation, draught-proofing, heating systems and tank jackets. To find out more visit www.nswz.co.uk or telephone 01782 479099.



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 webcasting. 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.





Bev Harding, of Blurton, with the new photovoltaic panels installed on her home by the council in the initiative which is cutting residents' fuel bills and creating jobs.

Solar power green energy drive creates 100 new jobs

ONE hundred new jobs are being created across the city to install environmentally-friendly solar panels in thousands of homes.

The council and its partners – energy provider E.ON and Kier Stoke – are carrying out the recruitment drive as part of a green energy scheme to install photovoltaic (pv) panels on up to 4,000 properties.

The JET (Jobs, Enterprise and Training) scheme will help

people enrol on the programme and train and equip them with the new skills they will need.

Councillor Mark Meredith, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "This project gives our local workforce the chance to learn new skills and take part in one of the most exciting and innovative projects the city has to offer. We want to train people with existing skills to broaden their experience – for example, electricians who have no experience of working at heights will be trained to do so as the panels are installed on the property's roof.

"It's about making sure people who have a certain set of skills can increase that breadth of knowledge and increase their chances of employment in the future."

The council has signed an agreement with E.ON which will see the utility company invest up to £24 million to install the solar PV panels on council and privately-owned houses.

As well as the panels, houses in Northwood, Birches Head and Middleport have also been given external wall insulation and offered energy saving measures.

Kier's Managing Director for Maintenance Peter Brynes said: "Kier is committed to identifying and delivering energy saving solutions for our customers' commercial and domestic needs through green energy generation.

Well-received by residents

"Our existing important relationship with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and E.ON enables us to understand the needs of our customer base and tailor our service to their requirements ensuring they gain maximum benefits from available renewable technology funding."

Councillor Gwen Hassall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods, added: "The solar panels we have installed so far have been well received by residents and are part of a larger plan to increase fuel efficiency in the city and ensure we are less and less reliant on fossil fuels. We have a strong commitment to using sustainable energies as part of our Mandate for Change policy, to make Stoke-on-Trent the place to bring business. Reducing fuel bills not only boosts the existing local economy, but encourages people to come to Stoke-on-Trent if they feel they will be benefiting from the scheme."



THE POWER OF SUNLIGHT... Kier Stoke Operations Director Jane Spellacy, left, and Training Manager Jenny Donkin check a hi-tech monitor at the Civic Centre which shows exactly how much energy is being generated by solar panels on the building's roof. They are similar to those being installed at 4,000 homes across the city.

Evening meetings open up council to more people

COUNCILLORS have voted to move their council meetings from the afternoon to early evening to allow more members of the public to engage in the democratic process.

The proposal was brought forward to move full council meetings outside of normal working hours to make the decision-making process more accessible.

The move is also intended to attract high calibre candidates with diverse backgrounds to local Government.

Leader of the Council Councillor Mohammed Pervez said: "This is an opportunity to get more people in the city involved in local democracy.

"By broadening access to local politics we hope to attract more young people to take an interest in council decisions and possibly even stand for election.

"I believe this is a positive step forward as we continue to look at ways to make our decision-making process more open and transparent. If local decisions are more accessible to people they can get more involved in the council services that matter to them."

● **A list of dates and times of council meetings can be found on the council website at stoke.gov.uk/meetingdates**

Prosecution warning issued to fly-tippers

BUSINESSES who illegally dump waste have been warned they face prosecution and large fines if found guilty of fly tipping.

The council's Environmental Crime Unit announced the blitz on rogue traders who litter the city's roads, open spaces and pavements, or who do not have a proper waste disposal contract.

Illegal fly tipping cost the city almost £300,000 last year and officers were called out to deal with just over 3,000 incidents.

Now team members will be checking with local businesses to make sure they have a proper arrangement to dispose of commercial waste.

Councillor Janine Bridges, Cabinet Member for City Services, said: "Every business has to have proper waste disposal arrangements in place.

"Most businesses do, and the Environmental Crime Unit is determined to deal firmly with those that choose to ignore their duty. Fly tipping must stop if we are to attract investors and make Stoke-on-Trent a great working city again."

● **To report fly tippers in confidence please call 01782 234234 or email environmental.crime@stoke.gov.uk**

Service provides language link for communities

A DEDICATED team of professionals offers support to public services across the city with a translation and interpretation service in 45 different languages.

The service, based at Stoke Town Hall, was established in 1992 and provides much-needed help to members of the public, council officials and partner agencies whenever its services are needed.

From attending meetings to provide face-to-face interpretation, to translating anything from legal letters to promotional material, the self-financing service provides a vital link between the city's communities and public services.

Waqas Butt, head of Translation and Interpretation Services, who is also a translator and interpreter explained that around 95 per cent of its translators and interpreters were locally-based, which saved money which would otherwise be spent on bringing in specialists from other areas.

He said: "We also boost the local economy by providing work to the 120 interpreters and translators who are on our register and live locally."

● **The team makes a charge for its services and offers commercial work as well as helping members of the public and partner agencies. They can be contacted on 01782 235088, or email translation.interpretation@stoke.gov.uk or fax 01782 235090.**

New parents wake up to baby safety call

HARD-hitting radio ads have been used as part of a campaign aimed at hammering home safe sleeping messages to Stoke-on-Trent parents with new babies.

Two different ads aired during a one-week run – one featuring the Brahms lullaby and the other with a cooing baby, a heavily breathing parent and then total silence.

Radio presenters have also given their support to this campaign and have recorded further commercials for a second week.

Carole Preston, the Safeguarding Children Board Manager in Stoke-on-Trent, said: "The Safeguarding Children Board is committed to doing their best to promote the safety of babies and children in our community.

"National figures show an increase in the number of babies who have died while being put in risky sleeping situations and the risk is even higher for babies where a parent or carer has

consumed alcohol or taken drugs. All agencies involved with new parents offer advice about safe sleeping or co-sleeping but sadly some parents don't heed it so we're targeting those people with this campaign.

"Some people may have found the ads upsetting but it's really important that we do all we can to keep children safe and hopefully this hard hitting campaign will help us to get this very important message across.

Posters carrying the Safe Sleeping message remain on display in prominent places throughout the city where parents are likely to gather.

The striking posters remind parents that for the first six months of their lives babies should always sleep –

- *On their backs with their feet to the foot of the cot*
- *In their own cot or crib*
- *Never with a parent or carer in their bed, on a sofa or armchair*

Most important of all, it is NOT safe to be caring for a baby/child if either parent or carer have consumed alcohol or taken drugs.



SAFE AND SOUND... three-week old George Smith correctly positioned in his cot, watched by his mum Taryn, right, and Health Visitor Janice Frost.



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Older or disabled and need home improvements?

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- **Decorating and gardening services**
Free no obligation quotes from trusted contractors
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We search for grants or loans to help you get essential work done
- **Repairs management**
We specify the work, manage the contractor, and make sure jobs are done well
- **Falls and fire prevention checks**
We assess your home for fire and falls hazards
- **Home from hospital services**
Repairs and adaptations to enable you to leave hospital and return to your own home
- **Handyman services**
Small DIY type jobs carried out by our qualified multi-skilled handymen at a low hourly rate

Revival is a non-profit making agency owned by Staffordshire Housing Association. We are supported by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, NHS, Supporting People, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue and other local authorities and organisations.



Revival Home Improvement Agency
308 London Road
Stoke-on-Trent
ST4 5AB

Tel: 01782 749202

Fax: 01782 745829

Email: revival@staffshousing.org.uk

Www: improvingyourhomelife.co.uk

01782 749202
Call us to see how we can help you!



POLICE CLAMP DOWN ON METAL THEFT



PC Darren McGrath with the kind of scrap metal being targeted by thieves who often put their own and other people's safety at risk.

Spot the copper

A hard-hitting campaign to tackle the rising number of metal thefts has been launched by police in Stoke-on-Trent.

Anything from electricity cables to radiators are being targeted by thieves cashing in on the rising worldwide price of copper, lead and other non-ferrous metals – all for the sake of their scrap value.

Staffordshire Police has launched

a dedicated initiative – Operation Amalgam – to combat the problem and is working closely with partners to identify potential targets.

And they have warned that criminals involved, from thieves to dealers, face having their assets seized if they are caught.

In Stoke-on-Trent alone police have dealt with a wide range of metal thefts such as radiators torn from the walls of empty houses and even properties that are occupied, and metal items from yards and gardens.

In other cases thieves have broken into houses and commercial buildings to rip out water pipes – causing flooding to adjoining properties – and they have even put their lives at risk by stealing metal from electricity substations.

Three teenagers aged 16,

18 and 19 have been charged with burglary at a Western Power Distribution substation off Wilding Road, Ball Green, after being arrested at the location on the evening of Monday, 25 July.

Burglary offences

Also in July five men were charged with burglary offences following two separate break-ins at properties in the city – and both incidents are being linked to the theft of metal from the premises.

Western Power Distribution is also helping to fight metal crime by using SmartWater to mark the metal components of electricity substations, making the stolen metal traceable and worthless to thieves.

You can help

Anyone with information about metal theft is urged to report it to Staffordshire Police on

0300 123 4455

or Crimestoppers anonymously on

0800 555 111

Chief Inspector Adrian Roberts, commander of Stoke-on-Trent North Local Policing Team, said: “Metal theft is a problem that affects local communities and it is not a victimless crime. We are determined to target those responsible or involved in metal theft, including anyone receiving stolen goods.”

He added: “Offenders are taking huge risks when they break into electricity substations. These buildings are full of live electricity cables and extremely dangerous to people who are not experts in this field.”

Everyone can play their part in making the city a place for business

By City Council Chief Executive **John van de Laarschot**



THERE is no doubt that the Government's decision not to base an Enterprise Zone in Stoke-on-Trent was a massive blow to everyone in the city, especially considering the work that had gone into the bid and the encouragement at Government level for our proposals.

In this issue of *Our City*, Council Leader Councillor Mohammed Pervez outlines our future vision for bringing business to the city and supporting our existing business network, but I wanted to tell you about two projects that are already underway, which are in line with our Mandate for Change.

In the past month, we have seen a partnership between ourselves and Kier Stoke create 100 new jobs for skilled tradesmen across the city to install new solar panels on up to 4,000 council properties. This is exactly what our Mandate for Change has been designed to achieve.

The joint project, along with E.ON, will provide training for those with existing skills to broaden their experience. The council's JET (Jobs, Enterprise and Training) scheme will help people enrol and provide relevant training. Around 70 people, as well as 14 trainees, plus an estimated support team of 15 will be employed.

This is exactly the type of project we want to replicate and build on across the city, creating jobs, giving a skilled workforce the chance to gain employment, and as a result, boosting the local economy.

Powering the city

Attracting businesses to the city is also a key part of the Mandate for Change. This month, the council has been chosen by NESTA (the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) and the Local Government Group as one of 17 local authorities to take part in the Creative Councils programme.

The council's plan, which gained national media attention, could mean using surplus fuel generation capacity within the city, from businesses and industry, to power Stoke-on-Trent, reducing a reliance on externally provided energy, attracting investment by cutting fuel bills, giving new businesses an incentive to base themselves in the city, and safeguarding existing businesses.

NESTA, along with the Local Government Group, will provide expert advice to the council to help develop its idea on how the city can fuel itself in years to come.

These are just two examples of what we are already doing to create a great working city, but we need your help to ensure that vision becomes a reality.

Take a look at the Mandate for Change on stoke.gov.uk – see what we are trying to do to make Stoke-on-Trent the place to bring business and help us make that change.

Make it

Click and Easy
stoke.gov.uk

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

China Tales

By Placer



Star Trek android a big fan of city vampire movie saga

FILM-maker Chris Stone is boldly going where no director has gone before with his internet movie hit Blood and Bone China... and has picked up a Star Trek celebrity fan in the process.

Star Trek actor Brent Spiner – who blazed a trail as android Lt. Commander Data for seven years on TV and in four films – walked up to Chris as he showcased the

series at the recent London Film and Comic Con festival to congratulate him on his Potteries-based vampire drama.

Chris is currently working on the 12th and final episode and said: "Brent told me the cinematography was fabulous – like watching a movie – so that was fantastic."

Once the award-winning freelance has finished filming, he'll sink his fangs into marketing the series and is hopeful a partnership deal with YouTube will help it go viral.

He said: "We've had 45,000 hits so far for Blood and Bone China and now we have this partnership deal I'm hoping we can smash the 100,000 mark."

"This deal is brilliant and great promotion for Stoke-on-Trent. The series is really going down well and we're the only British entry at the Marseilles Film Festival in October."



Refurb reveals a piece of history

BUILDERS renovating one of Burslem's oldest pubs proved the history of our great city is never very far below the surface of 21st Century Stoke-on-Trent.

A wooden sign removed from the front of the Huntsman in Wesport Road revealed a brickwork frieze with the hostel's original name, The White Hart.

Few would remember the moniker, which dates back to Victorian times and was covered up in the early seventies, although historian Fred Hughes had a story to tell when quizzed about the pub. In 1872 The White Hart was the scene of colourful hotelier Fred Horry's last drink before he took a train to Lincoln

and murdered his wife. He was tried for the killing and hanged.

On the day of his execution, it is said 3,000 Boslemites lined the streets to watch an empty coffin carried from the George Hotel to St John's Churchyard.

Horry's friends eventually paid for a granite obelisk to be placed above an empty grave in his memory.



Daisy Pearson and Ethan Lewis, both aged nine, from Norton Primary School pond-dipping at Whitfield Valley.

Activities showcase our amazing environment

HUNDREDS of schoolchildren throughout the city are learning about Stoke-on-Trent's amazing environment by rolling up their sleeves at nature reserves on their doorsteps.

Fun days organised by the council's Countryside Team invite a number of schools on to a site to take part in a fun day of activities to open

their eyes, and inform their teachers, about the wealth of flora and fauna living often yards from their schools and homes – at the heart of a former industrial city.

The aim is to spread the word about the city's natural resources and encourage more and more schools to use the nature reserves as part of the curriculum.

One day staged at the Whitfield Valley Local Nature Reserve – up until the 1970s the site of coal mining operations – showed just how far Stoke-on-Trent has come in reclaiming and regenerating industrial wastelands.

Seven schools took part in a rotating programme of seven activities run by the Countryside Team. These included pond dipping, a geology trail, tree identification, hunting for mini beasts, identifying birds and story telling. They also created a journey stick – wooden stick

and a length of wool, which children use to attach leaves, flowers and other things they are challenged to find during a nature walk. This created a visual reminder of their journey around the nature reserve.

Helen Meharg, of the Countryside Team, said: "Schools might not be aware of what is on their own doorstep but the feedback we are getting from the sessions is that pupils and staff think they are absolutely brilliant."

Pride in the future

"As well as giving the young people an insight into the wildlife and habitats in our city, the sessions give them a pride in the future of the reserves, which will hopefully deter antisocial behaviour.

"We are working on an autumn programme which will involve seed gathering on the sites, and encouraging schools to grow seedlings which they can eventually plant in copses at the sites."

Environmental education activities are also held at Park Hall Country Park and Berryhill Fields.

To find out how your school could take part, call the Countryside Team on 01782 331889.



Troy Littleton, 11, from Holden Lane Primary School with Countryside Team Leader Helen Meharg looking for mini beasts.

Soccer link-up helps citizens rise up the health league

PORT Vale Football Club has signed a three-year deal with the NHS to promote healthy lifestyles.

The partnership will see the Valiants team up with public health staff to improve fans' health and fitness by raising awareness about a whole range of issues like smoking, obesity, alcohol misuse and mental health problems.

Fans will see more NHS information in and around the club and a series of health promotion events are planned at Vale Park and in the community.

The agreement builds on an excellent relationship NHS Stoke on Trent already has with the club, where half-time healthy snacks are provided for children on match days and a stop smoking group holds meetings.

The club's Chief Executive, Perry Deakin, said: "We are delighted to have signed this deal. We already work very closely with the NHS locally but we are keen to build on this and do more together going forward. We are keen to do all we can to make health information available to our fans and the wider community."

Ideally placed

Sharon Taaffe, Head of NHS Stoke on Trent's Health Improvement Team, said: "Port Vale are ideally placed to work with our Health Improvement Team to help us address the health related issues that face this city.

"By working with Port Vale and using their branding, and the networks and contacts they have, we can reach people we wouldn't normally be able to.

"We hope the partnership will increase the number of people using services they wouldn't normally access including smoking cessation classes. We are really looking forward to working with Port Vale to help get our messages across."

More signings are on the horizon as NHS Stoke on Trent talks to Stoke City about further health promotion initiatives involving the Premier League club.

Around 1,000 people have already taken part in match day walks at Stoke and Vale after the NHS worked closely with the Federation of Stadium Communities. Stoke City also hosts its own stop smoking group.

To find out more about healthy living initiatives contact NHS Stoke on Trent on 01782 298002



A PICTURE OF HEALTH...

Port Vale players Ben Williamson, left, and Mike Green, right, and their colleagues are helping to promote healthy lifestyles to supporters. They are pictured, left, with Sharon Taaffe, Head of NHS Stoke on Trent's Health Improvement Team.

Hunt is on for nominees to be city's next Young Poet Laureate

YOUNG Poet Laureate Dan Tatton, pictured, has challenged students across the city to pick up their pens and try to become his successors.



Entries have been received in a libraries competition to find the next young person from

Stoke-on-Trent to be given the role of promoting poetry in schools.

Since winning the competition Dan has started his own blog on the libraries website and also won a regional poetry competition.

Dan said: "The past year has been an amazing experience for me and has really helped me to broaden my horizons as a poet.

"I hope now that I can pass the baton on to someone else who can take the role to new heights."

Councillor Gwen Hassall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods, said: "This is a wonderful opportunity provided for our young people and we should continue to nurture that creative spark which has been so evident in Stoke-on-Trent for so many years."

Look out for details of the new Young Poet Laureate in November's Our City.

Inspectors' report backs improving care services

STOKE-on-Trent's most vulnerable children are receiving improved services according to an independent Government report.

Inspectors from Ofsted announced safeguarding arrangements and services for looked after children in the city were good in 14 of 22 categories.

The report – which focusses on the 432 looked-after children in Stoke-on-Trent – also found that capacity for improvement is good.

Councillor Debra Gratton, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, said: "It is a key aim of this council and our partners that our children and young people are protected and safe. It is crucial that vulnerable young people are given the most appropriate and timely care and support.

"We are pleased with the Ofsted report and it highlights many good aspects of our work."

The services inspected by Ofsted are provided in partnership by the council, NHS Stoke on Trent, Staffordshire Police and a number of other agencies.

Our City: give us your views and you could win a £50 voucher

£50 worth of vouchers to spend in the city's popular markets are up for grabs for people who help the council to improve *Our City*.

The magazine, which was named the UK's Best Council Publication in 2008, aims to include as many people as possible in promoting everything good about Stoke-on-Trent and telling residents how they can access the public services they need.

But in a bid to make the magazine even better, and help it reflect what the city's people want to see, *Our City* wants readers to answer the following questions:

- What do you like best about *Our City*?
- Is there anything you don't like?
- What would you like to see more of in the magazine?

Send your answers by email to ourcity@stoke.gov.uk, or write the answers on a postcard including your name and contact details and send to Freepost *Our City*.

All answers will be entered into a prize draw and the first pulled out of the hat on 28 October will receive vouchers to the value of £50 to spend in the city's markets.



FALLING CRIME AND HIGH-PROFILE POLICING MEAN IT'S NEVER BEEN SAFER TO

Senior police officers are moving quickly to reassure the people of Stoke-on-Trent that Government cuts will not damage the good work being done to cut crime and reduce antisocial behaviour, making Stoke-on-Trent a safer city year on year. Here, *Our City* reports on the round the clock policing efforts which are sending clear signals to criminals and law-abiding citizens alike...



ROUND THE CLOCK POLICING:
Residents in Stoke-on-Trent can be confident they will see high-visibility policing around the city, day and night.

Crimefighters promise to stay tough on the streets

AROUND-the-clock policing is making Stoke-on-Trent a safer place to live than ever before.

Despite budget cuts, highly visible front-line officers are continuing to patrol the city's streets and effectively fight crime.

The latest figures show that crime is continuing to fall year on year – while crime and antisocial behaviour victims are increasingly satisfied with the service they are getting from Staffordshire Police.

There were nearly 2,000 fewer crimes between 1 April 2011 and 30 June compared to the same period the previous year – a

reduction of 10 per cent.

At the same time over 91 per cent of crime victims said they were happy with the service they received from the force, rising from 88 per cent for the same quarter in 2010.

Violent crime with injury has been significantly reduced too, with a county-wide fall of 24 per cent in the first quarter of the financial year compared to the same time in 2010.

And serious acquisitive crime – which includes burglary, robbery and vehicle crime – fell to 2,131 from 2,247, a drop of five per cent.

Behind the statistics, the man in charge of policing the city says teamwork and front

line presence have been a major factor.

Chief Superintendent Bernie O'Reilly said: "We are absolutely committed to neighbourhood policing, to effective and swift response policing and carrying out detailed investigations into major crime."

"The public values a significant police presence on the streets and we will continue to meet that demand as effectively as ever before. However, we are not in a bubble and are very aware of the financial constraints but I understand the importance that people place on a frontline police presence and I will continue to endeavour that this is maintained and that we continue to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour across the board."

He added: "The latest figures show that we are continuing to head in the right direction and even though it is inevitable we will shrink as an organisation, we will continue to prioritise on what is important to the public – and that is having officers on the streets, cutting down on theft and burglary and preventing antisocial behaviour."

"Despite the improvements, we cannot be complacent. For instance, the national disorder illustrated how criminals were able to mobilise at great speed through the use of social networking. It is up to us as a police force to make sure we stay one step ahead and develop tactics that are as flexible and as agile, and that will give us the edge."



Chief Superintendent Bernie O'Reilly



READY TO HELP:
Experts at the Northern Area Control Room are there 24/7 to take the public's calls and send the right resources when and where they are needed.



Find us on **Facebook** Be a fan on [facebook/staffordshirepolice](https://www.facebook.com/staffordshirepolice)
Follow us on **Twitter** @[policingstoke](https://twitter.com/policingstoke)
See our videos on **YouTube** [youtube/staffordshirepolice](https://www.youtube.com/staffordshirepolice)

Neighbourhood policing to be

A MULTI-FACETED team of neighbourhood officers and specialist support staff is delivering policing in the city.

From the people who take the emergency calls in the Northern Area Control Room to the local response team officers who are the first to attend an incident, and from the CID detectives to the scene of crime officers that carry out detailed forensic investigations, it is a 24 hour-a-day operation.

Neighbourhood beat officers and

Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) add to the visible presence, which helps to proactively deter crime as well as rapidly react to it.

Sergeant Sean Clerk, who is a member of the Local Response Team and heads up a shift of 15 officers who patrol the city centre area, said: "From the uniformed officers on the streets' point of view we want to reassure the public that we are out there proactively combating crime and reacting to their needs."

LIVE IN THE CITY



READY TO ANSWER THE CALL:
Hanley-based response team PC Alison Birtwistle, left, and PC Julie Pointon.



VISIBLE POLICING:
PCSO Scott Holland is part of the front line team who are available, day and night, to protect the public and listen to residents' concerns.

HOT ON THE TRAIL:
When crime does occur police forensic officers are on the scene, gathering the evidence that leads to arrests and convictions.



Partners join forces in crime clamp-down

PARTNERSHIP working between the police and other organisations is a key ingredient in combating crime.

Within Stoke-on-Trent the police work alongside other agencies, including the city council, under the umbrella of the Safer City Partnership. This helps to proactively clamp-down on antisocial behaviour before it becomes more than a nuisance.

Meanwhile, campaigns such as Operation Safer Nights, which is the force's approach to tackling alcohol fuelled violence, and dedicated antisocial behaviour units patrolling streets are having a big impact.

On top of these, seasonal campaigns aimed at crime prevention in the home or in vehicles are helping prevent serious acquisitive crime.

Chief Superintendent Bernie O'Reilly said: "Partnership is key – and our relationship with the city council couldn't be better. At a time when it is more important than ever how we spend the public pound, combining resources, campaigns and strategies is the way forward."

Councillor Gwen Hassall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods, said: "We remain committed to working in partnership with Staffordshire Police and other agencies within the Safer City Partnership and communities to continue to reduce antisocial behaviour.

"We are also doing our utmost to prevent such incidents

occurring in the first instance, by providing positive activities. For example, we have continued to vigorously pursue appropriate legal sanctions against the minority of people responsible for the most serious and persistent antisocial behaviour.

"There is clear evidence to link the obtaining of antisocial behaviour orders with the reduced levels of incidents being reported and we are confident that residents welcome these most pleasing outcomes."



We have continued to vigorously pursue appropriate legal sanctions against the minority of people responsible for the most serious and persistent antisocial behaviour.



COUNCILLOR GWEN HASSALL

CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

maintained to boost community safety

"Our own team works around the clock to deal with incidents ranging from someone reporting a lost dog to a murder. From the public's point of view we are their first port of call and a visible presence on the streets.

"Even if we attend a serious incident which is then referred to our colleagues in CID, that initial role is vitally important in gathering eye witness evidence while it is still fresh in their mind and in preserving a crime scene

and protecting evidence.

"However, our role interlinks with the rest of the team and everyone has a role to play to ensure frontline policing is effective around the clock."

Scott Holland, who has been a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for nearly five years, says the challenge of the job and solving major problems give him real satisfaction.

Scott, who works with PC Rob Mountford and patrols the

Fenpark and Fenton East neighbourhoods, said: "I act as a link between the community and the police.

"Over the years I have seen the problems we have aimed to tackle reduce and respect for my role and that of the police grow.

"I have a great relationship with Rob and also with the community and we have worked hard to drive down antisocial behaviour and make people feel safer in their own homes."

Book now for entrepreneur advice scheme

BUDDING entrepreneurs are being given advice on setting up a business thanks to a new council service.

Stoke-on-Trent Libraries are working with HM Revenue and Customs to provide free workshops allowing people to receive professional advice about working for themselves.

The workshops, entitled Newly Self-Employed – The Basics, will be held between 10am and 12:30pm on Friday, 30 September, and then repeated at the same time on Friday, 28 October, 2011 at City Central Library, Hanley.

Visitors will be offered guidance on how to register with HMRC, the basics of record keeping, how and when to submit tax returns and payments and other useful advice.

Councillor Gwen Hassall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods, said: "Getting people to think of ways to create industry in this city needs to be encouraged at all times. We want people who may not know how to make those first steps into business to consider the library as a starting point to becoming your own boss."

● **Places are limited and booking is essential.**

To book a free place telephone 01782 238455.

For further information contact Janet Garner on 01782 238493 or email janet.garner@stoke.gov.uk



£29.5m health centres bring care facilities closer to where people live

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE... pictured outside the new Cobridge health centre are family doctors Uday Pathak, left, and Hrishi Pathak, Marilyn Marathe – from the Apsley House Surgery which is relocating to the centre – and chair of the Patient Participant Group for Cobridge Surgery, local resident Bernard Wragg.

THREE new NHS health centres costing £29.5 million are revolutionising patient care across Stoke-on-Trent.

One of them, Cobridge, will offer outpatient services as part of the North Staffordshire-wide Fit for the Future programme, which is designed to better support patients outside hospital with a range of testing and treatments in state-of-the-art community facilities.

The transformation began on 19 September when the new £4.5 million Tunstall Primary Care Centre in Scotia Road went operational. Bringing two GP practices together, the two-storey building is now home to a dental

access centre and offers specialist and district nursing, health visiting and blood tests.

There is a community pharmacy next door. Next to open is Cobridge Community Health Centre, which begins treating the first of 8,000 patients currently registered with the two GP practices transferring to the facility in late October.

State-of-the-art

Costing £14 million, two state-of-the-art buildings on the Elder Road site bring together a full range of services – one is a three-storey centre featuring a pharmacy, chest clinic and x-ray services while the other is an integrated sexual health unit. Outpatient services are also being provided, which will

save patients a trip to the University Hospital of North Staffordshire site.

Meir Primary Care Centre is the third centre to open its doors and will welcome its first patients at the end of November. Built on the Weston Road and A50 roundabout, the new centre brings together six GP practices and incorporates a wide range of health services including physiotherapy, contraception and sexual health services.

Nick Pritchard, Head of Premises Development for NHS Stoke on Trent, said: "Although the services delivered from the new buildings are most important, having clean, pleasant and accessible health centres will benefit communities directly and help in the regeneration of the city."

Looking for Childcare?

Your local Family Information Service provides free, friendly and impartial information, advice and assistance to find a solution that meets your childcare needs.

FREE Childcare support and advice for families

- **Childcare** – information on availability, facilities, types, school pick-ups, inspection outcomes and much more.
- **Childcare costs** – options to support the cost of childcare, including advice about child tax credits and childcare vouchers.
- **FREE Early Years Provision for 3 and 4 year olds** – information about when, where and how to access your free entitlement.

If you are looking for childcare call the Family Information Service on

0800 015 1120 or **01782 232200**

or email us at fis@stoke.gov.uk



stoke.gov.uk

Fostering

A career that changes lives in Stoke-on-Trent

01782 234555
stoke.gov.uk/fostering



Twin city visitors' praise for regeneration progress

REVITALISED links between Stoke-on-Trent and its twin Erlangen are planned after the German city's partnership officer paid glowing tributes during a two-day visit.

Peter Steger was in the Potteries to help promote and renew trade and investment opportunities between the two cities. The extension of collaboration and exchanges between schools and universities was also on the agenda.

He met the Lord Mayor, Councillor Terry Follows, on his first day and they discussed low carbon issues before meeting officers from Keele University.

Peter was shown the city's Mandate for Change plans before touring Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College and visiting the construction site of the Centre for Refurbishment Excellence (CORE) – the national centre for best practice in refurbishment.

The Stadt Erlangen partnership officer said: "This visit has highlighted to me the potential benefit that can be felt by both Erlangen and Stoke-on-Trent by renewing the links between our two cities."

Forward-thinking city

"I have seen a great deal of promise from Stoke-on-Trent, which is a tremendous city with a great deal to offer and I feel that, in return, we can help improve the lives of people here with what we can bring to the table."

"This is a forward thinking city and that has been made clear to me during my visit and I look forward to many years of trade and education links to come."

"Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent, the Chief Executive and everyone in the city for making this such a fruitful trip."

The Lord Mayor, Councillor Terry Follows, said: "It has been great to meet with Peter and get his thoughts on the future partnership of our two cities. He has given a glowing reference to our city, which is a testament to

the hard work we all know goes on here.

"I hope we can now take forward some of these ideas and ensure that the future of Stoke-on-Trent is as bright as we know it deserves to be."

Karen Tsang, an Investment Development Officer with the council's Make It Stoke-on-

ERLANGEN university graduate Nicole Eichenseher is in Stoke-on-Trent on an internship with the city council.

The 24-year-old's month-long exchange was organised by Erlangen's partnership officer Peter Steger ahead of his recent visit to the Potteries.

Nicole, who is about to start the second year of her master's degree in management of global companies at the University of Nuremberg, is spending time with the council's investment development and culture and tourism teams. She is pictured with Stoke-on-Trent's city crest at the Civic Centre.

Trent investment development team, said:

"There are many positives to renewing our partnership and developing long term economic benefits for our cities. Encouraging and creating more opportunities for businesses to work together is just one of them."

Residents warned over fake whisky

TRADING Standards officers have issued a warning after a batch of illicit whisky containing cleaning chemicals was discovered in the city.

A resident complained that drinking fake Highland Glen Scotch Whisky had made him feel ill.

Tests on the drink conformed it was unfit for consumption.

Councillor Gwen Hassall, Cabinet Member for Housing and Neighbourhoods, said: "Thankfully the complainant is ok. He was given the whisky as a gift from a friend; it has not been seen in shops. But there might be other examples of this product out there."

"The whisky is not a genuine brand. It has a black and gold label with 'Highland' and 'Glen' in white letters. It is not labelled with details of the producer – genuine products will always have details of the producer."

"We are urging residents to be wary of this product – if you think you have bought or been given a bottle do not drink it, and call the public protection service on 01782 232065."

● If you know someone selling fakes, call the fakes hotline anonymously on 01782 238444 or visit stoke.gov.uk/fakes

2012 grassroots sports boost

SPORTS clubs across the city will be able to advertise volunteer opportunities and seek new volunteers through a Sport England initiative linked to the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Sport Maker programme will recruit thousands of new sports volunteers aged 16 and over to organise and lead community sporting activity.

The council is supporting Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent deliver Sport Maker to inspire people to make sport happen at a local level. It aims to recruit, train and employ the next generation of sports volunteers.

● Individuals wishing to volunteer and clubs interested in recruiting new volunteers should register at www.sportmakers.co.uk or contact Ben Hollands, tel. 01785 619317, email bhollands@staffordbc.gov.uk or Vanessa Darlington, Stoke-on-Trent 2012 Co-ordinator, tel. 01782 236156, email vanessa.darlington@stoke.gov.uk



Erlangen's Partnership Officer Peter Steger, right, took in Stoke-on-Trent's new 6th Form College, above, and work on the CORE Centre of Refurbishment Excellence in Longton, far right, during his visit.



Public urged to act now over funeral arrangements

BEREAVEMENTS can be even more distressing if there is no money to pay for the funeral or the deceased has not left a will.

In cases like these the council may be responsible for arranging the funeral if there are no relatives or friends able to do it.

They may arrange a Welfare Funeral and take steps to recover the cost from the deceased's estate where possible. Burials take place in an unmarked shared public grave.

But this procedure, which can be an upsetting experience for family or friends, can often be avoided if people make a will or leave written instructions to ensure their wishes are carried out.

The law applies to the council area where the person dies. It means that a person from another part of the country who happened to be in Stoke-on-Trent (for instance in hospital) at the time of death could be put to rest far from home in a public grave without a headstone.

The Department for Work and Pensions has issued guidance called "What to do after death" to help the bereaved deal with the formalities of registering a death and to give advice about financial assistance that may be available and how the deceased's estate may be accessed to pay for the funeral.

Uncertainty avoided

Sometimes a payment from the Social Fund which helps people on low incomes pay for one-off events can be made to relatives on low income to help towards the funeral costs.

Relatives or friends who have no means of paying for a funeral must first contact the Coroner's Office who will put them in touch with the city council's Public Protection division. Officers will try to locate a will or relatives that may be able to carry out the funeral arrangements, and there can often be a delay before the funeral is held.

Dawn Birkin, Compliance and Health Protection Manager, said: "It's never too soon to make a will or put in writing your wishes for your funeral arrangements. Many people put off making a will believing that their assets will go to relatives or friends, but this may not be the case. We make a lot of effort to carry out the deceased's wishes with regard to burial or cremation, but if their wishes are not known we have to arrange a burial in a public grave without a headstone."

"Sometimes we are able to arrange cremation at Carmountside Crematorium and we can arrange for the ashes to be scattered on the rose garden there or to have them collected by a friend or relative. However all this uncertainty can be avoided if there is a will or written instructions."

Firefighter Tim Chan outside the new station at Bethesda Street, Hanley.



21st Century fire stations open community facilities

THE city's latest community fire stations have opened in Hanley and Burslem to offer first class amenities for local groups and residents as well as 21st Century bases for Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

This brings the total number of community fire stations in Stoke-on-Trent to three after the opening of the one at Sandyford, which has proved to be hugely popular.

Both of the latest state-of-the-art stations come complete with community facilities such as meeting rooms and the larger station at Hanley also has a partnership area, gym and training building.

As well as the firefighters, the Hanley Community Fire Station is also home to the Risk Reduction and Fire Safety Team for the North Staffordshire area.

Free facilities

Work is continuing at both stations to complete landscaping and parking facilities, and once this is done they will open their doors to the public, with Hanley holding drop-in sessions on:

Sat 15 October – 10am-4pm
Mon 17 October – 10am-12pm
Thurs 20 October – 10am-12pm
Thurs 20 October – 3pm-7pm

Burslem will invite the public to visit the station later in the year.

The drop-in sessions will provide visitors with a tour of the building and the chance to chat with their local firefighters about the work they do and the facilities on offer.

Sandyford Community Fire Station is already taking over 40 bookings per month from organisations as diverse as Age UK,

North Staffs Cancer Support, Workers' Education Association, Foster Carers' Support Group and local schools who all use the free facilities on a regular basis.

The city's fourth community fire station will be built at Longton and will also come complete with community facilities.

Group Manager Wayne Bowcock said: "Our old stations were designed to keep members of the public out.

These new buildings are exactly the opposite – they are community facilities that

happen to be fire stations. We hope Hanley and Burslem will be as popular as Sandyford. It's fantastic to open another two community fire stations on time, to quality and to budget.

"We would encourage local people to start using their new facilities."

● Community and partner groups interested in booking free facilities at the stations should email northerncommunityrooms@staffordshirefire.gov.uk or phone 01785 898897.

Firefighter Zahir Khalifa in the community area of Hanley Fire Station.



Grants and expert advice support help create new jobs

NEW businesses and entrepreneurs could benefit from a new grants pot being dished out by the council and a partner.

Investment grants and business support and mentoring are available for new social enterprises.

In 2010 the initiative handed out over £75,000 and created 14 new jobs.

Councillor Mark Meredith, Stoke-on-Trent City Council Cabinet Member for Economic

Development, said: "Supporting and developing businesses in Stoke-on-Trent is a priority for the council.

"These grants will provide a boost to individuals looking to set up a social enterprise which will not only benefit the city but create extra jobs.

"I would encourage people thinking of setting up a social enterprise to get in touch as help is available."

● Social Enterprises support social objectives and re-investment of profit into social and economic outcomes that benefit people who are disadvantaged, produce environmental benefits, and add value to community well being.

● To find out more about the programme contact Amanda Locke at VAST on 01782 683030 or via email on amanda.locke@vast.org.uk



Michelle Plant of Nails with Attitude who is looking to expand her business after a successful first year.

Nail beauty business points to more success

EXPANSION is already on the cards for Michelle Plant just a year after she launched her first nail and pedicure venture at Hanley indoor market.

The 35-year-old is contemplating expanding to a double stall so she can offer more services and she credits Business Enterprise Coach Gaynor Parkinson with giving her the belief and confidence to

get her business off the ground.

The former car saleswoman has not looked back since re-training at night school and making a career switch to give herself more time with her son Rhys, aged nine.

Her Nails With Attitude manicure and pedicure bar is now open six days a week and has gone from strength to strength. Situated just 100 yards away from her dad David's sweet stall, Michelle now has 80 regulars, has helped a work

experience student qualify in beauty and nails and is now planning to take on her second work experience student.

She said: "It was my dad's idea to set up in the market but I wasn't sure it would work. I spoke to Gaynor and she helped me with all sorts of advice, the legal things and advice on staffing.

"I've just celebrated my first birthday at the market and my dad had his 35th anniversary. I love it.

"It's friendly and inviting with plenty of passing trade. My clients are like family now, friends more than anything, it's not like a job. I wouldn't do anything else now. I'm thinking about expanding next year so I can offer tanning and do false eye lashes and I know I can turn to Gaynor for more support."

Enterprise Coach Gaynor, who is based at Bentilee Local Centre (see contact panel below), said: "I met Michelle in July and by August she had started her business in Hanley Market.

Stay positive

"It was her dad's idea to try the business there as he has had businesses in Stoke-on-Trent's markets for many years.

"She was not sure at first but now 12 months later the proof of the pudding really is in the eating. Michelle is an example of how you can be successful if you are prepared to put in the work and stay positive. It has not been easy for Michelle but she has not lost sight of her original goal, which was to run her own business."

Coaches offer monthly drop-in sessions

A MONTHLY enterprise support club is now helping even more people launch their own businesses in Stoke-on-Trent.

The city's three Enterprise Support Coaches organise free drop-in sessions with experts on hand to give advice on human resources, tax issues, banking, insurance, printing, graphic design and IT. The coaches are also available for one-to-one practical support as they talk budding entrepreneurs through business plans, funding applications and problem solving.

Sessions take place between 10am and 1pm

at the Unity union's offices on Garth Street in Hanley with the next scheduled for 18 October.

The team, launched in 2009 and funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, has already helped around 100 clients become their own boss.

● If you think you could benefit from the help of an Enterprise Coach call Gayle Jessiman on 07969 557915 or email gaylej@enterprise.support.org, Gaynor Parkinson on 07834 657828 or email gaynorp@enterprise.support.org, and Lisa Davies on 07866 807134 or email lisad@enterprisesupport.org

JUSTICE SEEN JUSTICE DONE

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

SAMURAI SWORD ATTACKERS JAILED:

Two men have been jailed for seven years each after using a sword and a dog in a sustained attack on another man in his own home. Dean Benson's Staffordshire Bull terrier ripped the man's lip off while Colin Sutcliffe nearly took their victim's hand off by repeatedly slashing him with an ornamental Samurai sword, shattering his fingers. Benson, 47, of Walton Grange, Stone, and 43-year-old Sutcliffe, of Campbell Road, Stoke, were convicted of wounding with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.



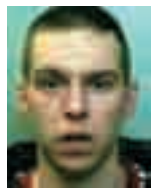
CRACK COURIER LOCKED UP:

Johann Carty is behind bars for three years. Carty, 26, of King William Street, Tunstall, has been sentenced to three years after police caught him with crack cocaine. He pleaded guilty to possession with intent to supply on the basis that he was a courier.



WEDDING DAY ASSAULT:

Lea Stanley lost his job and ended up with a one-year prison sentence after attending his employer's wedding reception and attacking the man's father. The 27-year-old from Lyme Road, Meir, had been drinking when he bit his victim's eyelid. Stanley appeared at Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court and admitted assault occasioning actual bodily harm.



CANNABIS FACTORY RAID:

Police found cannabis with a street value of £8,000 when they raided Wesley Gwilt's Smallthorne home. Officers discovered 76 plants, dried and drying cannabis, heaters, fans, an irrigation system and timer units. Electricity worth nearly £690 had been unlawfully used from the by-passed meter. Stoke-on-Trent Crown Court heard Gwilt, 32, of Moorland Road, had set up the drug factory to help pay off his debts. He admitted producing cannabis, possession of cannabis with intent to supply and abstracting electricity. He was jailed for 16 months.



PROLIFIC BURGLAR STRIKES AGAIN:

Thief Scott Barclay had been out of prison less than a month when he stole cash and tobacco from a flat above a workingmen's club as the stewards slept. The 40-year-old was homeless and back on heroin at the time. Barclay admitted burglary and was given a 32-month jail sentence. The court heard he had 22 previous burglary convictions.



Public urged to help city clampdown on housing fraud

INVESTIGATORS at Stoke-on-Trent City Council are at the forefront of tackling housing tenancy fraud.

And a citywide project launched in March this year is bearing fruit with what are believed to be the first prosecutions in the country outside London already pending and associated benefit fraud totalling £74,000 identified.

The Audit Commission is closely monitoring the council's work as it pays particular attention to those who obtain council tenancies and then sub-let for their own financial gain or just leave properties unoccupied while living elsewhere.

More co-ordinated working by the council's Fraud Investigation Officers and Housing Team means intelligence is now shared and officers are identifying housing tenancy issues and associated housing, council tax and other benefit-related offences.

Pro-active stance

Tenancy fraud investigations look into areas around housing applications, tenancy succession and unlawful sub-letting and have so far resulted in the recovery of 16 properties, which the council has been able to re-let to those on the waiting list who are in genuine need.

A further six properties have been served with notices to quit while authorisation has been given for three prosecutions for alleged tenancy and benefit offences. There are 71 on-going cases and the £74,000 in benefit fraud identified as a direct result of tenancy fraud investigations is being recovered.

Paul Bicknell, the council's Corporate Fraud Manager, said: "Our work to date on this project highlights the council's zero tolerance approach to fraud as we take a pro-active stance against those people committing housing tenancy fraud by recovering the

properties but also by taking criminal proceedings, where appropriate, against those involved.

"The Audit Commission has confirmed that we are one of a very few local authorities outside London who are tackling this issue in such a positive way.

"Not only are we helping to ensure that only those in genuine need are able to obtain council housing, we are also recovering properties from unlawful tenants who are causing antisocial problems, which obviously improves the lives of neighbours in the immediate vicinity.

"This work is crucial from both a moral and financial viewpoint and will benefit genuine tenants. It is therefore very important that if members of the public suspect housing tenancy fraud offences are being committed, that they inform the council of their concerns.

"It's also worth pointing out that tenants have a legal requirement to report changes in their circumstances as per their tenancy agreements so I would advise anyone whose situation has changed to notify their Local Centre immediately, as failure to do so may result in action being taken against them."

REPORT IT

You can report suspected housing tenancy fraud by calling 01782 236800 during office hours. An out of hours message machine is also in operation. You can also email the council on fraud@stoke.gov.uk

City council investigators have adopted a zero tolerance approach to housing tenancy fraud.



HI-TECH JOBS...
Aerotherm Fabricator Mark Dilk testing a pneumatic diverter.

Make it Stoke-on-Trent team helps business to grow

AN industrial engineering group has moved premises, expanded and diversified with the support of the Make it Stoke-on-Trent Investment Development Team, which encourages companies to do business in the city.

Through the service, Aerotherm and its 50 employees relocated from Longton to Scotia Business Park in Tunstall. As well as taking on new staff, the move to a bigger base of operations has allowed the company to diversify into three divisions.

Chris Bramhall, Group Marketing Manager at Aerotherm, said: "We had reached our absolute limit in the previous premises in Longton, and to meet with our growth plans we needed to increase capacity in terms of manufacturing, office and storage space.

"Yet we wanted to stay in North Staffordshire as it is such a good location to do business.

"Since moving to Scotia Road Business Park we have increased our staffing levels in



COUNCIL SUPPORT... Aerotherm's new, bigger premises at Scotia Business Park, Tunstall have helped the company stay in the city and create jobs.

all areas of the business and we will be looking to hire a further five."

The team was set up last August with the aim of attracting companies to relocate to the city, to support growth by raising its profile as a good place to do business.

The scheme is co-funded by the city council along with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Karen Tsang, the council's Investment Development Officer, said: "We worked with Aerotherm to ensure they could remain in the city. We

looked at potential property for the company and helped them relocate to the bigger premises at Scotia Business Park.

"We also looked at recruitment and through the council's JET scheme helped to fund new positions."

So far around 300 jobs have been created by companies moving to Stoke-on-Trent, while nearly 600 more have been saved due to expanding businesses being persuaded to stay in the area.

Councillor Mark Meredith, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "The Make It Stoke-on-Trent investment development team is providing a red carpet service for potential investors to the area."

Mandate for Change

For more information on how the council is rolling out the red carpet to new and existing businesses, see pages 16 and 17



For more details about business support in the city please call 01782 234747.

TV hit *Who Do You Think You Are?* boosts interest in City Archives

Huge records store preserves stories that bring history to life

EVERY year thousands of people visit the third floor of Stoke-on-Trent City Central Library in order to make a journey of discovery in the City Archives.

It may be to delve into their ancestry or uncover a piece of local history. Either way, visitors can count on the expertise of City Archivist Chris Latimer and his dedicated staff.

The team is responsible for thousands of historical documents, many of which chronicle pivotal moments in the area's past going back hundreds of years before Stoke-on-Trent became a city.

While helping the public to find out what they want to know, the archivists are also busy in the background carefully cataloguing present day facts and figures for the benefit of future generations.

They also provide one-to-one advice sessions at community libraries and put on small exhibitions around the city.

Chris said: "Contrary to what some people may imagine, the archives department is not a dry and dusty environment. The documents and files we keep bring our heritage and family history to life."

Run in conjunction with the Staffordshire County Council Archives service, the city's archives department role is to identify, preserve and make available material that tells the stories of communities around the city.

They may be official records of organisations such as schools, councils and

the police or more personal insights into the past with items such as a collection of diaries kept by farmers in Burslem and Abbey Hulton during the first half of the 20th century.

The city's industrial heritage is reflected in the archives with records of major ceramic names like Spode as well as the British Ceramics Federation. Every issue of *The Sentinel* since it first published in 1854 is on microfilm along with several other Staffordshire newspapers.

Family trees

Records currently being collated for future use include those of all of Stoke-on-Trent high schools that are becoming academies.

With the popularity of TV's *Who Do You Think You Are?* in which famous people explore their family trees, the number of visitors seeking information about their ancestry has increased.

Some have come from as far away as the United States and New Zealand! Last year 7,500 people visited the city archives.

The city's archivist service is making a name for itself at national level.

It is one of only three archive services in the country to gain the distinction of Outstanding National and International

Importance. In terms of performance it is rated 10th in the whole country, while user surveys consistently rate the service as very good or good.

Chris said: "We never know who is going to visit. It could be a professor doing academic research or a private individual wanting to trace their ancestry."

"We are a very people focused and user friendly service. We are not like a museum or library where people can instantly find what they want. Our role is to help people in an unobtrusive way by providing them with the means to find out things for themselves."

Chris, who has previously worked at Walsall and Greater Manchester, added: "It's a fascinating job for someone interested in history and putting large collections of paper files in order. You also need to enjoy dealing with people and steering them towards the information they are looking for."

The City Archives are open to the public on Wednesday from 10am to 7pm and on Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10am to 2pm. Booking advisable: tel 01782 238420.

OUTSTANDING ARCHIVE...
City Archivist Chris Latimer inspects records which paint a picture of Stoke-on-Trent's rich history.



NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION... left to right, Sophie Ashton, 10, resident Deborah Fawcett, Chair of the Holden Lane Community Association, John Reynolds, and residents Denise Ashton and Marion Lee pictured at the Pleydell Street Garage site where members of the community joined public services in Respect action which removed six skips of waste.

Respect action pays off

EFFECTIVE Respect Action Weeks – which give residents the opportunity to take action in their neighbourhoods – have been refined and improved. Funding has been secured for a series of Respect Action Days, which target communities throughout the city but with the opportunity to cover more neighbourhoods.

It means more areas can be effectively covered by agencies which co-ordinate the events under the umbrella of the Safer City Partnership.

Respect Week Co-ordinator Bill James said: "The extra funding means that Respect Action schemes will continue throughout the financial year, and at least up until next March."

"Residents respond well to these popular events, which give them advice on combating crime and health and welfare issues, as well as helping them carry out clean ups of their environment."

Respect Action Weeks have been operating for more than three years and bring together the council, Staffordshire Police, NHS Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service to target issues like antisocial behaviour, fly tipping, drug abuse and litter. The Respect Action Week held in Sneyd Green earlier this year highlights the effectiveness of the scheme in reducing crime and helping the community feel safer.

Working together, the council, Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service and a host of other groups are targeting issues like antisocial behaviour, drug abuse and litter, rubbish and fly-tipping.

Initiatives included free dance sessions for over 11s, free blood pressure checks and healthy living advice and home fire safety checks. Residents also worked to clean up litter and fly-tipping blackspots and make the area more pleasant.

A month after Stoke-on-Trent City Council launched its Mandate for Change vision to create a great working city, it unveiled a package of actions pulling out all the stops to attract new investment, new business and new jobs while supporting and developing existing companies in the city. Here, *Our City* reports on the initiative establishing Stoke-on-Trent as a great place to do business...

Mandate for Change



City targets jobs and investment by rolling out the red carpet

COUNCIL chiefs will leave no stone unturned to attract new investment and jobs to the city.

An ambitious plan to go out and find employers who would benefit from being in Stoke-on-Trent and offer them an attractive package to locate here.

At the heart of the initiative is the pledge to roll out the "red carpet" treatment to any employer looking at providing or creating jobs in the city.

The package includes:

- A golden number – 01782 234747 - which is a single point of contact – a direct dial link to the city's Inward Investment Team.
- A streamlined planning process which responds to business needs with less bureaucracy.

- Support and solutions which are tailored to business growth.
- Help to signpost businesses to funding which may help them create more jobs.
- Access to supply chains, labour markets and networks.

Hundreds of local businesses have already backed the council's Mandate for Change initiative which includes creating a great working city.

Now Stoke-on-Trent will showcase its strengths to thousands of local businesses, as well as potential investors and employers throughout the UK and further afield.

Council Leader Mohammed Pervez said the council and cabinet had a clear mandate to drive the city forward and they had wasted no time in making job creation their number one priority.

He said: "We want to make Stoke-on-Trent a great place to do business so we have developed a range of services to make our city competitive and attractive to potential investors.

"We are standing up for our city and taking the lead positively to change our economic future.

"But we are not standing alone. We are

supported by representatives of the private sector in our city.

"Together we will deliver big solutions for big businesses while providing local support for local companies to survive and grow during these difficult economic times."

Councillor Pervez said the red carpet launch would be followed by a huge campaign to target local and national businesses who want to grow and create jobs in Stoke-on-Trent with the council's help.

He said: "We are going to reach out to investors by identifying companies who will benefit from what Stoke-on-Trent has to offer, making sure they know that we are here and will roll out the red carpet service to attract them.

Clear mandate to deliver

"Stoke-on-Trent is a great city with excellent connectivity with the road and rail network, an available workforce and suitable sites for a range of job-creating development.

"This is coupled with the fact that we are producing the red carpet treatment package of services which can help businesses set up and prosper.

"In the past there has been a perception that bureaucracy has put people off coming to the city. Our city has been through some turbulent times but we now have a clear political mandate to deliver."

For more information on Mandate for Change and the council's red carpet approach visit stoke.gov.uk and click on the Mandate for Change button.



I know of one developer who is praising the council's new approach because they have already benefited from it, with planners making decisions quickly to facilitate development rather than holding it back.

Bryan Carnes

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

GOLDEN NUMBER:

Holding up the telephone number of the hotline to the city's Investment Development Team are, back row, left to right, Chief Executive of North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bryan Carnes, Kier Operations Director Jane Spellacy, council Director of Place Hardial Bhogal, and, front row, left to right, Stoke-on-Trent North MP Joan Walley, Council Leader Councillor Mohammed Pervez and Chairman of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Maitland Hyslop.

Do not allow the gainsayers to talk our city down – there is no time for failure. Everything in this package links together to create the right environment for business.

Maitland Hyslop

CHAIR OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Partners praise council initiative

BUSINESS leaders and partners attending the launch of the city's red carpet inward investment package welcomed the initiative.

Maitland Hyslop, Chair of the Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership spoke of the need for the whole city to join together in a positive spirit to make the drive succeed. He said: "This is a very practical and deliverable initiative and Councillor Pervez and the city council Chief Executive John van de Laarschot should have everyone's support in what they are doing.

"It is a real red carpet treatment with a single telephone point of contact, a one-stop shop for anyone who wants to invest, start a business or expand a business in the city, delivering tax breaks where possible and a super-fast broadband network better than the rest of the country.

"We need to put the negativity of the past behind us – no more talk about 'forgotten Stoke'. We have all got to get behind this city and make sure it takes its place in a global market and believes in itself. We have got to get real and encourage developers sitting on pockets of land to start releasing them.

"Do not allow the gainsayers to talk our city down – there is no time for failure. Everything in this package links together to create the right environment for business."

Bryan Carnes, Chief Executive of North Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry said the council's new approach to open doors for business was already having an effect. He said: "This is about the city council responding to the express needs of business who for a long time have seen planners creating obstacles, have seen difficulties where businesses needed quick decisions and bureaucracy has taken an unnecessarily long time.

"We are convinced this new approach which outs business needs first will speed up the process and give Stoke-on-Trent a national and international reputation as a city that wants to do business.

"I know of one developer who is praising the council's new approach because they have already benefited from it, with planners making decisions quickly to facilitate development rather than holding it back."

Stoke-on-Trent North MP Joan Walley praised the council for taking the initiative to attract investment. She said:

"Regardless of whether or not the Government chooses to support Stoke-on-Trent we will create the environment where investors want to come to the city and create jobs.

"Whoever I talk to, from young people in education or training to older people concerned about the effect of cuts, the one thing they are all concerned about is job creation.

"This coming together of business partners with the council is sending out a clear message that it will help businesses, from supporting start-ups to attracting big employers, tapping into the green environmental technology revolution that's going to be here.

"Nothing is more important for our city than people having a secure future knowing that there are jobs for them to do. We have to show that we mean business and this is the start."

The Investment Development Team is there to support businesses. So any employer looking to expand, or who wants to invest in the city, can contact them on the golden number... 01782 234747.

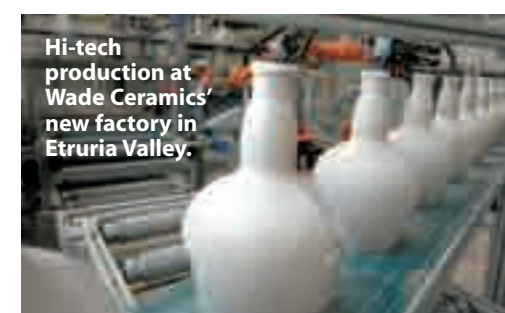
Valley plan will attract new jobs

ETRURIA Valley has been named the city's first Accelerated Development Zone (ADZ) to make it easier for businesses there to succeed.

The 69.8 hectare (172.4 acre) site – which is already home to major employers like Bet 365 and Vodafone – will offer financial incentives, access to super-fast broadband and fast-track planning decisions, making it attractive to new and growing business.

The council is working to reduce business energy costs by tapping into local energy sources, renewables and other green energy solutions.

And it has even proposed to share certain financial risks with big businesses wishing to make major investments to create the jobs the city needs, making



sure problems accessing finance do not hinder growth.

Councillor Mohammed Pervez said: "It is simple. We need jobs and to create jobs we need to do everything in our power to attract businesses looking to invest."



Delegates back vision to boost city's economy

ALMOST all the 200 delegates who attended the launch of the council's Mandate for Change vision agreed with its primary aim of doing everything it could to attract business.

Delegates from across the city also backed the council's plans to make Stoke-on-Trent a great working city and 78 per cent said the local authority was right to support and develop existing businesses too.

Positive comments suggesting ways these objectives could be achieved are being considered by the council, and there will be regular updates and further meetings to report back on progress.

Deputy Council Leader Councillor Paul Shotton said: "We would like to thank everyone for their contributions and hope we can rely on ongoing support as we move forward on this important agenda together."

City homes meet high standard

STOKE-on-Trent City Council has exceeded the Decent Homes standard set by the Government after a six-year renovation programme involving thousands of properties.

When work first began, 33 per cent of the council's housing stock was classed as not decent – a total of 6,900 flats, houses and bungalows in the city. The work included improving kitchens and bathrooms, replacing front and rear doors in hardwood, replacement roofs and new heating systems.

In the final year, the council replaced 617 kitchens, 603 bathrooms, installed central heating in 243 properties, over-hauled 109 roofs, replaced 90 chimneys and fitted external doors on 391 homes.

Quit smoking

SMOKERS are being urged to join the 8,216 people who kicked the habit in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire between April 2010 and March 2011.

To find out more about your local stop smoking services contact **0800 085 0928 for NHS Stoke on Trent.**



Potteries hosts six week spotlight on world's best ceramics

A SIX-WEEK programme of events showcasing Stoke-on-Trent as the home of the very best contemporary ceramics starts at the end of the month.

The British Ceramics Biennial, BCB, returns after attracting 35,000 visits to the city in 2009.

This year's line-up – from 30 September to 13 November – includes exhibitions, events,

CONTEMPORARY STYLE:

work entitled **Blue Multi Loop** – a BCB award nominee by ceramicist **Merete Rasmussen.**



drop-in activities, a potter-in-residence and a festival tearoom – The Factory Refectory – offering brunch, lunch and afternoon tea at the original Spode factory site in Stoke. Major shows will also be exhibited at The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery and AirSpace Gallery in the city centre.

Barney Hare Duke, Co-Director of BCB, said: "The programme for the British Ceramics Biennial mixes new talent bursting onto the scene alongside established international artists, and a thriving ceramic industry. It is very exciting to be able to launch our 2011 programme announcing 40 graduates in the Fresh exhibition and 24 leading UK based artists breaking new ground in the Award show."

"We are also delighted to welcome a number of sponsors from the city including Spode, part of the Portmeirion Group, Steelite International, Emma Bridgewater, Johnson Tiles and Staffordshire University."

Everyone can get involved – as visitors, volunteers, to pick up an early Christmas gift or simply to take afternoon tea.

For more information visit www.britishceramicsbiennial.com



TRADITIONAL SKILLS: Simon Stamatou, BCB Artists' Studio Manager throws a pot.

MEMBERS of the public are being warned that violent or abusive behaviour will not be tolerated towards civil enforcement officers – who make sure the public are safe by enforcing against vehicles parked irresponsibly.

The 22-strong team covers the whole city, and as well as enforcing parking restrictions, operate a camera car to monitor bus lanes and also remove untaxed vehicles.

Civil Enforcement Team Manager Lucas Ford said: "Most members of the public understand

we have a difficult job to do and behave in a civil manner. Incidents of physical and verbal abuse are fortunately few and far between, although they do occur.

"My officers are supported by radios, mobile phones and extensive CCTV coverage around the city and we are glad we get a

fast police response.

"The city council will not tolerate abuse of any sort towards its employees who are just doing their job and legal action is taken where necessary."

The civil enforcement officers have also been trialling a new miniature camera, which is worn

on the uniform, and can be used to record visual and audio evidence.

Lucas added: "After a successful trial, we may buy some cameras. Not only can the recordings be used as independent evidence but have already been shown to deter and prevent abuse in the first place."

Parking officers protected by hi-tech security



TESTING YOUR SMOKE ALARM EVERY WEEK COULD SAVE YOUR LIFE

How will you remember?

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31				

Check it bleeps every week!

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SMOOTH OPERATOR...
Charanjit Singh power floats the concrete floors as work progresses at the new Co-operative Academy.

'Class act' construction on 18 new schools

CONSTRUCTION work has now started on all 18 projects that form the biggest ever school building programme in Stoke-on-Trent.

Earlier this month, contractors moved onto site at Aynsley Special School, Thistley Hough High School and St Margaret Ward Catholic College as part of

the £213 million Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

Three new academies – Ormiston Horizon, in Chell, Discovery, in Bentilee, and St Peter's, on the former Sixth Form College site, Fenton – also opened in September, using the existing buildings at James Brindley, Mitchell High and Edensor Technology College and St Peter's and Berry Hill High

Schools respectively.

Environmental improvement schemes, funded by the Department for Education, have been carried out at all these schools to change the look and the feel of the buildings and all pupils at the new academies have new uniforms.

Meanwhile demolition works began at the Willfield (Discovery Academy) site and Fenton Manor (St Peter's Academy) site, while phase 2 of refurbishments being carried out at Haywood, Trentham and Birches Head Foundation Schools also started in September.

It follows a busy summer during which classrooms and learning facilities continued to be transformed throughout the city.

On track to deliver

A ground-breaking ceremony took place at Ormiston Sir Stanley Matthews Academy site in Blurton, while work is also well on the way to completion at the Reach Pupil Referral Unit where the new building is due to open in February 2012.

BSF Project Director Tracy Penrose-Gould said: "While pupils have been on holiday during the summer the BSF project has continued quickly, and to date, we are on track to deliver all 18 school projects by January 2014. All projects are in various stages of construction.

"The programme is also very much committed to generate employment opportunities for the local workforce and we have

worked closely with our main contractors Balfour Beatty and Thomas Vale/Wates to ensure this happens.

"Approximately 50 per cent, £100 million, of the work is going to local companies – safeguarding jobs in Stoke-on-Trent for the immediate future."

Tracy added: "As well as the construction work, most secondary and special schools have now started engagement with RM, our ICT provider to receive staff training and development and to choose new teaching and learning technologies and equipment available through the BSF programme funding."

The Co-operative Academy project, at the former Brownhills High School site in Burslem, demonstrates the commitment to local investment.

Stuart Scrimgeour, who is Balfour Beatty's Project Manager for the Co-operative Academy, said: "During the construction works, the site targeted the use of local labour and the local spend has a high priority.

"To date 54 per cent of the project money has been spent locally while the 240 operatives represent 48 per cent of the workforce."

Meanwhile, contractors Thomas Vale/Wates have to date spent 32 per cent of the project money for Aynsley School on materials from local suppliers and the 11 local workers on site represent 69 per cent of the workforce.



Seven arrested in drive against drugs trade

SEVEN people were arrested by police in the latest Operation Nemesis raids in Stoke-on-Trent.

As a result of community concerns about suspicious activity taking place in the area, police carried out extensive behind-the-scenes work resulting in the arrest day.

Five men and two women were arrested in Normacot, Meir and Weston Coyney.

Detailed searches of nine properties and five gardens were conducted by scenes-of-crimes officers, together with specialist search dogs.

Detectives also carried out inquiries at each address and neighbourhood police officers undertook high visibility patrols to reassure residents.

Chief Inspector Peter Hall, policing commander for Stoke South, said: "This operation has targeted people we believe to be involved in the supply of Class A drugs in this city.

"Drugs misuse will not be tolerated in Stoke-on-Trent and once again we have acted on information received from concerned members of the public about suspected drug dealing in their streets. We are committed to taking action against those we believe are involved in such criminal activity and the antisocial behaviour which comes with it.

"Operation Nemesis is the force's commitment to tackling major drug dealers and bringing them to justice. But we cannot continue to do this without the help of our partners and members of the public. By working together we will improve life for the communities we serve. The message to drug dealers is clear and simple: we are not going away and we will bring you to justice."

The operation was captured live on social media pages (see page 8) and you can watch a video of the raids by visiting www.youtube.com/staffordshirepolice or by scanning the code at the bottom of the column with your smartphone.

● **Anyone with concerns about drug misuse is asked to contact Staffordshire Police on 0300 123 44 55 or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.**



CENTRAL FEATURE:
A computer-generated impression of the striking forum area at the new St Peter's Academy at the Fenton Manor site.

Free fruit and vitamins give healthy start

PREGNANT women on low incomes and their children are being reminded they may qualify for free healthy food, milk, infant formula and vitamins.

The package of support provided under the Healthy Start initiative aims to improve mums' and children's health at the most crucial stage of their lives.

The scheme provides families with vouchers which can be exchanged for frozen or fresh fruit and vegetables, cow's milk and infant formula and free vitamins for pregnant women, new mums and children aged under four.

NHS Stoke on Trent Health improvement worker Sue Marshall said: "Healthy Start vitamins contain the vitamins which are vital for strong bones, healthy growth and the immune system.

"The vitamin tablets for women also contain folic acid which is vitally important before and during early pregnancy."

● Anyone wanting to find out more about the Healthy Start scheme can do so by visiting www.healthystart.nhs.uk Alternatively they can talk to their health visitor or midwife.

Social media used for good in our city

THOUSANDS of residents used the latest social networking sites to get the latest information from police during last month's disorder in London, Birmingham, and Manchester.

As a result of a great community effort there were no incidents of violence in Stoke-on-Trent, although police did receive more calls than normal from people concerned about rumours of disorder.

Staffordshire's Assistant Chief Constable Nick Baker said: "There were lots of visible police patrols on duty throughout the evenings and officers spent time speaking to our communities."

Many thousands of Staffordshire residents are now receiving regular updates from across the county via social media.

"The sites give updates of what is happening in communities to tackle local issues," added Mr Baker.

● Anyone who wants to keep up-to-date with the very latest news from Staffordshire Police should visit facebook.com/staffordshirepolice or [staffordshirepolice on Twitter](http://staffordshirepolice.on Twitter).

twitter

Find us on Facebook



CITY ON STAGE...
Mitchell Arts Centre Executive Officer Ian Hutchinson watches rehearsals in the auditorium which was part of a £4.3m revamp.

Theatre scrutiny raises curtain on new line-up of reviews

A detailed look at how theatres benefit the city is being carried out this Autumn as part of a new programme of councillor reviews launched to help improve the city and services for local people.

The theatre review, carried out by a special team of councillors, will look at the existing and future role of theatres in the city in creating a great city to live in. It will include investigating the cultural and economic benefits of venues such as the Regent

Theatre, Victoria Hall and the newly-revamped Mitchell Arts Centre.

The review – led by Councillor Matt Wilcox – will also compare the provision on offer here to that of other cities of similar size – such as Nottingham and Derby – in looking at the role that theatres can and could play in the regeneration of the city and city centre.

Two other reviews will also be carried out over the next three months. One – led by Councillor Joy Garner – will look at procurement and test how the council's multi million pound

purchasing power for buying and commissioning goods and services can best be used to support local businesses and help create a great working city.

The third review – led by Councillor Andy Lilley – will look at how the council can improve its collection rate of council tax and support people to become more financially independent and leave debt behind.

John Ross, Overview and Scrutiny Manager said: "Councillors choose and carry out the review topics based on priorities for the city and its

people. Many reviews will seek the views of relevant people as part of developing recommendations to the Cabinet for the future.

"For example, the procurement review will be giving local businesses an opportunity to let them know how the council can do better business with them."

The review teams will be active over the next three months and will report their findings and recommendations to Cabinet at public meetings in November.

If you would like to know more about any of the reviews please contact scrutiny@stoke.gov.uk

Volunteers needed to help out at the refurbished 'Mitch'

VOLUNTEERS with an interest in theatre and the arts are needed to help out at the newly refurbished Mitchell Arts Centre.

Re-opened after a £4.3 million transformation, the centre has day and evening opportunities for front-of-house duties on reception and in the box office, for ushers and also for people to volunteer in the café and behind the bar.

Chief Executive Officer Ian Hutchinson said: "Volunteering at Mitchell Arts Centre is ideal for those with a passion for the arts and who have time to spare, for those who want to meet new people, take on

new challenges, learn new skills and be part of the thriving arts community in Stoke-on-Trent.

"We want to encourage people from all backgrounds to join us. The only requirement is to be enthusiastic, reliable, welcoming and dedicated in making the Mitchell Arts Centre great."

People willing to lend a hand could be contributing to the success of a packed autumn season, which includes *If Dreams Were Wishes* by Caversmill Drama Society and *RENT the Musical*, presented by Stage Productions.

Also scheduled is *Beauty and The Beast* by Rooftop Studios and the Christmas pantomime *Sleeping Beauty*, which is being presented by Christian Paul Productions.

● Information on all events being staged at 'The Mitch' including, dates and times are on www.mitchellartscentre.co.uk. If you would like to play a volunteering role or would like more information then please email info@mitchellartscentre.co.uk or call 01782 409307.

Millions to watch our city's **open top bus in London Lord Mayor's Parade**

STOKE-on-Trent's proud traditions and regeneration will be promoted to an audience of millions when the city takes part in the Lord Mayor of London's prestigious parade.

The capital's incoming Lord Mayor David Wootton invited our city to join in as he has a special soft spot for The Potteries and his father still lives in Burslem.

Plans are underway to make sure Stoke-on-Trent makes a big impact during the three mile parade, which is broadcast live by the BBC and takes to the streets of London on 12 November.

Lord Mayor Councillor Terry Follows will lead the city's team on the day and will be dressed in full civic regalia for the parade.

An open top bus will carry flag waving students from Trentham High School – which is in Councillor Follows' ward – and the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress along the route from Mansion House in the City of London to the Royal Courts of Justice.

They will be joined by the costumed Anglo-Saxon warriors who promote the world famous Staffordshire Hoard, and walking alongside will be characters wearing special costumes in the shape of plates and showcasing the very best of ceramics produced in the city.

The bus will be decorated with the Make it Stoke-on-Trent

branding, as well as positive images showing everything that is best about the city.

Councillor Follows said appearing in the parade was a tremendous opportunity to show the country, and the world that Stoke-on-Trent means business and is a great place to live, work and enjoy life.

He added that the bus display would also promote important initiatives like the council's Mandate for Change programme, and its hotline initiative to roll out the red carpet to support existing businesses and attract investment.

He said: "It was a tremendous honour that London's Lord Mayor David Wootton wanted me there to represent our city as his father came from Stoke-on-Trent.

Great working city

"I will be riding on our float in the procession and it will be a great opportunity to promote our city.

"We hope the open top bus idea will be different from the rest of the floats and really make us stand out.

"The decoration of the vehicle, promotion of our world famous ceramics and the happy, smiling faces of the children from Trentham High will all go to show what a vibrant, diverse and friendly place our city is.

"It will also promote Stoke-on-Trent as a place to do business, and the council's commitment to help create jobs and secure investment in a great working city."



Above, an official photograph taken to record Terry Follows' inauguration as Lord Mayor in May, and right, Terry and Lady Mayoress Jacqueline Pearson attend a civic engagement at Trentham Parish Church.



People are the real stars of busy first few months

SINCE his inauguration as Lord Mayor in May Councillor Terry Follows has been soaked in gunge, sung karaoke to shoppers and even been asked if he has a lie detector... as well as meeting hundreds of members of the city's public.

The veteran councillor, who represents the Hanford and Trentham Ward, is lapping up his civic duties and is all set for even more as his year in office progresses.

Sadly his wife Christine, a councillor for the Meir Park and Sandon Ward, died from cancer in 2009, a

personal tragedy which prompted Terry to choose the Dot Griffiths Cancer Appeal, a local charity, as the chosen charity. During his term as Lord Mayor, Terry is being supported by his Lady Mayoress Jacqueline Pearson, who is a close friend.

He said: "I've really enjoyed the job so far. I've met celebrities like the Lord Lieutenant and High Sheriff, but the real celebrities have been the people – such as the special needs children I met at the Special Olympics."

Safety advice helps couple escape TV fire

IT wasn't the shock result that footy fan Joseph Taft had expected when he turned on his television to watch two of Europe's top teams in action.

The pre-season international friendly between AC Milan and Bayern Munich had reached half time when a pall of grey smoke started to billow from the back of Joseph's bedroom TV.

However the 71-year-old pensioner was not caught offside by the drama off the pitch.

He kept calm and remembered the advice of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service when they carried out a free

home fire risk check at the Blurton home of Joseph and his wife Patricia.

"What they told me just kicked in and I followed their advice," said Joseph who switched off the faulty TV, unplugged it and closed his bedroom door to help stop the smoke spreading through the house.

Then Joseph went downstairs, phoned 999 and he and Patricia left the house by the back door to wait outside until the arrival of firefighters who carried the still smoking TV out of the house to dispose of it safely.

Joseph, who was watching football upstairs on an ageing TV set so Patricia could enjoy her favourite soap downstairs, said: "During the home visit two years ago the fire officer fitted an additional smoke alarm and advised us on an exit route in the event of a fire.

"Fortunately the TV did not burst into flames, but the smoke was thick and choking and I remembered being told that smoke inhalation can often be more dangerous than fire. I just followed the advice I had been given when the fire officer checked our house. There was no damage but it took a long time to get rid of the smell of smoke."

He added: "It could have been a lot worse and I'll always be thankful I asked the fire service to carry out a safety check."

Station Manager Mick Daniels said: "Thanks to the advice given to Mr Taft during our visit he knew exactly what to do in order to ensure the safety of him and his wife and we had also made sure the couple's home had working smoke alarms."

● To book a free Home Fire Risk Check phone 0800 0241 999.



Joseph and Patricia Taft used advice given during a free home fire safety check to escape a fire at their house in Blurton.

Adult learners pick up the skills they need to find work

NEW-style adult learning courses designed to give Stoke-on-Trent people the skills to help them find jobs and make money are being offered through the city council. Funded by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), the free courses in ceramics and photography are being delivered by professionals in their field.

Mark Meredith, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "These are unique stand-alone courses, funded by NIACE, which are being delivered with Burslem School of Art and renowned, locally based film maker Chris Stone. The courses are a new and exciting way of giving people the skills to help them into work and they're entirely free."

The eight-week Great Wall of Stoke-on-Trent China programme involves training by some of the best potters, artists and tutors in the city. Those taking part will be taught how to make saleable pots, photography for selling and how to sell on Ebay. The 10-week Stories Without Words project will help people develop skills in taking, editing and exhibiting professional standard photographs.

● **For more information and to register on the ceramics course, call Leva Alksne on 01782 810808 or visit www.greatwallstoke.com**
To find out more about the photography project email digitalmediachallenge@gmail.com or phone 01782 234775.



Art and Events Manager at Burslem School of Art Leva Alksne who is helping deliver "making sessions" for the ceramic course.

Learner forums help shape future course programmes

THREE learner forums are being staged across Stoke-on-Trent as the Adult and Community Learning Service encourages feedback to help it shape future provision of courses.

The first takes place on Thursday, 6 October from 6.30-8pm at Meir Community Education Centre.

The next is being staged at Tunstall Library on Wednesday, 12 October between 2-3.30pm whilst the final one happens between 10-11.30am at the Hanley Community Fire Station on Monday, 10 October.

● **To reserve a place at one of the sessions, please call Tracey Clarke on 01782 234775.**

For information on dozens of adult learning courses available at community venues throughout Stoke-on-Trent please turn to pages 30 and 31.



Pre-School Room Leader Charlotte Whitehead reads with four-year-old Lucy Jean Hammond at the Early Days Nursery, Park Hall, which is taking part in the Communicate with Confidence awards scheme.

Good communication is **child's play**

THE city is blazing a trail nationally when it comes to ensuring children start life with the best possible communication skills.

Through a multi-agency project called Stoke Speaks Out, youngsters and their families are provided with specialist support to encourage and develop speech and languages skills from an early age.

Project specialists have also trained more than 4,000 people who have professional contact with children, such as teachers, psychologists and nursery staff as well as officers from Staffordshire Police and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

The project also runs a *Communicate with Confidence* awards scheme giving organisation certificates marking their successes.

It has long been recognised that children who start school with speech, language and communication difficulties will be disadvantaged both

socially and emotionally. And the latest figures show that one in 10 children in the UK (approximately one million) have a speech or language difficulty.

In Stoke-on-Trent a pioneering approach to developing language skills has been paying dividends. When the project was launched seven years ago, it was found that 64 per cent of three year olds had a language delay. By 2010 this figure had dropped to 39 per cent – and is still falling.

Confident with language

Janet Cooper from Stoke Speaks Out said: "Communication skills are essential throughout life and developing them and being confident with language at an early age is absolutely essential.

"Good speech skills will help a child get the most out of education and will also stand them in very good stead for later life. For instance job interviews are all about communicating."

Janet, who is on the National Steering Group for developing child

communication, said: "In the city we have been leading the way on this kind of work and many local authorities come to us for advice on best practice and to study the kind of techniques we employ. At the heart of what we do is the motto 'communication is everyone's business'.

"It means that everyone who lives or works with children is responsible for encouraging them to develop their speech and language skills."

Two events organised by the Stoke Speaks Out team to tie in with national campaigns are taking place on 28 September.

Firstly, a nursery rhyme-themed event aimed at pre-school children and also a promoting communications event to tie in with National No Pens Days. Both events will be held at locations around the city centre.

For more information about Stoke Speaks Out and the upcoming events log onto their website www.stokespeaksout.org



Community Payback Supervisor Alan White oversees work being carried out by Dan Heath, 22, at St Paul's Church in Blurton.

Tackling night time nuisance

PEOPLE facing orders banning them from specified areas, because of alcohol related incidents, are being offered the opportunity to attend an alcohol awareness course.

The Safer City Partnership has worked with the Business Crime Initiative, Staffordshire Police and the community alcohol service, Adsis and are now able to offer an alternative to those facing a 12 month ban from licensed premises.

Previously, the ban came into force when members of the public received a second Section 27 (direction to leave) notice. Using the new initiative, people will be given an option to avoid the ban by attending an alcohol awareness programme at Adsis.

Safer City Partnership Alcohol Programme Lead, Suzie Kelly said: "We currently have 100 repeat Section 27 offenders every year.

"By choosing to take part in the sessions we hope they will gain a better understanding of the negative impact alcohol has had on their behaviour and what they can do prevent it from happening again. Adsis can also identify those people who are at higher risk of alcohol-related harm and, where necessary, refer them on for further support."

It is hoped that Government legislation will change later this year to enable the scheme also to be offered as an alternative to people who have been served with an £80 penalty notice for alcohol-related disorder.

Suzie added: "This scheme has been developed to help change the behaviour of people at risk of committing alcohol-related crime and disorder and to improve the experience of people accessing our nightlife economy."

DOZENS of projects and organisations have benefited from the work of offenders under the Community Payback Scheme.

Teams of people of all ages, who have been ordered by the courts to serve community hours as part of their sentence, carry out a wide variety of manual labour tasks, including sprucing up city parks, restoring church halls and working with charity organisations.

The participants – who wear distinctive orange vests so they are easily identifiable – work in teams of eight, usually with one supervisor.

Recent projects they have worked on in Stoke-on-Trent include restoring church halls and church grounds in Middleport and Blurton, transformation work in Tunstall Park, work with organisations including the Douglas Macmillan Hospice, the North Staffordshire Caribbean Association in Hanley, gardeners at the Hartshill allotments and the Disabled Anglers Association in Abbey Hulton.

After clearing the five-acre site, they put up duck houses made in the Hanley Community Payback workshop.

Community Payback has been a big success among both offenders and organisations which have benefited from the work.

A survey carried out by the Staffordshire and West

Thousands benefit from offender payback schemes

Midlands Probation Trust found that 98 per cent of the nearly 300 people or organisations in Staffordshire who had projects worked on by offenders sentenced to Community Payback had a 'good experience'.

Neil Keeling, Deputy Unit Manager at the Hanley Community Payback Unit, said: "There has been a great deal of positive feedback for the scheme and the

work that is being done is always useful to the community.

"From the offenders point of view we are equipping them with skills that will be useful for the future and providing them with work experience which will help them find a job.

"The days are structured so they get used to working to deadlines and timetables and there is an educational aspect to the scheme

because we link in with the local colleges.

"In short, the Community Payback Scheme is not only about punishing people but reducing the risk of them re-offending."

● Any organisation or project co-ordinator that thinks they could benefit from working with the Community Payback scheme can call Neil on 01782 213324.

Sessions help drug-users become drug-free



Project manager Debbie Arnold running the Peer Support Stimulant Group at the Adult Community Drug Service.

THE Adult Community Drug Service is running a series of groundbreaking peer support sessions to help users overcome their drug use.

The informal hour-long meetings, which take place every Friday afternoon, revolve around service users discussing their recovery and what resources they need to help them become drug free.

Each session starts with an open discussion about how everyone's week has gone. At the end they make a goal for the week ahead.

CRI Project Manager Debbie Arnold said: "We have been running the sessions for more than two months now. At one point we had five people attending and two became drug free, with one subsequently finding a job."

● For more information about the sessions which take place at CRI Community Service building on Hope Street, Hanley, call 01782 219777.

For more information from the Safer City Partnership turn to page 24.



How safe do you feel in the city?

The Safer City Partnership is responsible for creating a safer, stronger and healthier city by reducing crime, disorder, substance misuse and associated problems.

Please help us to prioritise future work by completing this survey.

1. How safe do you currently feel living in your neighbourhood?	Day	Night
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Very safe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe
Please tell us your post code:	<input type="checkbox"/> Very unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/> Very unsafe

2. How does this compare with six months ago?	<input type="checkbox"/> Much safer	<input type="checkbox"/> Much safer
	<input type="checkbox"/> Safer	<input type="checkbox"/> Safer
	<input type="checkbox"/> Same	<input type="checkbox"/> Same
	<input type="checkbox"/> Less safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Less safe

Please tell us your age

3. Do you have any community safety concerns about your neighbourhood? Yes No

If yes, please tick the items that concern you most (maximum of three)

Crime and Disorder

- A) Distraction burglaries/ bogus officials
- B) Home burglary
- C) Domestic abuse
- D) Sexual violence
- E) Racist and other hate crime
- F) Violence
- G) Street robbery (mugging)
- F) Theft of or from vehicles
- I) Sex workers or kerb crawling

Drugs and Alcohol

- J) Alcohol misuse
- K) Drink or drug driving
- L) Discarded needles
- M) People using drugs
- N) People dealing drugs
- O) Underage drinking or buying alcohol for underage drinkers
- P) Alcohol-related violence/ street drinking

ASB and Environmental

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Q) Criminal damage (including vandalism, graffiti and causing deliberate damage to cars or property) | <input type="checkbox"/> U) Litter or rubbish |
| <input type="checkbox"/> R) Dog fouling | <input type="checkbox"/> V) Nuisance vehicles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> S) Fly tipping | <input type="checkbox"/> W) People starting fires deliberately (arson) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> T) Individuals/Groups of people causing nuisance in the street | <input type="checkbox"/> X) Nuisance and noisy neighbours |

4. Thinking outside of your neighbourhood, in areas of the city you visit, do you feel?	Day	Night
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Very safe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe	<input type="checkbox"/> Safe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsafe
	<input type="checkbox"/> Very unsafe	<input type="checkbox"/> Very unsafe

If you feel unsafe/very unsafe in any area please tell us where. e.g. town centres, parks, entertainment venues etc.

.....

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Please return to FREEPOST OUR CITY by Friday 7 October 2011



Ashley Scaife, 10, litterpicking at the skateboarding area in Burslem Park with Safer City Partnership Officer Jennie Lawson and park keeper Gary Bickerton.

Youngsters make amends in park clean-up

T EENAGERS who got into trouble after spraying a park building with graffiti have learned the error of their ways through a restorative justice scheme.

The eight boys, all aged 15 or under, worked with Safer City Partnership Officers to carry out clean-up work in Burslem Park.

Armed with brushes and gardening tools the eight youths spent a day gardening, litter picking and generally maintaining the site.

They also discussed the graffiti incident with park keeper Gary Bickerton and learned how much work goes into keeping the park neat and tidy for the public. Afterwards, all the boys

were invited to join the Junior Park Ranger Scheme which encourages young people to take responsibility for their local area.

Safer City Partnership Officer Jennie Lawson, who accompanied them, said: "The day worked out very well. The boys were very enthusiastic and learned a lot about maintaining the park as well as the consequences of their actions and how much it costs to remove graffiti.

"They were proud with the work they had done on the day and developed good links with the park keeper. Many of them also said they would enrol on the Junior Park Ranger Scheme, which is also very encouraging and helps them to take extra responsibility in their community."

Alcohol service at hospital

THE Safer City Partnership has funded the appointment of an Alcohol Liaison Nurse at the area's biggest hospital.

The specialist will support medical staff at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire by helping to screen patients for alcohol-misuse or to advise on patients admitted with alcohol-related conditions.

The nurse will also help patients who need post hospital treatment for their condition, including arranging community detoxification.

More than 5,000 patients are admitted to the hospital each year with alcohol-related problems or conditions.

Close-knit happy family shows benefits of adoption

MORE Stoke-on-Trent families are being urged to consider adopting a child.

About 50 children in the city need families each year – many are brothers and sisters – so the council is particularly looking for people open to adopting siblings aged two to six and above.

The council's Principal Adoption Manager, Lyn Bugarski, said: "The children all need safe, secure, loving homes.

"They also need families who can understand the extra help and support they are going to need because of their early experiences.

"We help prepare people for this as they go through the assessment and preparation process and then we offer support and advice at the matching stage and through to adoption and beyond."

Carol Collins, 64, and her 69-year-old husband Derek have four grown-up children – two of them are adopted. Clare, who arrived as a six-month old baby, is now 33 and Jamie, now 29, was adopted when he was 11.

Dual heritage

"Our birth children, Sonia and Gavin, were five and three when we first decided we wanted to extend our family.

"We felt we were in a position to offer other children a chance, so we fostered and then adopted," said Carol.

"We made a real effort to reflect Clare's dual heritage and made sure she was able to have friendships in the Afro-Caribbean community, which was enriching for all of us. It took a bit more time before Jamie felt secure. He was close to his Caribbean granddad but he did settle down.

"All four children now see themselves as part of the same family so we're really pleased we all have



CLOSE FAMILY...
Derek and Carol Collins with their adopted children Clare and Jamie.

such close relationships. Both Derek and I would like to think people will follow in our footsteps and adopt. It's such a rewarding experience."

Clare, who graduated with a degree in Community Arts in 2000, now works as a care co-ordinator near Derby but is living at home while she buys a new house. Jamie lives at home and works as a self-employed kitchen fitter. He loves DJing and has just

returned from Ibiza after a couple of months behind the decks.

Clare said: "I was given the opportunity to do what I wanted with my life and I grew up feeling that I wasn't any different to anyone else.

"My friends knew I was adopted but they didn't hold it against me! My mum and dad are brilliant, amazing people, I couldn't wish for anyone better."

If you are interested and want to know more about adoption, call the adoption duty line on 01782 235020, email duty.adoption@stoke.gov.uk or visit the council's web page stoke.gov.uk/adoption. The council provides an information pack and also holds information meetings every two months.

Parents praise social worker's 'amazing' support

HOWARD and Karen adopted two children through the council – a brother and sister aged four and six.

Karen said: "We'd been trying for children but unsuccessfully and, after doing some research, decided adoption was for us so we contacted the council.

"The support from our social worker has been amazing and we were kept informed every step of the way.

"When the panel approved us we both came out and cried. We were ecstatic when we were told.

"It's something we'd dreamt of and for it to come true after everyone's hard work was fantastic. It was amazing when our children finally came to live with us. They said 'it's our new mum and dad' and we cried. Our lives are now complete.

"It's like we've all known each other forever and our children have settled in very, very well. We're completely family orientated now. I'd say to anyone thinking about adopting, just go for it. It's the most amazingly rewarding thing you can do."



Chell Heath Residents' Association Chairman Jim Gibson with one of the soccer shirts sponsored by Partners Assuring a Safer Staffordshire.

Community spirit helps newly-formed team to promotion in first season

NEWLY formed Chell Heath Rangers are champions in everything but name as they prove community spirit counts for a lot.

Friends who enjoyed a kick about turned to Jim Gibson, chairman of Chell Heath Residents' Association, last year and he soon organised them into a promotion-winning outfit who now play in the Coors Sunday League, Division Three.

Jim, who now manages the squad of about 25, said:

"They're a great bunch of lads who represent Chell Heath well. They're willing to work for each other and for them it really is all about the team."

The side, newly kitted out thanks to funding from Partners Assuring a Safer Staffordshire (PASS), are targeting promotion again this year.

Let us know if your Residents' Association has a story to tell. Email ourcity@stoke.gov.uk

Do you have a spare room in your home is someone in need of a young person?

Are you already accommodating a young person?

Can you support a young person to make and maintain positive changes in their life?

Supported Lodgings Hosts provide a young person aged between 16 and 25 with accommodation within their home.

We need hosts from all walks of life, from any culture or race; you can be single or married; straight or gay; you could be working full-time or part-time. What you will need to be is passionate about supporting young people and, of course, have a spare room!

In return you will get a weekly payment, training and support from a designated worker and the satisfaction that comes from seeing how your support helps a young person develop into a responsible adult.

For more information...

and to meet some of our customers and other hosts, please come along to one of our Showcase Events:

Monday
17th
October

Hanley Fire
Station
HANLEY
ST1 3RP
3.30pm-7pm

Wednesday
19th
October

Arch
Resource
Centre
HANLEY
ST1 3LL
6pm-8.30pm

Thursday
20th
October

City Central
Library
HANLEY
ST1 3RS
Noon-3pm

You Can Also...

Get more information by visiting:
www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk/accommodation

Or by getting in touch with:
Donna, Tamara or Andy
in the Supported Lodgings Team:
01782 683714

Or by email:
supportedlodgings@archnorthstaffs.org.uk

"Don't get me wrong, it's not easy moving in with a family. But I'm learning how to take care of myself whilst knowing there is still someone to back me up when things don't quite work out!"





Firefighters hope their warnings will lead to everyone enjoying a safe bonfire night... with no need for them to attend dangerous, badly organised fires.

Firework safety warning aims to prevent bonfire tragedies

FIRE safety officers are warning of the dangers of fireworks in a bid to prevent bonfire night accidents... or even tragedies.

An astonishing checklist of firework facts highlights how hot a sparkler burns, how fast a rocket is propelled and how far a firework shell can actually travel.

The statistics might come as a shock for concerned parents, and mums and dads across the area are being urged to warn

their children of the dangers of playing with fireworks.

Firefighters and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Risk Reduction Officers will be doing the rounds to dozens of schools across the city in the run up to the big night to deliver the bonfire night safety messages.

And in the run up to 5 November officers out and about will be alerting bonfire organisers if they see any risks. As usual, the best advice is to leave the organisation to someone else and go to a properly-run

display, where the public's safety is of paramount importance.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Risk Reduction Manager David Steele said: "We want everyone to enjoy Bonfire Night but we urge people to stay safe by following the firework code and attending displays which are well organised.

"Children for example should always be supervised when using sparklers and they should never be given to children under the age of five."

- A sparkler reaches a temperature of up to 2,000 degrees Celsius – that's 20 times the boiling point of water.
- Sparklers get five times hotter than cooking oil.
- A rocket can reach 150 miles an hour.
- A firework shell can go as high as 200 metres.
- The most common injuries from fireworks and bonfires are to hands followed by eyes and faces.
- Fireworks are safer now thanks to the safety standard BS7114 – you should never buy or use a firework that does not show on the label that it complies with this standard.

Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service have also issued advice that parents can pass onto their children. They are:

- Never give sparklers to someone under the age of five.
- Fireworks will scare pets so keep them safely indoors.
- If you are given a sparkler, always wear gloves and hold it at arm's length.
- Only adults should handle and light fireworks.
- When a sparkler goes out DON'T TOUCH IT – it could still burn you so put it in a bucket of water hot end down.
- Never go near a firework when it has been lit – even if it hasn't gone off it could still explode.
- When you are watching fireworks always stand well back.
- Remember – you have to be 18 years old before you are allowed to buy fireworks in the shops.
- Never play with fireworks – they are dangerous and can hurt you.

History society pays tribute to American Civil War soldier

HISTORY buffs visited a city cemetery to pay tribute to a Stoke-on-Trent man who fought in the American Civil War.

They took time out from a weekend event at the Etruria Industrial Museum to honour John Livesey, the son of a local pottery manufacturer, who signed up to fight for the Union in the 6th Regiment, New York Cavalry during a trip to America in 1864.

A plaque of remembrance to John Livesey is in Hanley Cemetery.

He was admitted to hospital later that year with gunshot wounds, resulting

in an arm and a leg being amputated. He returned home but died in 1867.

Councillor Mark Meredith, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, said: "This city has an incredibly diverse history but to have links with the American Civil War is something which many people living here will not know or even have considered a possibility."

During the weekend the American Civil War Society staged battle re-enactments and showed what every day life was like for soldiers in the conflict.

Register for much more than voting

RESIDENTS of Stoke-on-Trent should make sure they are entitled to vote – by taking part in the annual canvass for inclusion on the electoral register.

It is a legal requirement to register by using the form currently being delivered by Royal Mail.

The register will run from 1 December 2011 to 30 November 2012.

Residents not on the electoral register will find that they are barred from voting at local and national elections and may also have problems obtaining a mortgage or credit, opening bank accounts or obtaining goods or services that require a credit check.

If details of everyone in the household have not changed, householders can simply register by



Freephone, internet or text (SMS) – details are on the form. When changes need to be made – for example, new owners or tenants, changes of name, additional electors or removal of electors – the form needs to be completed, signed and returned.

Reminders will be sent to properties which have not responded around the end of September, then households which have still failed to respond will receive personal visits during October and November.

Paul Hackney, the city council's Assistant Director (Legal Services) who is also the Electoral Registration Officer, said: "This has to be done by law, but is very costly, so we would urge householders to respond to the initial forms as soon as possible in order to save public money."



Your Councillors

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FORTHCOMING PUBLIC MEETINGS AT THE CIVIC CENTRE, STOKE:

- The next Cabinet meeting is scheduled for 29 September at 5.30pm.
- Full city council meetings 20 October and 8 December (times to be confirmed).

For more information on your councillors go to stoke.gov.uk/councillors

Adult Learning

ON the next two pages you will find information about lots of courses for adults aged 19 or over to help you gain new skills, knowledge and confidence – all in a fun, friendly and informal way.

Adult and Community Learning also offers a range of Family Learning workshops and courses.

We have funding available for voluntary and community sector groups to deliver their own courses.

For information about joining a class, or for more details about a particular course, please call 01782 234775.

Course Fees

MANY of our courses are free of charge. Where fees apply course charges are £2.70 per hour with a £6 administration fee also payable.

This £6 is paid on your first course enrolment but covers you for as many courses as you want to do until July 2012.

Payment is by cash or cheque; please note cheques should be supported by a cheque guarantee card.

Fee Concessions

WE want our courses to be as accessible as possible and try to keep costs to a minimum at all times.

You will be entitled to a reduced fee if you are in receipt of Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.

Please bring proof of benefit when enrolling.

Please note: non-UK residents have a slightly higher rate of charges. Adult and Community Learning reserve the right to change the fee policy.

Information Advice and Guidance

IF you would like to talk to someone about starting a course or receive information about the content of any of our courses please contact our Engagement Team on 01782 234775 or adult.learning@stoke.gov.uk

Our staff are qualified advisers who will be happy to give you information about our courses and can also signpost you to other providers.

Please visit our website stoke.gov.uk/adultlearning for up-to-date course listings.

Skills for Life and Learner Support

WE aim to offer an inclusive service to all of our learners.

If you are concerned about your literacy or numeracy skills or have a disability which you feel may affect your learning with us please contact our Skills for Life Coordinator on 01782 236461 or email janet.slack@stoke.gov.uk

We want you to get the most out of your learning opportunities with us and will endeavour to support you either through our Learning Support Officers or through assistive technology.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information. The Adult Learning Service reserves the right to change any fee, course or service described.

1 Personal Development/ Getting into work

Active listening

Learners will learn more effective communication skills to enable them to engage.

HCL Fri 10:00-13:00 1 Wk (16/9/11-16/9/11) FREE (£6)

Mental health awareness

Learners will understand mental health, increasing awareness of the various types of mental distress and their treatment.

HBC Thur 13:00-15:00 3 Wks (29/9/11-13/10/11) FREE (£6)

Stress management

Learners will understand the causes and consequences of stress and be able to employ techniques to manage stress.

HBC Thur 13:00-15:00 3 Wks (3/11/11-17/11/11) FREE (£6)

2 Parenting, Caring and Health

First aid for the treatment of children

Gain the knowledge and skills to recognise and treat illnesses and injuries that are most likely to be encountered by children and babies.

SP Thur 09:15-11:15 5 Wks (3/11/11-12/11) FREE

Reflexology

Learn to identify the reflexes on the feet and understand how this relates to general health.

WCC Mon 18:00-20:00 8 Wks (3/10/11-21/11/11) £43.20 (£6)

Why do we do it and how do we deal with it?

Understand why people behave in certain ways and gain skills and strategies to accept or change behaviours.

BNC Wed 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (21/9/11-19/10/11) FREE (£6)

HCL Mon 09:45-11:45 5 Wks (12/9/11-10/10/11) FREE (£6)

WVC Tue 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (1/11/11-29/11/11) FREE (£6)

3 Art and Craft

Art of photography

Develop knowledge of focal length, shutter speeds and the rule of thirds applied to creative photography.

CCL Wed 12:30-14:30 6 Wks (9/11/11-14/12/11) £32.40 (£6)

SBE Thur 18:30-20:30 6 Wks (15/9/11-3/11/11) £32.40 (£6)

Card making

Design and create a range of greetings cards exploring different media and techniques.

WCC Fri 10:30-12:30 5 Wks (4/11/11-2/12/11) FREE (£6)

Christmas crafts

Design and create your own range of Christmas stationery and decorations.

BCL Tue 12:30-14:30 5 Wks (8/11/11-6/12/11) FREE (£6)

CCC Thur 12:30-14:30 5 Wks (17/11/11-15/12/11) FREE (£6)

SJC Wed 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (2/11/11-30/11/11) FREE (£6)

TY Mon 10:30-12:30 5 Wks (31/10/11-28/11/10) FREE (£6)

Christmas floral arrangements

Develop a range of traditional Christmas designs including a holly wreath and table arrangement.

BNC Wed 18:00-20:00 4 Wks (2/11/11-23/11/11) FREE (£6)

DC Thur 18:00-20:00 4 Wks (24/11/11-22/12/11) FREE (£6)

HCC Thur 18:00-20:00 4 Wks (1/12/11-22/12/11) FREE (£6)

MCE Tue 18:30-20:30 4 Wks (15/11/11-6/12/11) FREE (£6)

Craft sampler

Sample bead and fabric jewellery making, basic decoupage box, pop up card and glass painting.

BCL Tue 12:30-14:30 5 Wks (20/9/11-18/10/11) FREE (£6)

WCC Fri 10:30-12:30 5 Wks (30/9/11-28/10/11) FREE (£6)

Cushions

Learn to design and create different styles of cushion with a variety of fastenings and decoration.

MCE Fri 13:00-15:00 5 Wks (21/10/11-18/11/11) FREE (£6)

Drawing and painting

To provide a basic introduction to drawing and painting techniques and materials.

MCC Thur 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (15/9/11-13/10/11) FREE (£6)

TY Mon 10:30-12:30 5 Wks (19/9/11-17/10/11) FREE (£6)

WCC Wed 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (14/9/11-12/10/11) FREE (£6)

Floral art for beginners

Learn the basic floral art skills, art and design, to include colour harmonies and shapes of arrangement.

CC Fri 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (16/9/11-14/10/11) FREE (£6)

MCE Tue 18:30-20:30 5 Wks (11/10/11-8/11/11) FREE (£6)

Getting started with your digital camera

Understand the basics of operating a digital camera and downloading images.

SBE Wed 18:30-20:30 5 Wks (2/11/11-30/11/11) FREE (£6)

Get to know your overlocker

Learners will be able to make effective use of an overlocker, includes threading.

BP Fri 12:45-14:45 3 Wks (25/11/11-9/12/11) FREE (£6)

SJC Fri 10:00-12:00 3 Wks (25/11/11-9/12/11) FREE (£6)

Glass painting

Experience painting on both glass and acetate; creating your own design.

MS Mon 12:30-14:30 5 Wks (12/9/11-10/10/11) FREE (£6)

SJC Wed 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (28/9/11-26/10/11) FREE (£6)

Introduction to sewing

Learners will be able to set up their own sewing equipment and complete a small sewing project.

BP Fri 12:45-14:45 5 Wks (23/9/11-21/10/11) FREE (£6)

CCC Thur 12:30-14:30 5 Wks (22/9/11-20/10/11) FREE (£6)

SJC Fri 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (23/9/11-21/10/11) FREE (£6)

Learn to face paint

Develop a basic knowledge of application techniques to cover a range of face painting designs.

MS Mon 09:30-12:30 5 Wks (12/9/11-10/10/11) FREE (£6)

TCC Wed 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (2/11/11-30/11/11) FREE (£6)

Painting with acrylics

An introduction to using acrylics to create a diverse range of artwork.

WCC Tue 10:00-12:00 6 Wks (1/11/11-6/12/11) £32.40 (£6)

Painting with watercolours

An introduction to using watercolours to create a diverse range of artwork.

WCC Wed 10:00-12:00 6 Wks (19/10/11-23/11/11) £32.40 (£6)

MCE Fri 10:00-12:00 6 Wks (4/11/11-9/12/11) £32.40 (£6)

Photo restoration

Develop skills in restoring old photographs; includes brightening, resizing and retouching.

CCL Wed 12:30-14:30 6 Wks (14/9/11-19/10/11) £32.40 (£6)

SJC Fri 10:00-12:00 6 Wks (30/9/11-11/11/11) £32.40 (£6)

Sewing for baby

Design and create a range of personalised soft furnishings for baby.

HCC Mon 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (19/9/11-17/10/11) FREE (£6)

Sewing machine techniques

Gain an insight in to the various functions of a sewing machine and how to apply them.

BP Fri 12:45-14:45 3 Wks (4/11/11-18/11/11) FREE (£6)

SJC Fri 10:00-12:00 3 Wks (4/11/11-18/11/11) FREE (£6)

Window blinds

Learn to measure and choose fabrics and mechanisms for different window settings.

MCE Mon 18:30-20:30 10 Wks (12/9/11-14/11/11) £54 (£6)

4 Languages

Digame – beginners Spanish

A basic introduction to the Spanish language - covering greetings, names, numbers etc.

HCL Wed 13:00-15:00 5 Wks (14/9/11-12/10/11) FREE (£6)

NPH Mon 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (19/9/11-17/10/11) FREE (£6)

English in the community

Learners will develop English conversation and comprehension skills including culture, leisure, education and community.

CCC Thur 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (15/9/11-13/10/11) FREE (£6)

HCC Wed 12:30-14:30 5 Wks (21/9/11-19/10/11) FREE (£6)

TL Tue 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (13/9/11-11/10/11) FREE (£6)

Spanish conversation

Learners will develop existing knowledge to be able to converse fluently on a range of topics.

DC Mon 18:30-20:30 30 Wks (5/9/11-30/4/12) £162 (£6)

DC Thur 18:30-20:30 30 Wks (8/9/11-10/5/12) £162 (£6)

Everyday English

Learners will become confident and competent in using basic English in home, transport, shopping and health situations.

TL Tue 13:00-15:00 5 Wks (13/9/11-11/10/11) FREE (£6)

Everyday British Sign Language

Learners will acquire the basics of British Sign Language to be able to greet and hold a simple conversation with a BSL user.

TY Wed 10:30-12:30 5 Wks (21/9/11-19/10/11) FREE (£6)

TL Mon 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (12/9/11-10/10/11) FREE (£6)

5 Lifestyle, Beauty and Home

Facial treatments

Recognise skin types and conditions and the correct techniques and products required for facial care.

WCC Thur 18:30-20:30 6 Wks (20/10/11-24/11/11) £32.40 (£6)

Hand and nail treatments

Learn the basic principles of manicure, nail polish application and hand massage.

HCL Wed 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (14/9/11-12/10/11) FREE (£6)

Holistic therapies

Explore and experience the benefits of Aromatherapy, Indian Head Massage and Reflexology.

WCC Mon 18:00-20:00 3 Wks (12/9/11-26/9/11) FREE (£6)

WVC Thur 10:00-12:00 3 Wks (15/9/11-29/9/11) FREE (£6)

Indian head massage

Perform a basic Indian Head Massage and understand the benefits of massage in health and well-being.

BNC Tue 09:30-11:30 5 Wks (20/9/11-18/10/11) FREE (£6)

WVC Thur 10:00-12:00 5 Wks (6/10/11-10/11/11) FREE (£6)

Look good, new you

Review your lifestyle to improve your image and well-being.

WCC Thur 18:30-20:30 5 Wks (15/9/11-13/10/11) FREE (£6)

6 ICT

Build your own PC

Learners will be guided through the steps needed to build a PC including hardware and the installation of operating systems and software.

BC Wed 18:00-20:00 8 Wks (21/9/11-23/11/11) £64 (£6)

Computers for absolute beginners

Gain an understanding of basic operations and uses of computers including Microsoft Office and the internet.

BL Wed 09:30-11:30 10 Wks (14/9/11-23/11/11) FREE

CC Tue 18:30-20:30 10 Wks (13/9/11-22/11/11) FREE

CC Wed 18:30-20:30 10 Wks (14/9/11-23/11/11) FREE

CC Mon 10:00-12:00 10 Wks (12/9/11-21/11/11) FREE

Computers for absolute beginners

Gain an understanding of basic operations and uses of computers including Microsoft Office and the internet.

CC	Thur	13:00-15:00	10 Wks (15/9/11-24/11/11)	FREE
CCL	Mon	09:30-11:30	10 Wks (5/9/11-14/11/11)	FREE
dD	Tue	09:30-11:30	10 Wks (13/9/11-22/11/11)	FREE
HCL	Mon	15:15-17:15	10 Wks (12/9/11-21/11/11)	FREE
HBC	Tue	10:30-12:30	10 Wks (27/9/11-6/12/11)	FREE
NOR	Tue	10:00-12:00	10 Wks (13/9/11-15/11/11)	FREE
SJC	Thur	12:30-14:30	10 Wks (22/9/11-1/12/11)	FREE
SL	Mon	09:30-11:30	10 Wks (12/9/11-14/11/11)	FREE
TL	Thur	10:00-12:00	10 Wks (15/9/11-24/11/11)	FREE
WCC	Mon	10:00-12:00	10 Wks (12/9/11-14/11/11)	FREE
HBC	Mon	13:00-15:00	10 Wks (26/9/11-5/12/11)	FREE
MCE	Mon	18:30-20:30	10 Wks (12/9/11-14/11/11)	FREE

Introduction to Desk Top Publishing

Learn how to use basic features of Publisher through creating and editing publications such as cards, posters and letterheads.

TL	Mon	13:00-15:00	3 Wks (28/11/11-12/12/11)	FREE (£6)
CC	Thur	10:00-12:00	3 Wks (15/9/11-29/9/11)	FREE (£6)
CCL	Mon	09:30-11:30	3 Wks (28/11/11-12/12/11)	FREE (£6)
dD	Tue	12:30-14:30	3 Wks (13/9/11-27/9/11)	FREE (£6)
SL	Fri	09:30-11:30	3 Wks (7/10/11-21/10/11)	FREE (£6)

Introduction to email

Acquire the knowledge to set up, send and receive emails - including adding attachments and internet security.

BL	Wed	09:30-12:00	4 Wks (30/11/11-21/12/11)	FREE (£6)
CC	Mon	13:00-15:00	5 Wks (7/11/11-5/12/11)	FREE (£6)
CCL	Tue	12:30-14:30	5 Wks (13/9/11-11/10/11)	FREE (£6)
dD	Tue	12:30-14:30	5 Wks (4/10/11-8/11/11)	FREE (£6)
NOR	Tue	10:00-12:00	5 Wks (22/11/11-20/12/11)	FREE (£6)
SJC	Mon	12:30-14:30	5 Wks (31/10/11-28/11/12)	FREE (£6)
SL	Mon	09:30-11:30	5 Wks (21/11/11-19/12/11)	FREE (£6)
WCC	Mon	10:00-12:00	5 Wks (21/11/11-19/12/11)	FREE (£6)

Introduction to Excel

Learn how to create simple spreadsheets, enter data and use basic formulae to produce charts or graphs.

BL	Thur	09:30-11:30	3 Wks (1/12/11-15/12/11)	FREE (£6)
CCL	Tue	12:30-14:30	3 Wks (1/11/11-15/11/11)	FREE (£6)
SL	Fri	09:30-11:30	3 Wks (2/12/11-16/12/11)	FREE (£6)

Introduction to Powerpoint

Learn how to create and edit basic PowerPoint presentations.

CCL	Tue	12:30-14:30	3 Wks (29/11/11-13/12/11)	FREE (£6)
SL	Fri	09:30-11:30	3 Wks (16/9/11-30/9/11)	FREE (£6)

Introduction to word processing

Learn to create a word document, change fonts and insert tables.

BL	Thur	09:30-11:30	5 Wks (20/10/11-24/11/11)	FREE (£6)
CC	Mon	13:00-15:00	3 Wks (12/9/11-26/9/11)	FREE (£6)
SJC	Mon	12:30-14:30	3 Wks (26/9/11-10/10/11)	FREE (£6)
TL	Thur	10:00-12:00	3 Wks (1/12/11-15/12/11)	FREE (£6)

Online shopping

Gain an understanding of the concept of online shopping; learning how to avoid dangers and how to explore shopping websites and comparison sites.

BL	Thur	09:30-11:30	5 Wks (15/9/11-13/10/11)	FREE (£6)
CC	Mon	13:00-15:00	5 Wks (3/10/11-31/10/11)	FREE (£6)
CCL	Wed	09:30-11:30	5 Wks (2/11/11-30/11/11)	FREE (£6)
SL	Fri	09:30-12:00	4 Wks (28/10/11-25/11/11)	FREE (£6)

Web design for beginners

Learners will gain an awareness and understanding of basic website design and creation, developing skills to build a website.

CCL	Sat	10:00-12:20	8 Wks (10/9/11-22/10/11)	£43.20 (£6)
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7 Counselling and Psychology

Counselling skills introduction

Develop the skills and techniques to enable effective communication, develop life skills and empathy with others.

HBC	Wed	13:00-15:00	10 Wks (28/9/11-7/12/11)	FREE
HCC	Thur	09:30-11:30	10 Wks (22/9/11-1/12/11)	FREE
SBE	Thur	18:30-20:30	10 Wks (24/11/11-9/2/12)	FREE
WCC	Thur	18:00-20:00	10 Wks (15/9/11-17/11/11)	FREE

Psychology – debates and memory

Learners will be introduced to the debates active in psychology, and be able to map out memory and how it works.

HCL	Mon	12:15-14:15	5 Wks (12/9/11-10/10/11)	FREE (£6)
TL	Thur	09:30-11:30	5 Wks (15/9/11-13/10/11)	FREE (£6)

Psychology of ageing

Understand and appreciate the changes in the human brain as it matures.

BNC	Wed	09:30-12:30	1 Wk (2/11/11-2/11/11)	FREE (£6)
HCL	Fri	10:00-13:00	1 Wk (30/9/11-30/9/11)	FREE (£6)

Psychology of behaviour

Learners will gain an understanding and knowledge of why people behave the way they do.

TL	Thur	09:30-11:30	5 Wks (3/11/11-1/12/11)	FREE (£6)
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8 Music and Dance

Salsa for beginners

Learn basic salsa movements and perform a simple routine.

TCC	Thur	09:30-10:30	10 Wks (15/9/11-24/11/11)	FREE (£6)
GCC	Thur	11:00-12:00	10 Wks (29/9/11-08/12/11)	FREE (£6)

9 Teaching Assistant

School support services courses – if you are interested in training to work in a school environment please ring Sue on 0771 789 2744 for further information.

For information about joining a class, or for more details about a particular course, please call 01782 234775 or visit www.facebook.com/AdultLearningStoke



Venue Codes

- BP Belgrave St Bartholomews Academy**
Sussex Place, Longton, ST3 4TP
01782 234775 or 07717 714279.
- BJ Bentilee JETS**
19 Brackenfield Avenue, Bentilee, ST2 0DH
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- BL Bentilee Library**
Dawlish Drive, Bentilee, ST2 0HW
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- BNC Bentilee Neighbourhood Centre**
Dawlish Drive, Bentilee, ST2 0EU
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- BCL Bethel Church (Longton)**
Dunrobin Street, Longton, ST3 4NA
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- CC Chatterley Centre**
Wilding Road, Ball Green, ST6 8BQ
01782 234775 or 07920 835877
- CCL City Central Library (Hanley)**
Bethesda Street, Hanley, ST1 3RS
01782 234775 or 07760 178495
- CCC Cobridge Community Centre**
Bursley Road, Cobridge, ST6 3DQ
01782 234775 or 07760 178495
- dD dDeaflinks (The Ellis Centre)**
Wellesley Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST1 4NF
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- DC Dudson Centre**
Hope Street, Hanley, ST1 5DD
01782 234775 or 07760 178495
- GCC Goldenhill Community Centre**
Drummond Street, Goldenhill, ST6 5RF
01782 234775 or 07920 835877
- HCL Haywood Community Library**
Haywood High School, Haywood Road, Stanfields, Burslem, ST6 7AH
01782 234775 or 07920 835877
- HBC Hollybush Centre**
77-81 Meaford Drive, Blurton, ST3 2BB
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- HCC Hope Community Church**
Garth Street, Hanley, ST1 2DA
01782 234775 or 07760 178495
- LL Longton Library**
Sutherland Institute, Lightwood Road, Longton, ST3 4HY
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- MCE Meir Community Education Centre**
Pickford Place, ST3 4DY
01782 235150
- ML Meir Library**
Sandon Road, ST3 7DJ
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- MS Milton Scout HQ**
1802 Leek Road, Milton, ST2 7AF
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- MCC Minton Community Centre**
Off Hartshill Road, Vicarage Lane, Hartshill, ST4 7NL
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- MG Moss Green Residents Association**
Moss Green Road, Moss Green Village, ST2 0SP
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- NPH Northwood Parish Hall**
Keelings Road, Northwood, ST1 6PB
01782 234775 or 07760 178495
- NOR NORSACA**
Lindsay Annexe, Cannon Place, Hanley, ST1 4EP
01782 267888 or 07766 360798
- SBE Sandon Business and Enterprise College**
Sandon Road, Meir, ST3 7DF
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- SJA St John's Ambulance (Hanley)**
Tansey House, Sheaf Street, Hanley, ST1 4LW
01785 257124
- SJC St John's Centre**
Newcastle Road, Trent Vale, ST4 6QD
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- SL Stoke Library (Stoke Local Centre)**
South Wolfe Street, ST4 4SZ
01782 234775 or 07766 360798
- SP Sutherland Primary School**
Beaconsfield Drive, Blurton, ST3 3DY
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- TY The Yard**
Forrest Road, Meir, ST3 7BY
01782 234775 or 07717 714279
- TCC Tunstall Community Centre/Floral Hall**
Tunstall Park, ST6 6EE
01782 234775 or 07920 835877
- TL Tunstall Library**
The Boulevard, Tunstall, ST6 6BD
01782 234775 or 07920 835877
- WCC Wedgwood College and Conference Centre**
Station Road, Barlaston, ST12 9DG
01782 372105
- WVC Whitfield Valley Community Centre**
Fegg Hayes Road, Fegg Hayes, ST6 6QR
01782 234775 or 07920 835877

WORLD'S LEADING CYCLISTS TACKLE GRUELLING 140-KILOMETRE RACE STAGE



The cameras roll to capture the dramatic finish and, below, Lord Mayor Councillor Terry Follows presents the cuddly toy "trophy" to King of the Mountains leader Russell Hampton.



Thousands line streets to cheer on riders in electric finish

THE wind battered Tour of Britain got back on track in Stoke-on-Trent as the UK's biggest professional cycling race returned to the Potteries for the fourth consecutive year.

After 75 mile an hour gusts forced the cancellation of the previous stage from Kendal to Blackpool, around a hundred riders got back in the saddle for the 140-kilometre long stage. Trentham Gardens hosted the start for the first time with thousands turning out on a crisp,

clear day to watch the race head out towards Stone and into the Moorlands before steaming back through Leek and the finish into Hanley City Centre. Thousands more lined the streets as Rabobank's Dutch rider Lars Boom took the stage win with overall race leader and 20-time Tour de France stage winner Mark Cavendish finishing fifth. With an international TV audience watching, the event showcased Stoke-on-Trent and what the city has to offer. The council's Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Mark

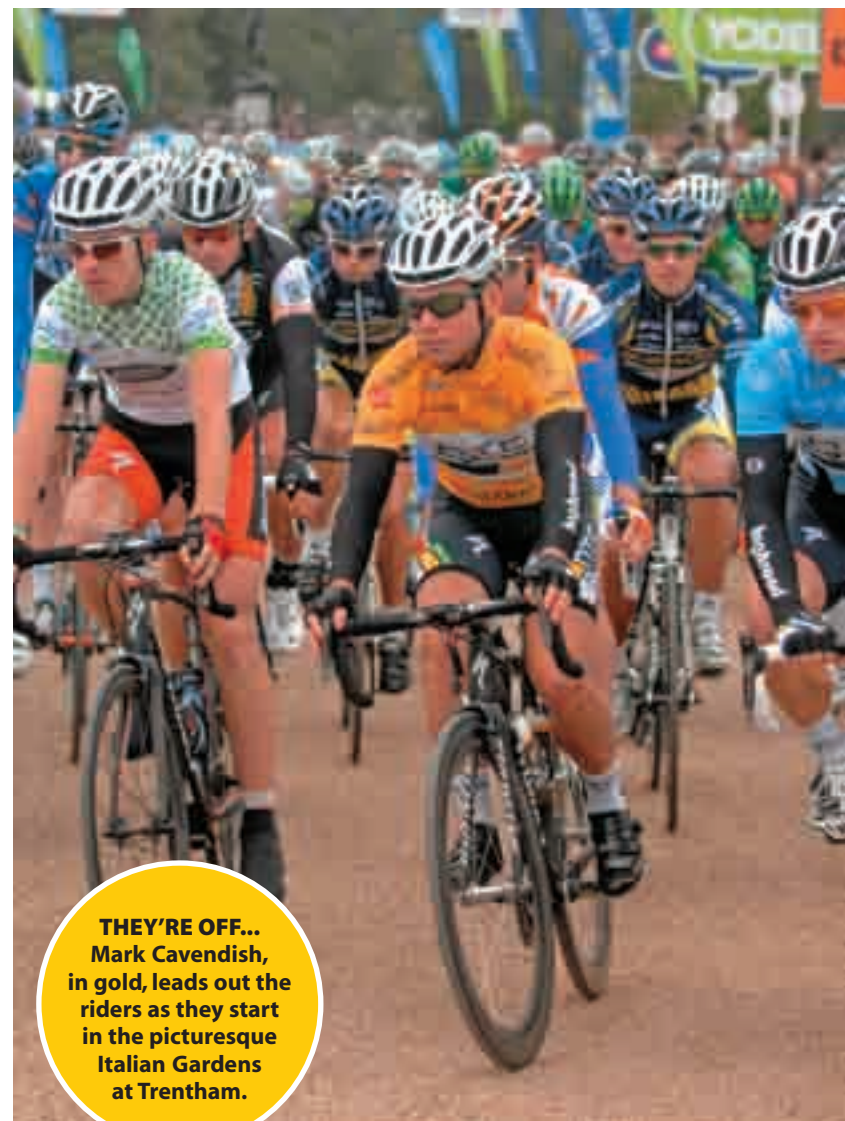
Meredith, said: "The Tour of Britain has once again highlighted Stoke-on-Trent's ability to host an event of international proportions. "It has proved to be another huge success with large numbers of people from inside and outside Stoke-on-Trent coming into the city centre to enjoy the activities." Mike Herbert, Regional Director for St. Modwen who own Trentham Gardens, said: "We have a wonderful and beautiful Italian Gardens and starting the event from this location is unique, creative and really exciting." Mike Bennett, Tour of Britain Race Director, said: "The race and the riders have proved very popular in this part of the world and we love coming back to the city, creating a tough route across the region and developing a relationship with our partners and cycling supporters in the area. "Our partners in Stoke always produce a great event with us."

Spectators praise big event

FANS from across the city made it a start to remember and supported riders all along the route. Imogen Crooks, 16, from Oakhill, said: "I thought it was great having it at Trentham Gardens because you could get really close up and see the professionals. I'll never forget it." Visitors flocked to the city for

the stage. Sue Holmes, who travelled from Mansfield, summed up the feelings of many when she said: "We are great cycling fanatics and go to the Tour de France so it is great to see an event like this in the Midlands. "It is good to see the stage getting bigger and better. "Stoke-on-Trent always provides a really good venue for the stage."

Amateur cyclists will get the chance to ride the stage if they sign up for The Prostate Cancer Charity Tour Ride on Sunday September 25, starting from Trentham Gardens. Find out more at www.tourride.co.uk



THEY'RE OFF... Mark Cavendish, in gold, leads out the riders as they start in the picturesque Italian Gardens at Trentham.

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

