

REVIEW



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It's official - Shoal Hill Common is now a Local Nature Reserve!

Common grounds for preservation

One of South Staffordshire's well-known and well-loved beauty spots has now been officially declared a Local Nature Reserve.

Shoal Hill Common just outside Huntington is one of Europe's increasingly scarce areas of Lowland Heath.

For the last 17 years, it has been managed by the Shoal Hill Joint Committee as a heathland restoration project.

But its upgraded status to a Local Nature Reserve provides additional protection of the site for future generations.

Besides the biodiversity of Lowland Heath, Shoal Hill is also host to many other rare species of flora and invertebrates.

When restoration work began, trees and bracken had almost crowded out the heather completely.

However, dedicated work by the Joint Committee and other agencies and specialist contractors have saved the Heathland for us all to enjoy.

Shoal Hill Common lies within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty on the outskirts of Cannock Chase. Spectacular views across the landscape can be enjoyed from strategic viewpoints on the common. Many hill ranges can be seen on a clear day including The Long Mynd in Shropshire.

The Shoal Hill Joint Committee is funded by South Staffordshire Council, Cannock Chase Council and Natural England.

CLr Donald Cartwright, Chairman of the Joint Committee said: "I am

delighted that we now have this important designation, it gives us Local and National recognition for all of the hard work carried out to protect and enhance such a valuable habitat.

"We will officially celebrate this event at the end of October. We will be inviting partners who have been instrumental in the restoration, to join us for an official declaration and a site visit.

"Of course maintenance of the habitat is just as important as the restoration. I am confident that with the help from our dedicated, specialist partners, this site will continue to thrive and demonstrates both councils' commitment to rare habitat protection".

For further information please contact Howard Medicott on 01902 696406 or e-mail h.medicott@sstaffs.gov.uk.

Making a BIG noise



Kids Summer event goes off with a BIG bang!

- turn to pages 4-5 to see the fun that was had at the BIG Summer Event at Baggeridge.

Award-winning Great Wyrley Fun Day

An annual fun day near Great Wyrley, organised by the South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership, has come runner-up in a prestigious national awards scheme organised by the Home Office.

The Tilly Awards give recognition to the best policing work across the country.

South Staffordshire's Quinton Project



was nominated for a Tilly Award - and had the honour of being runner-up.

The multi-agency Quinton Project was developed in October 2005, aimed at building bridges within the local community in and around the area, with particular focus on engaging with young people.

Since its launch, the whole community has been brought closer together and to showcase the work of local residents, the second annual

community fun day was held in August.

Police Sgt Maurice Annett, overall project manager from the South Staffordshire Community Safety Team said: "The Quinton Fun Day marked the work that has been carried out in the area by a wealth of community safety partners leading to a sustained reduction in crime and disorder and better feelings towards safety from shop keepers, residents and local young people."

You can read all about this year's Quinton Fun Day in the **Community Safety Supplement** inside.

Dishing the dirt

Ratemyplace website gives diners food for thought

Diners in South Staffordshire can now avoid a kitchen nightmare - by logging on to the Council's new food safety inspection website.

The site - www.ratemyplace.org.uk - gives the low-

down on how clean and hygienic local restaurants, pubs and cafes really are, by rating them up to five stars.

The ratings are based on the latest inspections by the Council's Food Safety Officers of establishments in South

Staffordshire serving or selling food or drink.

The 'Rate My Place' website, designed by Lichfield District Council and created in partnership with other Staffordshire authorities, provides visitors to establishments across the county with a one-click shop on food safety inspections.

It gives businesses a food safety star rating of up to 5 stars. Several businesses in South Staffordshire have already achieved the coveted 5 Stars and now Food Safety Officers are hoping that more premises will rise to the challenge. To get 5 stars a food operator must have good food safety procedures in place and be able to demonstrate that the premises has the highest standards of hygiene practices and cleanliness.

By allowing customers to see reports online, it is hoped that local businesses that have previously demonstrated poor hygiene standards will be motivated to improve. Similar schemes are also set to be rolled-out across the UK.

One of the factors in helping food businesses achieve higher standards is the introduction of the 'Safer Food Better



Pictured (from left to right) with Cllr Robert Marshall are Tom Lee, Golden Valley Chinese Take-Away; Nuccia Bird, Seven Stars Public House; Matt Davies, Moat House Hotel; Olga Dunn, Maori Coffee Shop; and Craig Thomas, Martin Thomas Butchers.

Business' initiative that offers straightforward and easy to use practical guidance for small to medium caterers and retailers. Food Safety Officers from South Staffordshire have been working closely with food traders to help them fulfil the requirements by offering workshops to promote good hygiene practice and important food handling tips.

The official launch of the website was held at the South Staffordshire Council Offices and was attended by some of the five-star winning businesses in the District.

Councillor Robert Marshall, Deputy Leader, Community

Services said: "We hope the website will improve the already good standards in South Staffordshire food outlets as well as allowing our residents to make an informed choice about where they eat based not only on the menu but also the hygiene".

Chris Lewis, Managing Partner of five-star rated 'The Moat House, Acton Trussell' added: "The Rate My Place initiative has the potential to revolutionise the way customers choose a restaurant or venue, by raising awareness and increasing the transparency in regards to food safety. The scheme effectively

allows customers to look behind the kitchen doors. At The Moat House we take our staff training and assessment in food safety very seriously and welcome the efforts of the councils to ensure everyone can eat and shop, safe in the knowledge that their food has been cooked in a safe environment."

For further details please contact Jenny Rhodes on 01902 696205 or e-mail: j.rhodes@sstaffs.gov.uk. 'Rate My Place' can be found at www.ratemyplace.org.uk. It is also accessible via a direct link from the Council's website www.sstaffs.gov.uk.

5 STAR RATED PREMISES

(As of 23rd August 2007)

Abbeyfield House, Codsall (Very Sheltered Housing)
 Brookside Residential Home, Wombourne
 Corbett C of E Primary School, Bobbington
 Deansfield House, Brewood (Sheltered Housing)
 Flappers Tea Room, Codsall
 Great Wyrley Community Support Unit
 Golden Valley Chinese Take-Away, Wombourne
 Jacob Foodserve Ltd, Four Ashes
 Lilliputt Children's Day Nursery, Coven
 Martin Thomas Butchers, Pattingham
 Maori Coffee Shop, Kinver
 New Inn, Wombourne
 Park Mount Residential Home, Wombourne
 Perfect Pizza (Distribution Centre), Four Ashes
 Prestwood Snack Bar, Prestwood
 R and D Glass, Stourton (Dairy)
 Say It With Food, Penkridge (Caterer)
 Seven Stars P H, Seisdon
 St Chads Church of England Primary School, Pattingham
 Teddy Bears Nursery, Great Wyrley
 The Moat House Hotel, Acton Trussell
 Victoria's Ltd, Perton (Caterer)

Top marks for Housing Services

The Council's housing services team has earned the official stamp of approval for the excellent services they provide to South Staffordshire residents.

The Council's Housing Services Team (Operations) is responsible for delivering the Council's statutory front line homelessness, housing advice and housing register services. The main aim of the service is "to provide a good quality housing advice service to all residents of South Staffordshire in partnership with voluntary and statutory agencies to reduce homelessness within the District."

The team has worked hard to achieve this with initiatives such as the Council's Stay Safe Scheme which enables victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes in a safe and secure environment, and by providing support to vulnerable households who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Customer feedback on how the service is provided has been excellent with 98% of customers being satisfied with the service that they have received between April - June 2007.

The team has been awarded Charter Mark Accreditation - the Government's recognised national standard for top-notch service.

The Charter Mark scheme is designed to make organisations focus on and improve their service to customers.

In South Staffordshire's case it meant

showing that the Council is aiming constantly to improve and give value for money.

Reaching Charter Mark standard demonstrates that the Housing team is prepared to 'go that extra mile' in putting customers' interests first.

But it was a tough assignment and the Housing team's performance was closely scrutinised in a number of key areas, including:

- Setting standards and performing well.
- Actively engaging with customers, partners and staff.
- Being fair and accessible to everyone and promoting choice.
- Continuously developing and improving the service.
- Using resources effectively and imaginatively.
- Contributing to improving opportunities and quality of life in the communities we serve.

The assessment was carried out in August and at the end of it, members of the Housing team were able to celebrate when it was announced they had passed the test.

If you would like more information on the award, please contact the Housing Services Manager (Operations), Pat Main, on 01902 606427, or by e-mail on p.main@sstaffs.gov.uk.

Further information can also be found on the Council's website at www.sstaffs.gov.uk

Ton-up Betty's big day



Photograph courtesy of: THE EXPRESS & STAR

A Pattingham resident joined the exclusive Centenarian's club recently. Mrs. Betty Tilke, of Burnhill Green, reached the 100-years milestone on 25 July.

To help Betty celebrate her special birthday, the Chairman of South Staffordshire Council, Cllr Mrs Patricia Griffin, made a surprise visit to present her with a bouquet of flowers.

Cllr Mrs Griffin said: "I am delighted to meet Betty and offer her my congratulations and best wishes on achieving her centenary."

Village hall advice

Anyone needing expert advice about the running of village halls or any issues concerning them can get it at a special surgery.

Cathy Russell, Village Halls Adviser at the Community Council of Staffordshire will be holding an advice surgery at South Staffordshire Council's offices in Codsall on 20 November.

She will be there between 9am and 8pm to answer questions about a range of issues of concern to village hall and community centre management committees, such as; fire safety, sale of alcohol, responsibilities of trustees, VAT, insurance and funding sources.

Anyone wishing to take advantage of this opportunity can either contact Cathy Russell on 01785 242525 to arrange an appointment or just call in to Solutions at the Council offices on the day. If you do not book an appointment, you may have to wait a little while to see Cathy.



Cut carbon calories... and give Planet Earth a healthy diet



Carbon emissions are killing Planet Earth, and most of us, right here in South Staffordshire, are carbon junkies.

We get our 'fixes' every day - from needlessly overheating our homes to leaving electrical gadgets in the 'standby' mode.

Every time that we turn on the car engine or flick a switch we release gases that heat up the earth and we should all know by now what global warming is doing to us.

But we can kick the carbon habit - by going on a low carbon 'diet'.

Look at it as if you are losing weight. The purpose of a low carbon diet is to reduce the everyday activities that make up your personal impact on climate change - or your carbon calories.

The biggest consumer is home energy use. Heat, hot water and electricity account for 43% of the average family's direct carbon emissions, but much of this energy is wasted. There is, however, plenty of room to trim the fat, simply by cutting out careless habits and investing in a few home improvements.

The electronic revolution!

There are a substantial number of gadgets, unheard of 20 or 30 years ago, which are now common in many of our homes. Not only are there

many more devices in the typical home, but also many of them are in a permanent state of readiness to swing into action. Some, such as Sky+, have to be on constant standby to receive software downloads - and you certainly can't turn them off if you have scheduled them to record a TV series.

This means that entertainment, computers and gadgets account for an extraordinary 45 per cent of electricity used in the home and need the equivalent of 14 average sized power stations just to power them.

Even a teenager's/child's bedroom is full of electrical gadgets:

The young technophile Annual Cost:

PS3	£23.00
14" Television (CRT) in bedroom	£6.50
Freeview box	£6.00
Mobile phone	£0.50
Digital radio	£5.00
iPod	£0.50
VCR	£11.00
PC & Monitor	£29.50
Printer	£2.50
Scanner	£5.00
PC Speakers	£3.00
Compact Hi-Fi	£8.50

**Total annual running cost:
£101.00**

Some of the biggest culprits are chargers for gadgets like mobile phones. For example if every

household in the country keeps a phone charger plugged in but not in use, 24 hours a day, every day of the year, the amount of energy wasted could be used to power 16,000 homes for a year.

What can I do?

There are a number of gadgets and gizmos available to help us in our task of reducing our impact.



Eco-kettle - releases only the water you need into a boiling chamber, therefore uses 30% less energy www.ecokettle.com

Standby smart plug - Instead of constantly bending over to push off standby buttons invest in a plug that cuts power to electrical items on standby but still allows them to be switched on and off using a remote control. (available from Currys)

Powermeter - This plug in meter shows how much electricity an individual appliance is using and the cost of electricity, even when its on standby. www.cat.org.uk/shopping

Powerdowns - These are designed to turn off electric supply to computers when not in use. We have a limited number available free to people in receipt of income related benefits.

Contact Rachel Eeles on 01902 696508 or e-mail r.eeles@sstaffs.gov.uk, for more information.

REMEMBER!

Choose products with the Energy Saving Recommended Label

Switch things off when you're not using them!!

Help is available for insulation and other energy saving tips!

Contact Rachel Eeles, Energy Conservation Officer on **01902 696508** or the local Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on **0800 512 012**

Source:

How consumer electronics are taking over the world, EST,2007

The Low Carbon Diet, Ghazi and Lewis, 2007

Our top energy saving tips

1 Cut bills by up to 10 per cent by turning your heating thermostat down by 1°C. Is your water too hot? Your cylinder thermostat shouldn't need to be set higher than 60°C/140°F. You can still be warm.



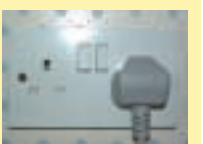
2 By closing your curtains at dusk, stop heat escaping through the windows.



3 Always turn off the lights when you leave a room.



4 Switch appliances off at the socket rather than leaving them on standby. Don't leave appliances, like mobile phones, on charge unnecessarily.



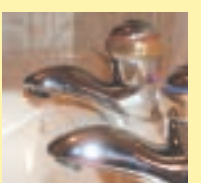
5 On your washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher, use the half-load or economy programme.



6 Only boil as much water as you need, but do remember to cover the element if you're using an electric kettle.



7 Fix dripping taps. They waste energy and in one week one dripping tap wastes enough hot water to fill half a bath. Fix leaking taps and make sure they're fully turned off.



8 Replace your light bulbs with energy saving recommended ones. One can reduce your lighting costs by up to £78 over the lifetime of the bulb and they last 10 times longer than ordinary bulbs.



9 When you next buy a kitchen appliance look out for the Energy Efficiency Recommended logo. It means that an appliance is energy efficient, using up to one third less electricity.



Cartons put on recycling menu

South Staffordshire has beefed up its recycling of throwaway waste with a new collection service for cartons.

The Council has teamed up with Tetra-Pak, the major manufacturer of plastic lined paper cartons that were previously a problem to recycle.

The cartons are used for a wide range of products, among them milk and soft drinks.

On average, each household throws away over two kilograms (around four and a half pounds) of cartons per year.

But in South Staffordshire they can now be recycled thanks to the introduction of the new collection facilities situated across the District.

The special collection bins are located at:

- Co-op Supermarket Car Park, Penkridge
- Co-op Supermarket Car Park, Codsall
- Pattingham Village Hall Car Park, Pattingham
- High Street Car Park, Wombourne
- High Street Car Park, Kinver

Once collected, the cartons are taken away to be baled and then transported to a recycling mill where they can be recycled into different products, ranging from plaster-board liner to high-strength paper bags and envelopes.

The introduction of carton collection in South



Cllr Mrs Joan Williams and Dan Roberts, Waste Management Officer, using the new carton bank

Staffordshire is the latest move in the Council's drive to cut the amount of rubbish sent to landfill sites. The Council's recycling programme has seen recycling rates increase from 10% to 44% over the past three years.

Councillor Joan Williams, Deputy Leader, Environment Services said: "The residents of South Staffordshire have really responded well to the different recycling schemes we've implemented over the last few years which is why I'm delighted to see these new facilities being trialled.

"We've still got some tough recycling targets to meet, but I'm pleased to see Tetra Pak and the carton industry supporting us."

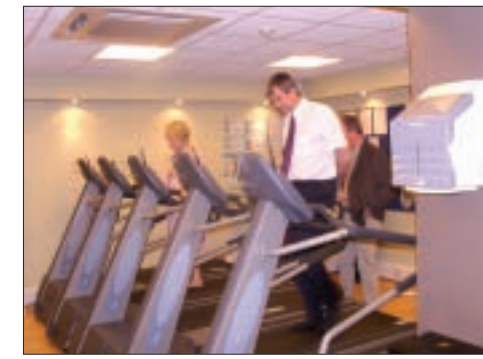
AT YOUR LEISURE

Codsall opens doors to an active lifestyle



The new-look Codsall Leisure Centre threw open its doors to customers this summer.

In a party atmosphere, South Staffordshire Council Chairman Cllr Patricia Griffin officially inaugurated the centre's new changing rooms and new fitness equipment.



The Chairman was joined at the opening, on 29th July, by Cllr Robert Marshall, Deputy Leader for Community Services.

Visitors were keen to try some moves on the new exercise machines in the Fitness Suite.

The facilities have given the leisure centre a great boost and members have been really impressed.

For special offers and deals on membership at the centre call 01902 844032.

The **BIG** Summer Event

Stay Safe ... Be healthy

Hundreds of youngsters from across the District got the message at South Staffordshire's BIG Summer Event.

More than 350 of them packed into Baggeridge Country Park for a fun-filled day of activities.

The event, organised by South Staffordshire Council and backed by Staffordshire Children's Fund, took place on 30th August.

The emphasis was firmly on giving the youngsters the opportunity to let their hair down and enjoy themselves, while at the same time promoting safety and health for young people.

Free transport was provided from all the District's leisure centres and out and about pick ups enabling all young people to take part in complete safety.

Activities included junk drums, street dancing, recycled plastic art workshops, bug hunts, cricket, football and tag rugby to name a few...

Every child who attended the day received a free T-shirt and goodie bag which included a host of information on staying safe and being healthy.



Game-on for our Parishes

Next year's South Staffordshire Inter-Parish Games could be the biggest and best so far.

Organisers of the event are making a big push to attract more entrants.

The games, now in their 31st year, are aimed at developing community spirit as well as getting people active.

Individual sports are selected so that the majority of the community can participate, ranging from the more active such as

swimming and cross country running, to more relaxed activities such as angling, cribbage, chess, and darts.

The games are open to all residents of South Staffordshire, regardless of age or sporting ability.

If you are interested in taking part in next year's Games or would like further information please contact Victoria Lacey on 01902 696519 or visit www.sstaffs.gov.uk/pg



Recharge your batteries at Penkridge

If you think you need a lift, you can re-energise yourself at Penkridge Leisure Centre.

The Centre has just launched its new

energist exercise programme and it is proving extremely popular!

Energist is the popular exercise programme run by South Staffordshire Council at all its Leisure Centres.

Penkridge now hosts a range of exercise classes - from the ever popular energetic legs, bums and tums to relaxing pilates and lots in between.

So why not pop down and work off some excess energy, burn some calories and get super fit!

Classes are available for all fitness levels and newcomers are especially welcome.

For more information on classes and times call Penkridge Leisure Centre on 01785 714152.



Weblink to What's On in South Staffordshire this Christmas!

Finding out What's On in South Staffordshire is now just the click of a mouse away...

Internet users can access a new electronic What's On calendar that lists a host of events, shows and festivals taking place in the District.

If you're looking for somewhere to go, something to do or something to inspire you this Autumn, Winter or Christmas time, visit the What's On calendar.

www.sstaffs.gov.uk

Event organisers in South Staffordshire are also invited to use this free listing guide as a means of promoting their event. Simply click on the link and complete the on line booking form.



timetoQuit

Is it time for you to stop smoking?

Smokers in South Staffordshire looking to kick the habit once and for all have been promised help and support from local health chiefs.

The District's Stop Smoking Service has just been relaunched - with lots of new ideas to help people quit the life threatening habit.

The move follows the merger earlier this year of all local NHS Primary Care Trusts into the South Staffordshire PCT. Its Stop Smoking Service has been streamlined, with one service now offered across the area.

The service offers new ways to support those smokers who have decided it is time to quit, from visiting your GP or local pharmacist to a new Virtual support network by phone.

Everyone in a support role has been through

an intensive training course so smokers can be assured of getting the best possible assistance. They will, for example, be able to advise on the correct Nicotine Replacement Therapies (NRT) to suit the individual, from patches through to nasal sprays.

The team will make it clear, however, that contrary to what many smokers believe, it won't be easy. The chemicals in cigarettes are highly addictive and there may well be slip-ups along the way. But with support and the correct NRT, the chances of quitting for good are high. The health benefits for ex-smokers and those who used to inhale their second-hand smoke are enormous and make the effort all worthwhile.

If you have decided now is the right time to stop smoking - YOU CAN DO IT.

We can help!

Free Phone: 0800 0434304

Text: 'QUIT' to 60777

E-mail: quit@itstimetoquit.co.uk



South Staffordshire NHS stop smoking service



Leisure Centres' Christmas Closing

The Council's leisure centres will be closing for a few days over the Christmas and New Year period for cleaning and maintenance.

All centres will be closed on 25th, 26th, 27th and 31st December and 1st of January.

Individual centres may be open between the two closure periods listed above. Full details will be posted by each centre at least a month beforehand.

Green Flag

Baggeridge Country Park once again be flying the flag for South Staffordshire - the Green Flag, that is.

For the NINTH consecutive year, this former colliery turned nature reserve has won this prestigious award.

The Green Flag is the National standard for Parks and Green Spaces, recognising and rewarding standards of excellence.

In the judges' eyes, Baggeridge was judged to be "welcoming, safe and well maintained with a strong involvement of the local community".

The Council, which owns and manages the site, is very proud of the Country Park. Thousands of visitors each year agree with the judges' verdict and flock to Baggeridge to enjoy its delights.

Why not come along and see for yourself why Baggeridge is a worthy Green Flag award winner?



Lift off for charity appeal

The charity appeal by South Staffordshire Council's Chairman Cllr. Mrs. Patricia Griffin, on behalf of the County Air Ambulance, has really taken off.

She is asking people to donate their unused or unwanted foreign currency, even coins and notes no longer in circulation, that will be converted for the benefit of this life-saving service.

A special carbon and plastic box has been custom-made to collect the currency and placed in the secure area of the Solutions Reception at South Staffordshire Council offices in Wolverhampton Road, Codsall. It is already starting to fill up.

The appeal's official launch took place on the 16 August, attended by the Chairman along with Paul Weir, Fundraising Manager for the County Air Ambulance, and Paul Umbers of GP Plastics, Birmingham, who designed the special container.

Cllr. Mrs. Griffin appeals to everyone to search their cupboards and drawers for unwanted coins and support the County



Paul Weir (County Air Ambulance), Paul Umbers and Cllr. Mrs. Patricia Griffin

Air Ambulance. She said, "This is one way that everyone can help a very worthwhile cause and actually does not cost them anything. The Air Ambulance need £3 million annually to keep their helicopters flying and every way that the public can contribute benefits their cause".

Anyone wishing to donate unwanted currency, or even old and out of date coins that have no monetary value to the holder, can pass them to your local District Councillor or hand them in at the Council offices. Alternatively, call Elaine Swadling, Chairman's Secretary on 01902 696139 or e-mail e.swadling@sstaffs.gov.uk.

Royal garden party guests

The Chairman of South Staffordshire Council, Cllr Mrs Patricia Griffin attended a special engagement this summer - at Buckingham Palace.

The Chairman and her consort, Mr. Andrew Griffin were invited to a Royal Garden Party, where they were in the presence of The Queen, Prince Philip, Princess Ann, Prince Andrew and the Duke of Kent.

Also invited to the Royal Garden Party were Tony Ward, the Leisure Services Manager for South Staffordshire Council and his wife, Helen. Together they travelled to London in a chauffeured car.

Cllr Mrs Griffin said: "I was honoured to receive an invitation to the Royal Garden Party. This was such a memorable occasion for me, because I have long admired the Royal Family and the work they carry out for the country and the Commonwealth."

Mr Ward said, "My wife and I were delighted to be invited to Buckingham Palace and it certainly was a very memorable day."



Pictured going to the Palace are the Chairman, Cllr. Mrs. Patricia Griffin, Mr. Andrew Griffin, and Tony and Helen Ward.

Working for rural Staffordshire

- the Community Council celebrates 50 years of service

For over 50 years the Community Council of Staffordshire has been looking out for 'the little guy' - the villages, hamlets and rural dwellers of the county.

The Community Council concentrates on the little things that can mean so much to small and often isolated communities.

The need for such an organisation was first recognised in the post war years by the then National Council of Social Services. It led to the formation of the first Rural Community Councils in England.

The Community Council is a voluntary body providing a wide range of advice, information and support to local voluntary groups and individuals.

It helps liaise between the statutory and voluntary sectors at all levels across a wide range of subjects including:

Environmental issues; affordable rural housing; health and community care; education; training; charity advice; children's play; transport; village halls and community buildings; shops; post offices; funding advice; voluntary car schemes; organisation of surveys and consultations; parish planning; competitions and all other rural services.

As well as being an independent voluntary organisation, the Community Council is also a company limited by guarantee, with Lord Stafford and the Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire James Hawley as its patrons and Cllr Terry Dix, Chairman of Staffordshire County Council, as President.

As a registered charity, the Community Council receives core financial support from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) via the



Government Office for the West Midlands and Staffordshire County Council. The Community Council also secures income from contracts, sponsorship and fundraising through long-standing private sector partners, which include Calor, Tarmac, Lafarge Cement UK, Express and Star Group, Lichfield Mercury/Tamworth Herald, Rubery Owen Holdings Ltd, Aon Risk Services and Staffordshire County magazine.

With an annual turnover between £500,000 and £750,000, the Community Council employs 18 full and part-time staff, assisted by four dedicated volunteers.

For over fifty years, the Community Council has organised Staffordshire's Best Kept Village of the Year competition where around seventy villages compete for the prestigious award. However, the Community Council's agenda goes far beyond this and as part of its on-going commitment to help improve the quality of life for village residents, undertakes a variety of consultation events across the county with the outcomes acting as a starting point and catalyst for building parish plans.

One such consultation included a youth service project based at Tutbury Castle in conjunction with partners from Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services with the objective of gaining the thoughts of children between the ages of eight and 12 years-old on play provision.

Their interviews were recorded

and a DVD was prepared which, along with evidence from across the County, will be used in planning play resources.

The 'Playaway' scheme is an important Community Council activity, which benefits over 40,000 children and young people each year by providing play resources to rural communities and disadvantaged groups across Staffordshire. Playaway has a varied membership, including schools, nurseries, scout groups, church groups and wildlife trusts. They enjoy a variety of benefits provided by the Community Council, including the 'scrap store', the toy library and children's play training.

The scrap store, or Aladdin's Cave as it is affectionately known, is not only a great resource but also a fantastic source of inspiration for young people. Inside the store is a real treasure trove of materials ranging from fur fabric to sand paper, all donated by several large companies in Staffordshire with whom Playaway has forged strong links.

The scrap store can now also be viewed online at:

www.playawaystaffordshire.co.uk

Members can view the scrap which is available, order online and delivery is free of charge!

Members can now also enjoy unlimited access to the scrap store, free toy hire with a choice of over 800 toys as well as access to our Big Kids items including bouncy castles, sumo suits, bungee run, surf simulator and marquees all at very competitive rates. The toy and equipment library now includes a wide range of toys such as sports equipment, games and activities, puzzles, multi-cultural costumes and puppets, construction toys, baby and toddler toys, children's books, circus skills items, musical items and much more!

For further information contact:

Chris Welch, Chief Executive,
Community Council of Staffordshire,
Friars Mill, Friars Terrace,
Stafford. ST174DX
Tel: 01785 242 525
E-mail: chris.welch@staffs.org.uk

INDUSTRIAL UNITS TO LET

**Landywood Enterprise Park,
Great Wyrley**
1,579 sq ft

**Heathmill Enterprise Centre,
Wombourne**
1,460 - 2,350 sq ft

Contact:

Glen Parker, Commercial Development Section,
Council Offices, Codsall, South Staffordshire WV8 1PX
Tel: 01902 696117 Fax: 01902 696705
E-mail: g.parker@sstaffs.gov.uk

Dog mess clean-up - bag it, tie it, bin it

Dog owners who let their pets foul the pavements and public places in South Staffordshire are being targeted in a clean-up campaign.

The Council is sending out a clear message to owners that they must clear up any mess their dogs make.

The bag-it, tie-it and bin-it campaign is being spearheaded by the Council's full time Enforcement Co-ordinator, Catherine Gutteridge.

She works in close liaison with the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the District, issuing fixed penalties for dog fouling and littering offences.

People failing to clean up after their dogs face instant fixed penalties of £50. A maximum fine of £1,000 can be issued for the offence at Magistrate's Court.

Dog fouling is an issue that needs to be sorted out. Every day, dogs in the UK produce 1,000 tonnes of faeces. This not only poses a health hazard but is unsightly and very unpleasant to tread in.

If you see a dog fouling or littering incident and are willing to report it by providing a statement, contact the Council on (01902) 696203.

Note down as much about the incident as possible:

- Time & date
- Location
- Description of offender/dog
- What happened?
- Include the name and address of person in charge of the dog, if known.



NO FOULING



BUDGET FORECAST

A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN FORMULATING THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 2008/09 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY.

Overview:

This background briefing for the Council's budget is circulated to all members of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Parish Councils and to members of the Local Strategic Partnership. It is published (*in shortened form*) here in the Council's own newspaper, South Staffordshire Review, and on the website www.sstaffs.gov.uk in order that everyone with an interest in the Council's budget may put forward their views and comments for consideration as part of the budgetary process. There is no set format for comments.

Timetable:

The Executive's Medium Term Financial Strategy, incorporating its initial budget proposals will be approved for consultation by the Executive at its meeting on 4th December, 2007. This will include a balanced budget, taking account of all relevant matters, including the consideration of any representations received in time. Consultees and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have four weeks - until 8th January, 2008 - to respond.

The initial Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 11th December, 2007.

Final proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy, together with the Capital programme and recommendations for the level of council tax, will be approved at the meeting of the Executive on 8th January and submitted to the Council on the 26th February, 2008.

Comments may be made in writing to:

**Budget Consultation,
SSC
FREEPOST MID 21881
Codsall,
Nr Wolverhampton,
South Staffordshire,
WV8 1BR**

By fax to Budget Consultation on:
01902 696136

Or by e-mail to:
budgetconsultation@sstaffs.gov.uk

District Council Budget

- important note:

It must be made clear that this document and the budget setting process it refers to, is

concerned solely with the budget and council tax for **South Staffordshire District Council**. Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Police Authority, Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Fire Authority and the 27 parish councils within the District all have their own budget setting processes. They set their budgets during January and February each year, notifying the District Council of their requirements when their budgets are set.

The District Council, as "billing authority", acts as the council tax collector on behalf of all these bodies, sending out a combined bill to the local taxpayers, collecting the payments and passing on the various shares at agreed stages throughout the financial year, but it has no control over the budgets or levels of council tax set by them.

The table below sets out the budgetary requirements for each of the other authorities involved for the current financial year, along with the resulting charges. (These are shown at band D equivalent only. Properties in other bands are charged proportions or multiples of the band D charge based on a nationally agreed formula. A - 6/9, B - 7/9, C - 8/9, E - 11/9, F - 13/9, G - 15/9 and H - 18/9.)

Authority	Budget Requirement £	2007/08 Tax Levied £	% of Total Bill
Staffordshire County Council	36,535,629	947.54	72.83
Staffordshire Police Authority	6,175,128	160.15	12.31
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Fire Authority	2,324,045	60.27	4.63
South Staffordshire Council	3,363,836	87.24	6.71
Parish Councils	1,764,917	45.77	3.52
Total	£50,163,555	£1,300.97	100.00

As the table (*above*) shows the District Council will keep, for its own purposes, less than 7% of the money that it will collect this year.

Putting this in a nationwide context, only four district councils set a lower level of council tax than South Staffordshire in 2007/08. (Source: CIPFA Council Tax Demands and Precepts 2007-08).

This situation has been achieved by the application over many years of sound financial practices, the consistent application of the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness and the careful husbandry of what is, and remains, public money.

This consultation refers only to the budget for South Staffordshire District Council.

The Budget Aims

In setting its budget, the Council faces many challenges, some beyond its direct control.

The Executive of the Council proposes a budget in line with the Council's longstanding aim to keep council tax as low as possible, whilst continuing to deliver the quality services people need and value.

Setting the Scene

All the indications are that the amount of money that the government intends to give to local government in 2008/09 and beyond will not increase by the amounts that we have seen over recent years. The Comprehensive Spending Review 2007, which is the latest triennial Government department budget setting exercise, has been widely trailed as the toughest for many years. Two-thirds of the Council's funding comes from central government in the form of this Council's share of the national business rate pool (£5.921m in 2007/08) and revenue support grant (£0.994m), a total of £6.915m.

Current assumptions are that this will increase by 2% per annum in future years because 2% is the Government's official inflation target. Any shortfalls against these expectations will have to be found either by reducing expenditure, increasing the council tax or transferring money from the Council's reserves.

Partnerships

The Council is increasing its voice and influence in new partnership arrangements with other public bodies on behalf of South Staffordshire people in areas which really affect their lives: health, crime and disorder, transport, education, social benefits, are just some.

A Local Strategic Partnership has been formed of representatives of bodies with an interest in public services in South Staffordshire and the input of residents to its deliberations will be sought and welcomed. The Staffordshire Local Area Agreement with central government will also require enhanced partnership working.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The current strategy covering the period up to and including 2011/12 was approved by the Council on the 6th of March, 2007. It is based on a detailed projection of current service provision costs and known new developments and takes into account the effects of inflation on both pay and prices. This report marks the first step, following the approval of the Budget and Policy Framework and Timetable, in updating the current strategy for factors and developments that have changed since then. The end result will be a new strategy covering the period up until 2012/2013 and a budget and council tax requirement for 2008/09.

There are many factors to be taken into account. These include the level of financial

reserves, assumptions on inflation and interest rates and spending requirements identified since the budget was set.

All of these, and any others that emerge over the coming weeks, will be evaluated and taken into account before the next stage of the process which is the publication by the Executive of the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and initial budget proposals at its meeting on 4th December.

Service Challenge 2007

This member-led process will take place during September and will see close scrutiny of current and proposed service plans across the Authority. Once again the emphasis will be focussed on enhanced service provision in pursuit of Council objectives through increased efficiency. A comprehensive review of current and previous year spending against agreed budgets will underpin this process. Proposals for efficiency savings and enhanced service provision will be costed and built into the budget plan.

Central Government Expectations

Last year, during the budget setting process, the government announced that it would consider capping councils that agreed council tax increases of more than 5%. This Council was able to agree a medium term financial strategy that will see increases pegged to 3% each year.

You can help

Members and officers will continue to search for efficiency savings and improvements across all services, with a brief to maintain or improve service quality and to achieve tight performance targets. Through its partnership working the Council will continue to seek to bid for funds, to bring in partner contributions and to gain economies of scale in order to make South Staffordshire a better place in which to live and work.

If there are any points or proposed service amendments, large or small, you feel should be taken into account when the Executive draws up its detailed budget proposals, please let us know by whatever means you find most convenient.

**The deadline for representations is:
23rd November, 2007.**

Thank you in advance for your time in considering these complex financial issues.



SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REVIEW



Winter warmers save you money

Householders in South Staffordshire can beat the winter blues - by keeping warm and cutting their home fuel bills at the same time.

Energy efficiency experts say too many people don't heat their homes properly, putting themselves at risk of cold-related illnesses and wasting precious fuel, which not only bumps up their bills but also puts out more carbon dioxide, the main 'greenhouse gas'.

According to the charity Help the Aged, 25,000 elderly people in England and Wales died of preventable, cold-related illnesses last year.

But heating problems do not just affect the elderly - anyone can be at risk, especially with energy costs rising.

One of the main reasons people suffer during the winter months is that they can't afford to heat their homes properly.

However, by making just a few little changes around the

home, your bills can be cut and your property can be kept at just the right temperature - right through the winter.

Some of these changes won't cost you a penny, some just a few pounds, yet they will all save you money in the long run.

Changes that cost nothing!

- Switching your electricity supplier is one of the simplest ways of saving hundreds of pounds! Many people have had the same supplier for years and are worried about the complexity of switching. Use an on-line comparison calculator or ring the energy advice centre and compare deals to find the one that best suits your needs. You can also switch to a green provider, which allows you to opt for

your energy from renewable energy sources.

- Bleeding trapped air from your radiators is quick and easy and makes them perform better.
- Ensure your cylinder thermostat on your boiler isn't set higher than 60°C or 140°F. Any higher is a waste of energy.
- Turn off appliances and lights when not in use (don't just leave them on standby) and boil only the required amount of water and save £45 a year.
- Hang thick curtains on the front and back doors to keep cold air out and warm air in, as long as they don't cover radiators.

Changes that cost a little money:

- The average uninsulated, three bedroom, gas heated house wastes 60p from every £1 spent on heating (EST, 2006). So while insulation might seem like a pricey option, it is

actually a huge energy saver. Installing loft insulation can save you up to 25 per cent off your annual heating bill, while wall cavity insulation can save a massive 33 per cent. (FoE, 2006).

- Spending just £10 on a boiler jacket (not less than 75mm (3") thick), and £3 a metre to lag the pipe from your boiler to the hot water tank could save you between £15 and £20 a year on water heating costs. (FoE, 2006)
- Hang reflective foil (with the shiny side facing the radiator) behind radiators fitted to outside walls to reduce heat loss. Kits are available from home improvement stores, but kitchen foil works just as well!
- Fit a nylon brush seal or spring flap to your letterbox to exclude draughts (costs around £10)
- Use draught exclusion strips on windows or dig out that old knitted snake your gran made

to block the draught under your bedroom door and save £20 a year.

- You should also get your boiler checked once a year for maximum efficiency and to make sure that it's safe. You can either use a local tradesman, or use British Gas' boiler insurance service.
- Use energy-efficient light bulbs. They cost approximately £4,

but an energy-efficient bulb uses a quarter of the energy of a normal bulb and lasts approx 10 times as long.

There are lots of grants available to those who want to lag their boiler, double glaze their windows or insulate their loft. Check out Help the Aged if you're over 60, or contact the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512 012 to see what help you can get.



South Staffordshire Council

CONTACTS:

Telephone: (01902) 696000
 Fax: (01902) 696800
 Website: www.sstaffs.gov.uk

OPENING TIMES

For personal visits to the Council's Customer Contact Centre the opening times are:

Monday	8.45am to 5.00pm
Tuesday	8.45am to 8.00pm
Wednesday	8.45am to 5.00pm
Thursday	8.45am to 5.00pm
Friday	8.45am to 5.00pm
Saturday	9.30am to 1.00pm

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں۔
 یہ کوئی بھی دستاویز ہے جسے کوئی بھی زبان میں تبدیل کر کے دیا جاسکتا ہے۔
 اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں۔
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 یہ کوئی بھی دستاویز ہے جسے کوئی بھی زبان میں تبدیل کر کے دیا جاسکتا ہے۔

If you would like a copy of this document in another language or format (eg Braille, audio cassette), please contact:

**South Staffordshire Council,
 Council Offices,
 Codsall,
 South Staffordshire.
 WV8 1PX
 Tel: (01902) 696000**

Your Autumn & Winter Passport to South Staffordshire...

Discover South Staffordshire's hidden gems this autumn and winter with a FREE Passport to quality gifts, quality food and historic homes.

This great booklet offers some very special discounts at a number of attractions, creative businesses and dining establishments in the District.

Tickets are still valid for 'The Studio' in Penkridge where you can buy some wonderful Sterling Silver and Crystal Jewellery. Also ideal for Christmas presents, perhaps, a piece of Pottery made by Paul Gooderham of Gailey Pottery!

If you're looking for a great place to visit on a winter's day, this is your passport to National Trust properties at The Holy Austin Rock Houses in Kinver, Moseley Old Hall and Wightwick Manor. Two people get in for the price of one, and the offer also applies to the Boulton Paul Heritage Project.

Dedicated to the history of Boulton Paul aircraft factory, this fine collection of aviation history is a delight for everyone - enthusiast or

otherwise.

Looking for food cooked and served with style?... Visit The Mess in Brewwood and enjoy 10% off any midweek evening meal or a free glass of wine with any lunchtime meal!

For garden enthusiasts, The Hollybush and Haven Nurseries are offering 10% off, whilst Pendrell Hall is offering 20% off any course booked before 31st March 2008 that is running until July 2008!

All this in one handy sized passport and what's more - it's FREE!!!...plus you also get the chance to enter the free prize draw to win one of 2 sets of tickets for 4 people to enjoy a Jazz Sunday roast dinner at Weston Park!

For your free passport, call South Staffordshire Council's, Strategic Services, on **01902 696410.**

Terms and conditions apply.



Photographs courtesy of: The National Trust

Next stop - England

Bus pass holders will have the freedom to travel throughout England from next April when the All-England bus pass will replace the Staffordshire Advantage pass.

Bus pass holders in South Staffordshire could miss out if they do not apply for the new national standard bus pass which requires a digital photograph.

Over the last few months existing bus pass holders have been invited to apply for the new bus pass and photography opportunities have been provided at a number of village halls.

Anyone who has missed out on the application process, can visit the Council Offices in Codsall, from Monday 12th November, to have their photograph taken.

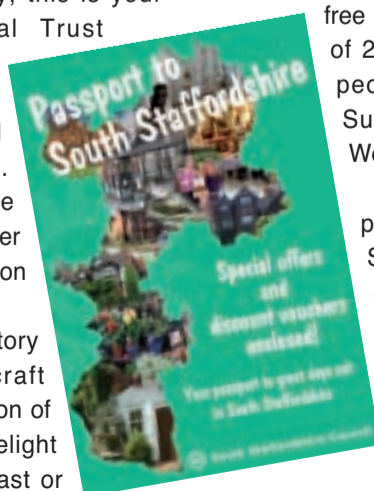
Alternatively, you can send in your own digital photograph to the Council up until Christmas.

New bus passes will be sent out, with full information on conditions of use, in March next year.

Anyone currently holding tokens will have an opportunity to apply for the new bus pass from April 2008. Further information will be sent out in March to eligible residents.

Further information will be made available on the Council's website. If you have any queries please ring the Concessionary Travel Helpline on 01902 696122 or e-mail:

www.concessionarytravel@sstaffs.gov.uk





Community Safety

"Working to make South Staffordshire Safer"

Goal-den great kicks off Fun Day

Wolves legend Steve Bull was back in front of a big crowd again - at the annual Quinton Fun Day in Great Wyrley.

The former Molineux goal ace kicked off the event in front of an estimated 1,000 people, who had come to take part in and watch a wide range of activities.

The Fun Day was organised by the South Staffordshire Community Safety Team and there was plenty to keep everyone entertained all day long.

There was a real carnival atmosphere, with the bouncy castles and face painting, but the main showpiece was a series of breathtaking stunts and tricks during the BMX-bike, in-line skating and skateboard competitions.

Sports fans also enjoyed the exhibition football matches that ran throughout the day whilst six local pop groups fought it out in a 'Battle of the Bands' extravaganza.

Judging the main attractions was local resident, Brett Wallbank who awarded trophies for first, second and third

places in each competition.

The day was a huge success - all thanks to the efforts of Staffordshire Police, Great Wyrley Parish Council, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership, the County and South Staffordshire Council including Leisure and Youth Services; together with local businesses, members of St Andrews Church, the local scout group and, of course, members of the local community.

Without their co-operation and team work, the event could not have taken place. The event truly showed how good partnership work can make a real difference to local communities.

The Fun Day Project Manager, Sgt Maurice Annett of the Community Safety Team said: "The day was a great success and the response and turnout was fantastic. This day formed part of



Steve Bull with local residents.

the Quinton Project - a multi-agency community safety initiative aimed at building bridges within the local community in and around the Quinton area of Great Wyrley, with particular focus on engaging with and gainfully occupying the time of young people. The day was about challenging the perception that young people hang about causing trouble and promoting young people and the positive role

that they play in the community. A wonderful day was had by all.

"Finally, a special thank you must go to Councillors Mike Lawrence and Kath Perry, South Staffordshire Housing Association, St John's Ambulance, PASS, Local Network Fund, E M Mears Ltd, Somerfield plc and other local businesses and volunteers who helped make the Fun Day project a real success," said Sgt Annett.



Free soft drinks for driving buddies

Free soft drinks for young drivers will be on offer in a campaign to reduce road accidents launched by South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership.

The aim is to cut the number of accidents involving 16-25 year olds, many of which are caused by speeding and/or alcohol.

Local pubs will be encouraged to sign up to a scheme whereby the designated driver of a group of young people will get a number of

complimentary soft drinks.

A system is being devised on how to identify the designated driver and the project will be introduced into the pubs during October and will run through to December.

The scheme will be publicised in pubs throughout the District - watch out for posters and beer mats giving details.

After the campaign, all participating pubs will receive a certificate to show that they really do care about their young customers and road users.

Champions of the Community!



Pictured (from left to right) are Mrs Ann Williams, Mr Tony Marsden, Cllr Brian Edwards, Mr David Perrin and Codsall Community High School pupils, Raychel Smith and Adam Plummer.

South Staffordshire is to recognise and celebrate the work of people from across the District who have proven to be dedicated champions of their community.

The special awards scheme has been established by the Community Safety Partnership.

The 'champions' for this year were revealed at the Partnership's annual meeting in June:

- Tony Marsden from Kinver was nominated because of his seven-year service as a volunteer, driving the 'Yellow Peril' Neighbourhood Watch vehicle.
- Mrs Ann Williams, also from Kinver, was nominated by the charity Victim Support, for her commitment and service to local victims of crime since 1995.
- Local schoolteacher David Perrin was joined by two of his pupils from Codsall Community High, in accepting the Community Champions Award in recognition of the pioneering 'Malawi Project' that the school led last year. The

volunteer project was designed to help residents in the Malawian town of Zomba fund and develop a scheme to include living areas, restaurants and accommodation for children and their carers or volunteers living in the country which is ravaged by AIDS and poverty. Mr Perrin and 18 pupils from the school visited Malawi last year and helped raise £4,000 for the project.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Brian Edwards, met with the winners and presented them with a certificate of official recognition of their commitment and service to the District.

He told them: "I am always humbled when I meet true community champions such as these. They give their own time to help others in our community and I am honoured to be able to present them with their Community Champion Awards."

For further information on the Community Champion Awards scheme, or to nominate your own community champion, contact Linda England on 01902 696530 or, by e-mail, at l.England@sstaffs.gov.uk.

Good Guy

Shops and retailers in South Staffordshire are being urged to be "Good Guys" when it comes to selling fireworks.

The Good Guy scheme asks them to sign up to a voluntary code of practice where they agree to act responsibly over firework purchases, especially by customers who appear to be under 21 years of age.

Shopkeepers have the right to refuse to sell fireworks to any individual.

South Staffordshire residents are also being asked to be on the alert for unauthorised selling of fireworks, for example at car boot sales. If you suspect that fireworks are being sold by anyone other than a responsible retailer, contact the Firework Hotline on

08454 02 03 34

All calls will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.



Local retailers, with Trading Standards and Community Safety Officers.

THANK YOU FOR ENTERING

The correct answer to the word search in Issue 37 of Review was **SHELL**

A big thank you to everyone who entered and well done to those who got the answer correct!

Word Search Competition

Can you find the following words to do with Bonfire-Night and Diwali in the grid? They may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal and could be backwards or forwards.

- BONFIRE • NIGHT • PARTY
- FIREWORKS • SPARKLERS
- ROCKETS • FOUNTAINS
- GUY FAWKES • PARLIAMENT
- GUNPOWDER PLOT • TREASON
- REMEMBER • SAFETY
- DIWALI • HINDU • FESTIVAL
- LAKSHMI • LIGHT • WEALTH
- DIVA • LAMPS • CANDLES
- FEASTING • RANGOLI • SWEETS

P	W	F	D	I	S	G	R	E	S	G	G	R	L
M	A	I	O	W	L	E	N	D	P	N	U	A	I
S	V	R	E	U	M	A	K	A	M	I	N	N	G
A	T	E	L	E	N	O	W	T	A	T	P	G	H
Y	T	E	M	I	W	T	T	I	L	S	O	O	T
S	T	B	K	E	A	U	A	A	D	A	W	L	I
W	E	R	R	C	N	M	D	I	I	E	D	I	M
R	R	I	A	I	O	O	E	N	N	F	E	B	H
I	F	T	N	P	R	R	S	N	I	S	R	O	S
S	E	L	D	N	A	C	P	A	T	H	P	N	K
G	U	Y	F	A	W	K	E	S	E	L	L	F	A
S	R	E	L	K	R	A	P	S	E	R	O	I	L
Y	T	E	F	A	S	N	I	G	H	T	T	R	S
F	E	S	T	I	V	A	L	H	T	L	A	E	W

There is one word in the list that is **NOT** included in the grid.

Write it on the back of a postcard (or sealed envelope) TOGETHER WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS and send to:

Helen Dye
Word Search Competition,
South Staffordshire Council,
Council Offices, Codsall,
South Staffordshire. WV8 1PX

The first correct entry picked after the closing date of

28th November, 2007,
will win a
£25 Prize

WORDSEARCH WINNER:

Congratulations to **Mrs Judy Hyde** from Wombourne who won £25 in the Word Search Competition in the Summer 2007 Edition of the South Staffordshire Review.

Buying booze for kids? That'll be £5,000, please!



Buying alcohol on behalf of under-age drinkers could cost you a packet.

Police and Trading Standards are warning adults that it is a criminal offence to 'do a favour' for teenagers trying to get their hands on liquor.

Anyone caught doing it is liable for an £80 on the spot fine - or a fine of upto £5,000, if the matter goes to court!

A close watch is being kept on off-licences and supermarkets to keep a check, not only on retailers, but also on who's buying the booze!

Youngsters are finding it much more difficult to purchase drink themselves due to the success of Challenge 21 - the demand for proof of age from anyone who looks to be under 21 years old.

As a result, under-age drinkers are resorting to other methods - like asking adults, even complete strangers, to go in and purchase on their behalf.

Some people may feel that they are not doing any

harm, but a recent survey of underage binge drinkers showed that their binge drinking had led to unsafe sex, injury, drug taking, anti-social behaviour, involvement with dangerous driving and problems with the police.

Brandon Cook, Team Leader for Fraud & Community Safety for Community Services said, "We need to change young people's attitude to drinking and alert them to the risks involved, not only those associated with health, but socially too. Teenage drinking is on the increase and we need to do something before it's too late.

"Retailers are working to avoid selling to children and parents need to do the same. We urge parents to be more vigilant at home, ensuring their children cannot access alcohol without their knowledge and to control the amount of alcohol they consume.

"I would encourage anybody with information regarding underage drinking to contact Trading Standards Confidential on 01785 330356."

Pass it on - youngsters are in the know

Over 60 teenagers from Great Wyrley and Cheslyn Hay have volunteered to be part of an information highway for young people in the District.

They will be taking training from the County Youth Service on issues such as drugs, alcohol and sexual health and then encouraged to find innovative ways of passing it on to their peers.

It is now understood that young people will take more notice of what people in their own age group say than, for example, being lectured by adults.

The Peer Education Programme is designed to take advantage of that, bringing information and reassurance to many other young people across the area. The training programme also involves many other topics that youngsters should know about, including first aid, the law and much more.

The means of passing it on will be not only through their schools, projects and social settings, but also to reach young people on the streets, with the support of Youth Workers.

The group will also work closely with local primary schools offering help to Year Six pupils with transition to senior school, and they will continue to offer support to these young people once they move into Year Seven.

The Peer Education Programme is funded by Great Wyrley and Cheslyn Hay Community and Learning Partnership, the Youth Service and South Staffordshire Council.

Each volunteer will commit well over 200 hours over the next year in training time and delivering to other young people. They will also gain accreditation through Youth Achievement Awards, 'V' awards or Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

If you would like more information about the Peer Education Programme please contact Diane Weaver, Senior Youth Worker, Staffordshire Youth Service on **01785 841699** or e-mail: diane.weaver@staffordshire.gov.uk

Cold shoulder for cold callers

If you think hawkers and similar unwanted callers knocking at your door are a nuisance - show them the red card.

South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership has just reissued its "No Cold Callers" card to put in your window.

The card has a new format to be more explicit about the fact that you don't want to receive canvassers, market researchers, salespeople or other traders.

Please feel free to cut this one out of South Staffordshire Review to replace your old one. If you haven't used one in the past, simply put it in a window near your front door.

This should deter most cold callers, but there are useful contact numbers on the back if you are concerned about any caller to your home.

More "No Cold Callers" cards can be obtained from South Staffordshire Council. Just pop in and collect them from Solutions (main reception).

CUT OUT AND KEEP 

Beat the Bogus Caller

- **STOP** - Are you expecting anyone?
- **CHAIN** - Secure door-bar or chain before opening the door.
- **CHECK** - Check callers' I.D. using the telephone numbers below to prove they are genuine.

British Meter Readers (Accuread)	0800 393 499
British Gas Sales Representatives	0800 300 100
BT Staff (BT Security Operations Centre)	0800 321 999 Option 1
Npower (Meter plus)	0800 073 3355 or 0800 073 0030
Powergen (Siemens)	0800 015 2221
Scottish Gas Meter Readers (Accuread)	0800 393 499
Scottish Gas Sales Representatives	0800 300 100
Severn Trent Water	0800 783 4444
South Staffordshire Council	01902 696456
South Staffordshire Housing Association	01785 312000
South Staffordshire Water	0800 389 10 11
Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service	01785 898 888
Transco Gas Staff	0845 605 6677

If you think callers are bogus, **DON'T LET THEM IN**
Should you feel in any danger phone **999** IMMEDIATELY





South Staffordshire **NHS**
Primary Care Trust



South Staffordshire
Council



Staffordshire
County Council

Support for Victims of domestic violence



Victims of domestic violence in South Staffordshire now have a team of professionals ready to support them and to deal with the people responsible for their plight.

Fortnightly case conferences headed by the police are being held to discuss high-risk cases where there may be a possibility of someone getting seriously injured or even killed.



At the meeting, suitable protection measures will be agreed to increase the safety, health and wellbeing of the families and their children.

At same time, the perpetrators of the violence will be scrutinised to see if they pose any risk to the general community.

A 'risk management plan' will be drawn up to provide professional support to all those at risk - and its measures will be implemented as soon as possible.

The support package is known as MARAC, which stands for Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference. It was trialled in Cardiff and found to be so successful in reducing repeat domestic violence that it is now being implemented in South Staffordshire.

The District's Domestic Violence Co-ordinator, Tracy Groom has been working closely with the police and other agencies to implement MARAC.

Cases referred to MARAC normally come through the Public Protection Unit at the Police, who chair the conferences.

Help for the victims can range from support from one of the local support agencies such as Staffordshire Women's Aid, to physical protection of the victim's property.

The MARAC meetings will link into the specialist domestic violence courts in Cannock and Stafford, the magistrates' court centres for offences committed in South Staffordshire.

These courts have been operating each Monday since May last year and deal specifically with domestic violence incidents. The courts have specially trained staff to deal with domestic violence and hope to ease the

proceedings for victims and their families who are going through the court process. Special measures can be put in place, such as letting witnesses give evidence from behind screens, or over video-link, where necessary.

Support for Victims in the Specialist Court

South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership partially fund an Independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA), with Staffordshire Women's Aid providing the service in the court. The IDVA will sit in court listening to the case being heard



and, after the hearing, contact the family to inform them of any bail conditions or any important information that the family might need to know.

The IDVA will support any woman who has suffered domestic violence and is going through the court process.

Women in South Staffordshire should no longer feel alone, knowing that a potentially daunting court case is hanging over them. The IDVA is there to offer support and guidance every step of the way.

To contact the Independent Domestic Violence Advisor please call the South Staffordshire 24 hour Domestic Violence helpline, available through Staffordshire Women's aid on:

0870 2700 123

STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE

We **DO NOT**

buy from,
or sell to,
callers at the door!!

require
Financial Advice
Home Improvements
Recommendation
Market Research
Security
etc.

If you are on
Official Business
show your identification
and state the reason for your visit.



CRIME ALERT AT THE DOOR

