

## REVIEW

thereview@sstaffs.gov.uk

www.sstaffs.gov.uk



Autumn 2008

Issue No. 41

INSIDE

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**  
- PAGES 8-9

**PARALYMPIC  
HONOUR**  
- PAGE 6

**WHERE TO GO  
&  
WHAT TO DO**  
- PAGE 14


*Enforcement agencies are coming down hard on lawbreakers:*

# 'Operation Feathers' knocks out the rogues

**The County's biggest ever stop and search operation - led by South Staffordshire Council - was set up on one of the District's busiest roads in a bid to catch an assortment of cheats, scam artists, tax and insurance dodgers and motorists putting lives at risk.**

The Council and Staffordshire Police linked up with Customs Officers, Trading Standards and VOSA (Vehicle Operations Standards Agency) to check for unsafe vehicles, drivers without MOTs and insurance, rogue traders, fly-tippers, unlicensed taxi drivers and motorists using illicit 'red diesel' illegally imported from abroad.

Parts of the A460 Cannock Road at Featherstone were cordoned off on 11th September and almost 300 vehicles were pulled over throughout the day as part of 'Operation Feathers'.

As a result, three men were arrested and a total of 22 cars were seized.

They included a man in his forties, who was arrested after South Staffordshire Council's Licensing team identified him as an unlicensed and uninsured taxi driver.



A man in his fifties was arrested for driving with no insurance and without a licence whilst a third man, in his thirties, has been charged with heroin possession.

**South Staffordshire Council also issued three fixed penalty notices to drivers who were carrying waste without a licence.**

*"This operation has been a big success - particularly as it has seen a number of agencies working closely together."*

Customs and Excise officials issued one driver with a £500 fine after his vehicle was found to be fuelled by illegal 'red diesel'.

Cllr Mrs Joan Williams, Deputy Leader (Environmental Services) at South Staffordshire Council, said:

*"Operation Feathers was a resounding success. This should send out a clear message to those who are driving without insurance, or driving vans and taxis that are*

*not roadworthy, that it won't be tolerated and that they're risking big fines or even prosecution if caught.*

*This was our fifth and our biggest stop and search operation in recent months and shows the commitment of all the agencies involved to ensure that our roads are safe."*

Inspector Maurice Annett, of Staffordshire Police Chase Division, added:

*"This operation has been a big success - particularly as it has seen a number of agencies working closely together. The message throughout this operation was clear - we aim to increase public safety and meet the needs of the community by reducing the ability of criminals and offenders to travel into Staffordshire to commit crime."*

South Staffordshire Council's Environmental Enforcement Team were particularly pleased with the outcome of Operation Feathers.

John Littleton, the Council's Enforcement Officer commented:

*"Fly-tipping in our country lanes costs the tax-payers of South Staffordshire nearly £50,000 each year. We're working harder than ever before to catch and prosecute fly-tippers, and operations such as this helps us crackdown on rogue traders who are just dumping waste."*

Residents can report fly-tipping by calling 01902 696203, by e-mail at [env.general@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:env.general@sstaffs.gov.uk) or online at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

## V Festival thumbs-up!



**The V Festival returned once again to South Staffordshire in August and, despite the rain, was a great success.**

- see page 15 for further information on the V Festival.

# Picture postcard Perton

*Upper Lake improvements complete the transformation*

**Work to stabilise and enhance Perton Upper Lake is now complete, leaving a magnificent amenity for the village.**

**The final phase of what has been a massive project saw improvements to the lake shore, the footpath network and the adjoining open space.**



**Cllr Mrs Joan Williams, Deputy Leader (Environmental Services); Cllr Alan Hinton, Chairman of South Staffordshire Council and Cllr Christine Young, Chairman of Perton Parish Council at the opening ceremony.**

A new 'Safer Route to School' cycleway/footpath has also been created leading from Anders Square to the Parkway.

Everything was finished by 1st October, when South Staffordshire Council was able to celebrate the end of a 12-year commitment to improve Perton's Upper Lake and adjacent open spaces.

The last stage included protecting and stabilising the remaining unimproved lake shore using sustainable materials that support a wide range of waterside vegetation. This will support wildlife habitats, whilst aiming to reduce the numbers of Canada Geese that are causing a nuisance. A safe, well drained, wheelchair

friendly access through the open space was another key component of the plan.

Although the overall project was designed and coordinated by South Staffordshire Council's Architectural and Landscape Services, the high standard of paving works was achieved with the help and supervision of Staffordshire Highways, an arm of the County Council. Thanks must also go to Perton Parish Council members and staff for their help in liaising with residents during the construction period.

The timing of the various elements of the works was crucial to the project's success, with the aim to accommodate Perton Parish Council's programme of improved play facilities and ensuring that land drainage, levels and additional access routes were all co-ordinated.

South Staffordshire Council's landscape contractor carried out the planting of trees and shrubs in difficult weather conditions during June. A specialist wetland contractor was appointed to grow and implement the vegetative embankment works to the lake. Changing the long-term maintenance of the open grass areas adjacent to the lake is aimed at further reducing the problems caused by the Canada Geese population by encouraging longer meadow grassland between the lake edge and adjacent pathways. Geese are not known to readily eat long, coarse grass. Ecologically, the benefits of meadow grass compared to mown grass are many, including a vastly increased level of biodiversity.

**improvements**

Already, geese numbers have halved compared to last year. Perton's friends group 'Wild About Perton' will continue to monitor geese populations and record expected improvements in native waterfowl numbers, mammals and insects.

Cllr Joan Williams, Deputy Leader (Environmental Services) said: "The dramatic improvements made in Perton show once again what amazing achievements can be realised with good partnership working. It is wonderful to see the aspirations of the Council's designers and Perton's residents effectively and economically coming to fruition, building on earlier improvements, to create such a wonderful green heart to the village."



Before

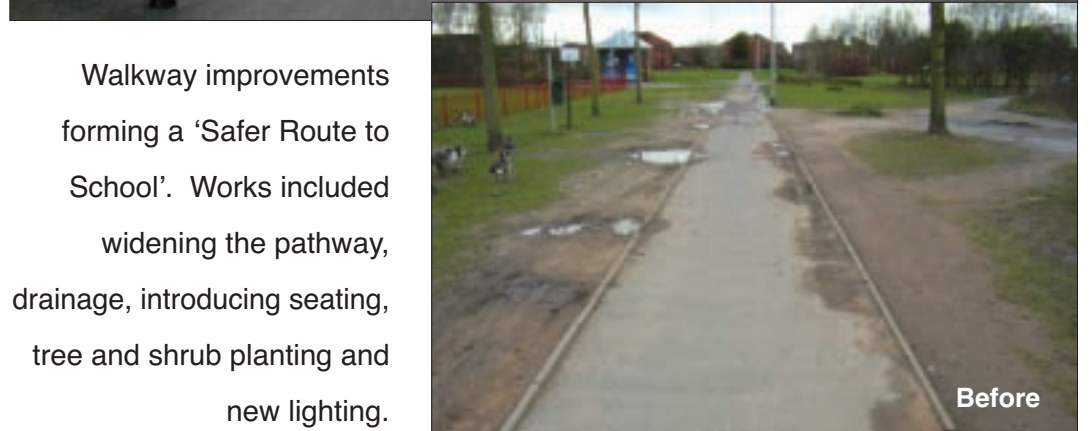
Upper Lake, Perton, pictured before (above) and after (right) the improvement work to stabilise and enhance the lake shore.



After



After



Before

Walkway improvements forming a 'Safer Route to School'. Works included widening the pathway, drainage, introducing seating, tree and shrub planting and new lighting.

## We gotto lotto things to play on

**Summer showers failed to dampen spirits at Perton's Village Fun Day in September, when a brand new play area was officially unveiled.**

One of the highlights of the event was the official opening of the brand new Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), part-funded by some of the £200,000 windfall the District received from the Big Lottery Fund.

Cllr Robert Marshall, Deputy Leader (Community Services) at South Staffordshire Council added: "The Games Area is the end result of many people putting in a lot of time and effort. I would particularly like to thank all of the Members and Officers at South Staffordshire Council and the Perton Parish Clerk, Tony Tappenden, who has been a tower of strength throughout."

The Village Fun Day also saw the official unveiling of the new Children's Playground, which sits alongside the MUGA and which was built with the help of the £10,000 cash award the village won as part of Goodyear's national playground appeal.



Cash injections from South Staffordshire Council, Perton Parish Council, Staffordshire County Council's Youth Bank and from a County Councillor, has meant that part of Perton's lakeside has been revamped and offers Perton youngsters a place to play.

The Perton Village Fun Day, which was organised by Perton Parish Council, proved a big hit, with fun-packed activities taking place all day including live music, magicians, football coaching sessions and a guest appearance from Wolves mascot, Wolfie.

Cllr David Billson, who represents Perton East on the District Council, said: "The Fun Day has really helped bring together the local community. Everyone involved with bringing the MUGA project together should be proud that they've given the youngsters of Perton this wonderful new facility."

"With the success of our Olympic athletes this summer, it's so important that our local youngsters are given the chance to get fit and get serious about sport."



Photograph courtesy of: GOODYEAR

**James Green, Jake Pritchard, Luke Davies, Jacob Patterson and Molly Jones at the Playground opening.**



## All aboard for free bus travel



### The new All-England bus pass is proving to be a big hit with South Staffordshire residents.

The pass gives unlimited FREE local bus travel all over the country to elderly and disabled people. It replaces the old localised bus passes, which were far from ideal.

Users of the new pass scheme can now travel freely in and out of the West Midlands and, most importantly, make connected journeys free.

Over 11,000 residents in South Staffordshire have taken advantage of the new bus pass, with some 4,000 switches from our local token scheme. There are still a very few who have not made the switch from the old Advantage bus passes, which have now expired and won't be accepted on local buses anymore. So, if you wish to continue travelling with a free bus pass, you need to make the switch to the All-England pass NOW.

To apply for the new All-England pass please contact the Council's helpline number on **01902 696122** or e-mail [concessionarytravel@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:concessionarytravel@sstaffs.gov.uk)

# LET'S GET FRUITY THIS WINTER

## Would you love to pick a fresh apple, pear, plum or cherry from your own garden?

South Staffordshire District Council is re-launching its Free Tree Scheme this year by offering households the opportunity to plant a fruit tree in their garden.

The Council is keen to encourage more tree planting to enhance villages and the District as a whole and hopes as many people as possible will take up the offer. The trees will provide a profusion of spring blossom, good autumn colour and an added bonus of delicious home grown fruit!

A total of 630 fruit trees consisting of 7 different varieties will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Varieties available are:

- Apples:**
  - Bramley's Seedling (*cooker*)
  - Falstaff (*eating*)
  - Sunset (*eating*)
- Plums:**
  - Greengage
  - Victoria
- Cherry:**
  - Morello
- Pear:**
  - Conference

South Staffordshire supporting:



The size of all these trees makes them suitable for garden planting.

Successful applicants will be informed of the collection time and date (a Saturday in February). Date and collection details will be sent with acknowledgement of application.

This year, because the stock will be bare rooted, there will be only one collection point - at the District Council Offices, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall.

For more information, please contact Steve Does on **(01902) 696422** or e-mail [s.dores@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:s.dores@sstaffs.gov.uk)



## FREE FRUIT TREE SCHEME FOR GARDENS

To apply for your FREE tree, please complete and return this application form by **31st January, 2009** to:

Architectural and Landscape Services,  
South Staffordshire Council,  
Council Offices, Codsall,  
South Staffordshire.  
WV8 1PX

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....

.....

Daytime Tel: .....

ONLY ONE FREE TREE PER HOUSEHOLD

Please tick your preferred choice:

- Apple - Bramley's Seedling
- Apple - Falstaff
- Apple - Sunset
- Plum - Greengage
- Plum - Victoria
- Cherry - Morello
- Pear - Conference



# YOUR VOTE COUNTS - DON'T LOSE YOURS!

## Choosing not to cast your vote in an election is not a crime, but failing to make an electoral registration return or giving false information IS an offence!

Some people may not be aware of the legal requirement for every household to make a return to register all eligible adults in a household every year.

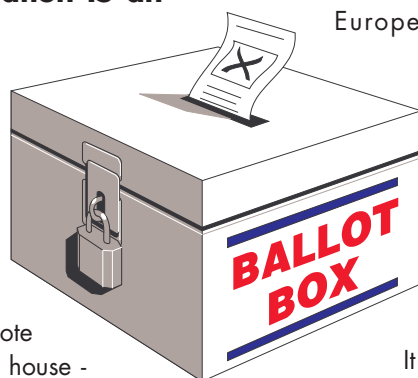
It is also important to remember to take your vote with you when you move house - you need to re-register at your new address.

Every year the Council is required to conduct an annual canvass of all households in its area and this year this commenced in mid-August. The Council encourages all householders to make a return as soon as you receive your personally hand-delivered form.

If you haven't yet returned your electoral registration forms, you need to do it now!

If you fail to return your form, you might find it difficult to obtain credit - for a mortgage or a store card for example, as major credit reference agencies purchase all electoral registers in the Country and use this as a basis for proof of existence.

Do not assume that if you are registered to pay Council Tax you will also automatically be able to vote. You have to register separately.



If you are not on the register, you will also miss your chance to vote in the Staffordshire County Council election next spring, which is likely to be combined with the European Parliamentary election on 4th June 2009.

Every household in South Staffordshire should have already received a green registration form.

It can be returned in a number of ways. This year we encouraged households to send the form back by entering their returned forms into a draw to win £25 of High Street vouchers.

By returning the forms, this helps to reduce the amount of reminders we have to print and send out, which costs time and money. The winner was the Walters family of Penkridge.

We also offered £25 of these vouchers to householders who received a random customer service questionnaire, for their time and trouble in completing the form. The lucky winner was Mr Homer of Kinver.

### How to Register

#### BY FREEPHONE, INTERNET & (new for 2008) SMS

If there are no changes, you can call the freephone number **0800 197 4418**.

Alternatively you can log on to the Internet site:

[www.registerbyinternet.com/sstaffs](http://www.registerbyinternet.com/sstaffs)

or SMS text your 2 part security codes to **80212 4418**. You will receive a confirmation text message back. You should note that this service will be at your operator's usual cost and you cannot request a postal vote, or to be opted out of the edited version of the register, via this method.

Electoral registration forms are available in different languages and different formats on request, or via the link to the Electoral Commission on our website.

#### BY POST

If there have been any changes in your household (*e.g. you need to add or remove a householder*), you have to return the form by post (freepost) or drop it in person to the Council Offices, Codsall.

Electoral Services are continually looking to improve our service to you and welcome any views. Please write to

**Phil Hardy,**  
**Electoral & Concessionary Services Manager,**  
**South Staffordshire Council,**  
**Council Offices, Codsall,**  
**South Staffordshire, WV8 1PX**  
e-mail [elections@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:elections@sstaffs.gov.uk)  
or phone **01902 696119**.

For general information on electoral services please ring our helpline number **01902 696121** or visit our website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).



South Staffordshire Council

# INDUSTRIAL UNITS TO LET

**South Staffordshire Business Park, Cheslyn Hay**

2,422 sq ft

**Landywood Enterprise Park, Great Wyrley**

2,807 sq ft

**Heathmill Enterprise Centre, Wombourne**

1,460 - 2,350 sq ft

**Littleton Business Park, Huntington**

1,345 sq ft

**Hilton Main Industrial Estate, Featherstone**

921 sq ft

**Four Ashes Enterprise Centre**

1,076 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](mailto:g.parker@sstaffs.gov.uk)



# Community Safety

## Meeting your local needs Autumn/Winter 2008

A continued commitment to cutting anti-social behaviour and increasing public reassurance and confidence through high visibility policing - a clear message from Chase division.

With a comprehensive team of officers readily available to respond to emergency calls for assistance and investigate those rare instances of serious crime, local residents can be assured of a round-the-clock, 24 hour service to meet their needs. These specialists compliment the dedicated neighbourhood policing teams who, working with partners, are continuing to develop even closer links with local people.



## Clear streets straight ahead

**A clampdown on problem parking on South Staffordshire's streets is just around the corner.**

From February next year, the Council will be taking positive action to keep village streets clear of vehicles that contravene traffic regulations, causing danger or inconvenience to residents.

South Staffordshire Council and Staffordshire County Council have teamed up to launch a Clear Streets operation which transfers the powers to tackle parking on yellow lines from the police to the Clear Streets partnership. A new highly trained team of Parking Officers will be out and about, tackling the dangers and frustrations caused by drivers who park on double yellow lines and cause obstructions, putting the safety of elderly, disabled and young pedestrians at risk.

When the new powers come into effect, anyone who parks on double yellow lines, obstructs driveways or blocks disabled parking spaces will receive a Penalty Charge Notice when caught. This means it will be the inconsiderate motorists who will pay the price of keeping the streets clear for everyone else.

If any surplus income is received from the charges, it will be spent by the County Council on improving highways and road safety in South Staffordshire, so that the local community benefits even further.

### New powers

Inconsiderate parking can block pavements for disabled people and parents with buggies. Yellow lines are there for a purpose and parking on them can be dangerous, often blocking the way for fire fighters, ambulances and the police. It can also affect local businesses, disrupting deliveries, putting off customers and stopping services such as waste collection.

In short, the new powers given to South Staffordshire Council will help keep South Staffordshire's traffic moving. Don't forget, blocked streets also lead to more congestion, with stationary traffic pumping out tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. Clear streets mean clearer air.

More news on the new Clear Streets campaign will be available shortly from the Council's website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

## Help us make your community even safer ...

### Bogus officials

Protect against would-be burglars that try to trick their way into homes to steal property or money. Targeting the vulnerable or elderly, they pretend to need to check water, gas or electricity, or offer to carry-out gardening or maintenance work.



If you're not expecting a caller and they don't have an appointment - don't let them in.

Use the door chain before opening the front door.

Always ask to see identification and double-check this by calling the company they are representing, before letting anyone into your home.

If in any doubt - call 999 immediately.

### Protect your property

You can help keep your home and property safe and secure by taking a few simple crime prevention measures.

Keep valuables, including car keys, away from windows and doors, and make sure your home is securely locked.

Consider installing a burglar alarm or outside security lighting - your local Crime Reduction officer can advise and guide you. Also, why not become involved in your local Neighbourhood Watch scheme - full details are available from your local Crime Reduction officer or through your nearest police station.

Remove all valuables, including mobile phones and Sat. Nav. systems/cradles from your car and lock all windows and doors.

Never leave a vehicle unattended with the keys in the ignition, even when buying a newspaper or using an ATM machine.

Park in well lit, busy areas and when at home, always use your garage.



### Road Safety

As a driver, passenger or pedestrian, make sure you stay safe when out and about.

Particularly during the winter weather, make sure vehicle windows are fully defrosted before starting any journey.

Always wear a seatbelt and ensure children are secured by appropriate seatbelts and child restraints.

Never use a mobile phone whilst driving.

If you're out socialising and thinking of having a drink, let someone else do the driving.

When walking, stay in well lit areas and always use pavements and pedestrian crossings.

### Contacting us

There are many ways to contact your neighbourhood beat officer, whether you have an issue or concern or want to give some local feedback or information.



Email: [watlingnpt@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:watlingnpt@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk) or [wombourment@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:wombourment@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk)  
Website: [www.staffordshire.police.uk](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk)



**In an emergency dial 999**

### Anti-social behaviour

Engaging with young people is just one of the ways officers from Chase division are meeting community needs.

Working in partnership, we are committed to responding to active incidents of anti-social behaviour within an hour and your neighbourhood team is working hard to meet your local concerns.



**Staffordshire is safe and we want people to feel safe**



South Staffordshire Council



Staffordshire County Council



# PAYMENTS & BENEFITS

## Banking on Direct Debits

- a report from the Council's Revenues & Benefits Section on its performance

The Council's Finance chiefs are stepping up efforts to persuade South Staffordshire Council Taxpayers and Business Ratepayers to use the Direct Debit system.

As well as being the most cost effective way of collecting the money and the most convenient for taxpayers, Direct Debits ensure payments arrive on time.

### Council Tax

Although the Council has a good record on collecting Council Tax, it has been unable to improve on its collection rate of 98.3% for the last three years.

This has been despite efforts to support customers in meeting their Council Tax obligations and actively pursuing those who do not pay promptly.

The Revenues & Benefits Section has pledged to continue to work with customers over the next year, assisting those who find it increasingly difficult to pay their Council Tax, and chasing up those who owe money.

### Business Rates

The collection of Business Rates has steadily increased over the past three years to 98.6%. Efforts are being made to improve this even further, by assisting those who find it increasingly difficult to

pay and by encouraging small businesses to claim the rates relief due to them.

However, new legislation from April this year effectively removes the 50% relief from business rates previously enjoyed by vacant commercial properties. As a result, 'empty' rate costs of office or shop premises have doubled, and owners of unoccupied industrial property, who have not been required to

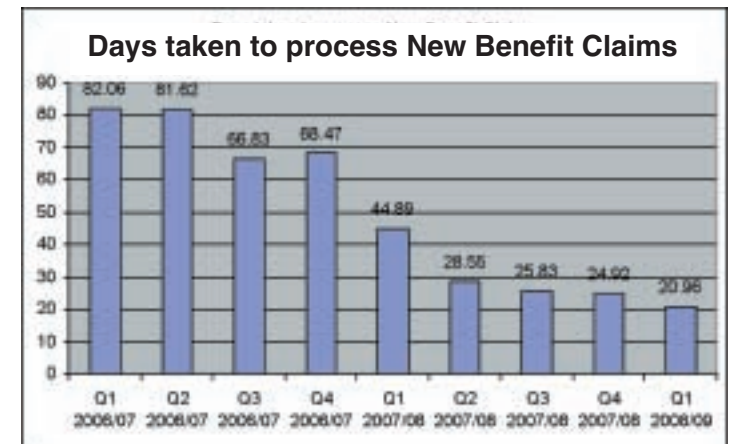
pay any empty rates, now face a significant liability. These new arrangements have impacted on the collection performance during the current year.

Arrangements will continue to be made with ratepayers to pay their bills, but accounts that are not paid promptly will be actively pursued. Direct Debit is the most cost effective method of collecting Business Rate payments.



### Housing Benefits and Council Tax Benefits

Performance in this sector has dramatically improved over the last two years, both in the speed in which the service processes both claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit, and subsequent changes in circumstances that affect these claims. Our residents can be confident that we are working even harder to process claims quicker and make sure that we are providing a top class service.



### New Claims

As can be seen by the chart above, performance has increased dramatically over the year, from a low point in the first quarter of 2006/07 where an average new claim would have taken 82 days to process, to a current performance for the same quarter this year of just under 21 days.

### Changes in Circumstances

The number of days taken to process a change in circumstances that affects benefit entitlement has also improved over the last two years.

However, the performance fluctuates during the year, due to the volumes of enquiries that are generally received in the early part of the financial year, but which have dramatically reduced in the current year's 1st quarter compared to the same period in the previous two years.

## ONLINE BENEFIT CALCULATOR & APPLICATION FORM

It is now possible to estimate your own Benefit entitlement on-line and then complete an on-line application form.

This service is FREE and entirely confidential. It is designed to give you an indication as to whether you will qualify, without needing to call us or visit the office.

If the calculator indicates that you do qualify, you can then carry on and complete the application on-line.

Visit our website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/benefits](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/benefits)



## Rate relief for small businesses

Owners of small businesses in South Staffordshire could be missing out on a financial boost by failing to claim relief on their rates.

To qualify for rate relief, businesses must meet the following criteria:

- The rateable value of the property must be less than £15,000
- Occupy only one business premises (or one main property, with the other properties having a rateable value less than £2,200).

If your business falls into these categories and you are not already receiving Small Business Rates Relief, contact the Council's Revenues office:

Call: **01902 696664**

Visit our website: [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)

Or visit the Council Offices at:

Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, WV8 1PX.

## Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

Have your circumstances changed?

You must tell the Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit office of your local authority if there has been a change in your circumstances that may make a difference to your existing Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit entitlement.

Some examples of changes that need reporting:

**Changes in Benefit** – you and/or your partner stop receiving Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance, or any other benefit.

**Changes in Income** – if there is a change in your or your partner's wages, Tax Credits, maintenance, pension, or any other income.

**People who live with you** – anyone comes to live with you or moves out, someone who lives with you starts or stops work, a child is born, a child leaves school, or any other change that may affect your entitlement.

**Bank accounts, savings and investments** – you must say if there are any changes in your bank accounts, savings or other investments. However you do not need to tell us about the day-to-day changes to your current account or value of shares on the stock market.

**Private rents** – if your landlord puts your rent up or down, the services included in your rent change, or the part of the property you live in changes.

Other changes include moving, living away from home, becoming a student or finishing a course, going into hospital or prison, or you have a partner of the same sex, whether or not your partnership has been registered in a civil ceremony.

The above does not cover all of the changes we need to know about. If you are not sure whether we need to know about a change let us know anyway. Don't leave it until the next time we ask.

For further information or advice on benefits telephone **01902 696668** or e-mail [benefits@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@sstaffs.gov.uk)



**South Staffordshire Council**

# AT YOUR LEISURE

## Leisure Centres get facelifts

Wombourne Leisure Centre has recently undergone refurbishments. The Fitness Suite and dedicated changing areas have been redecorated whilst major work was carried out on the poolside changing rooms.

Both the male and female changing rooms have been refurbished, increasing toilet facilities and also adding private changing cubicles. A dedicated disabled changing facility has also been added to the outside area.

The Changing Room project was funded wholly by South Staffordshire Council, which has also paid for The Fitness Suite project at Penkridge Leisure Centre.

### Gym Refurbishment

Penkridge Leisure Centre's Fitness Suite has been extended and refurbished, and has had the very latest Pulse Fitness machines installed. The Pulse equipment also includes exercise machines which are IFL accredited for disabled use.

The works to the fitness suite will also include the installation of a disabled lift and changes to the reception area and toilet facilities. These projects will be starting before the end of the year.

## Paralympic honour for Tony



Tony Ward, referee at the swimming events at this year's Paralympic Games in Beijing.

South Staffordshire Council's Leisure Services Manager, Tony Ward, had the honour of refereeing the swimming events at this year's Paralympic Games in Beijing.

It was the highpoint of a swimming career that has seen him win titles in the pool himself and also officiate at world-class events.

Tony specialised in the 100m freestyle and became a British and European record holder in Masters swimming events.

He started officiating at the age of 16, and had previously refereed at three World Cups and the 2006 Disability World Championships in South Africa.

One of only eight international referees worldwide for disability swimming, Tony sits on the National Masters Committee, West Midlands Masters Committee and is the current President of Staffordshire Swimming Association.

### Honoured

Tony, aged 53, said: "I was delighted and honoured to have been invited to referee in Beijing by the International Paralympic Committee. It was a lot of hard work and a lot of pressure during the two weeks of the games, but I brought back some happy memories.

"I really hope that the Olympics and Paralympics will help highlight the excellent work volunteers do up and down the country."

Councillor Robert Marshall, Deputy Leader (Community Services) at South Staffordshire Council added: "We were all delighted and very proud to hear that Tony was going to the Paralympics. I hope local young people will be inspired by what he's doing and see that there should be no limits to what they can achieve."

## Supporting Local Sports People in South Staffordshire

South Staffordshire Council has a variety of sports grants and scholarships available to South Staffordshire Clubs and residents.

- Grant Aid Assistance for sports clubs – grants to assist local sports clubs to develop participation opportunity in sport within South Staffordshire.
- Coach/ Official Education and Development Scholarships – a grant to assist potential and current coaches/ officials working in the District to gain or develop their coaching/ officials qualifications. This scholarship can provide up to 50% of the cost of the course(s) applicants wish to attend!



- Sport Grant Aid for Individuals – a scholarship to support achievement in sport by assisting individuals' costs such as training, equipment and competition.

For more information on sports grants, or to download an application form, please visit [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/sportscouncil](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/sportscouncil) or contact Leisure Services on 01902 696600.



## It's Panda-monium - but it's Fun!



South Staffordshire Council's Leisure Centres are launching a newly-revamped programme of activity parties for youngsters under the banner of 'Panda-monium'.

The parties will be available in the District between all four of the Council's leisure centres which include Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Penkridge and Wombourne. This enables the Council to offer a fantastic varied programme.

Panda-monium parties are suitable for 5-12 year olds and boast an array of activities, including:

- Swimming parties
- Go-Kart parties
- Trampoline parties
- Soft-play parties
- Fitness Frenzy parties
- Baggeridge Heights - Aerial Ropes Adventure parties
- Little Dragon's Kickboxing parties

And much more...

For more information contact:

- Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre: 01922 417790
- Codsall Leisure Centre: 01902 844032
- Penkridge Leisure Centre: 01785 714152
- Wombourne Leisure Centre: 01902 898202



## Prizes for loyal leisure customers

Loyal customers of South Staffordshire's leisure centres have been rewarded with High Street store spending vouchers.

Customers' visits were monitored throughout July and August, as part of a summer mini-motivator competition, to establish the most frequent users of the leisure centres.

The most frequent user was Keith Rogers, a member of Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre, whilst runners up included Laura Conte and Claire Rollason, both from Cheslyn Hay and Wendy Price who is a member of Wombourne Leisure Centre.

They each received gifts of up to £90.00 in High Street vouchers.

**Well done!**  
- and thanks for your custom.

## Open House at our Leisure Centres

South Staffordshire's Leisure Centres are throwing open their doors and inviting the public to come inside, have a look around - and see what great facilities and activities are on offer.

The Open Weekends at Cheslyn Hay, Codsall, Penkridge and Wombourne Leisure Centres will be on Saturday 1st and Sunday 2nd November.

Everybody is invited to come along to the leisure centres, where the customer service advisers will be giving full tours of the facilities, and will be available to offer any help and guidance in deciding what's the best way of getting the most for your money should you wish to start using the facilities, either on a pay as you go basis or as a member.

The leisure centres will also be showcasing various activities, which you can either take part in or just have a look at, some of which may include spinning, rebounding, trampolining, skating and more. In addition the centres are offering FREE Fitness Suite inductions for those who come to the open days, FREE toning trials, FREE Little Sunshines Crèche trials, plus free membership months are on offer as part of a seasonal saver offer.

For more information contact:

- Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre: 01922 417790
- Codsall Leisure Centre: 01902 844032
- Penkridge Leisure Centre: 01785 714152
- Wombourne Leisure Centre: 01902 898202

## Exercise to banish the Winter blues

Don't hibernate this winter - get yourself fit down at one of South Staffordshire's Leisure Centres.

The Council's Leisure Facilities team is encouraging people to improve their health by staying active this winter.

The leisure centres have a variety of activities on offer, which are suitable for beginners right through to fitness fanatics - youngsters, 50-plus, any age, whatever age!

There is plenty to choose from, so everyone should find something to suit. Here's some suggestions:

- Energise Fitness Suites
- Energise Exercise Classes
- Energise Toning Suites
- Swimming (Get Set Swimming Lessons available)
- Badminton,
- 5-a-side football
- Trampoline (Junior and adults)
- Yoga-Kidz
- Fitness Frenzy
- Skating
- ... and lots more.

The Leisure Facilities team has been working hard in developing current exercise programmes, and has been adding new classes to try and encourage people to get active.

The centres are also responding to customer feedback by changing their programmes to try and offer a good choice of days and times, to give people with busy lifestyles the time to get active and be healthy.

Start NOW and you could look and feel amazing by Christmas!

For more information on what's on offer, contact your nearest Energise facility:

- Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre 01922 417790
- Codsall Leisure Centre 01902 844032
- Penkridge Leisure Centre 01785 714152
- Wombourne Leisure Centre 01902 898202

## Summer ends with a Big Bang

Summer 2008 won't be remembered for the good weather, but in South Staffordshire it was jam-packed with activities for children and organisations concerned with young people!

Things kicked off in July with the 3rd Annual Conference to take place in South Staffordshire around children and young people.

With a wide range of agencies attending, delegates at the conference heard about the latest developments with the Young People's Homelessness Protocol, which was launched at the conference, as well as hearing about progress made within the District over the past twelve months.



Detailed discussions were held around the three focus areas highlighted by the Board - participation and engagement of children and young people, access and family development. The discussions held are being directly fed into the Action Plans being developed for the Board.

The conference had a good mixture of interactive and fun sessions, as well as more serious focussed sessions, with positive feedback being received. A copy of the Conference CD is available from Rachel Taylor at South Staffordshire Council.

The summer holidays continued with activities going out into 15 Parishes across the District through the Out & About scheme, thanks to funding from Staffordshire Children's Fund.

The summer finished with a 'bang' at the popular Big Summer Event, held at Baggeridge Country Park. The event was a 'sell out' more than a month before the big day - and one of the key elements was that 99 per cent of those with tickets were residents of South Staffordshire!

To the sound of Samba drumming, breakdancing and the cries of excitement from the High Ropes course resonating round the park, hundreds of youngsters got a day to remember.

### Bigger and Better

This is the third year for the Big Summer Event and it is just getting bigger and better.

It was also 'third time lucky' as the sun came out (the first year saw thunder and lightning). The children went home tired and happy, clutching their now famous goody-bags jam-packed with bits & pieces from different partners, including activity ideas, pens and pencils and more sensible information for parents all promoting healthy, safe and happy lifestyles.



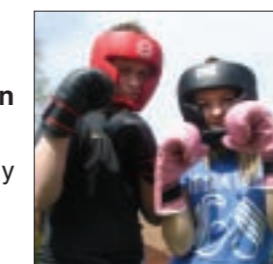
## South Staffordshire now punching its weight

Former world champion Richie Woodhall rang the bell on boxing's comeback to South Staffordshire.

The one-time Super Middleweight World Champion officially launched the new boxing sessions at Codsall Leisure Centre.



New activity packs a punch! Richie Woodhall (right) is pictured with Cllr Sonja Oakley and a budding boxer.



Training and coaching sessions are being run in conjunction with Wolverhampton Amateur Boxing Club.

But a number of other organisations have been working behind the scenes to help get the club up and punching.

Those involved have been Codsall and Bilbrook Parish Councils, South Staffordshire's Community Safety Partnership (with particular support from Codsall and Bilbrook Police), South Staffordshire Council, the County

Council, Codsall High School and Staffordshire Youth Service.

The bell for round one went on Friday, 9th May with Woodhall, now a boxing trainer and commentator for TV, doing the honours.

The Boxing sessions run every Friday evening, costing £3.00 per participant, and are for two age groups: 9-13 yrs at 6pm-7pm and 13 yrs-plus at 7pm-8pm.

Any parents interested in bringing their child to a boxing session should contact Codsall Leisure Centre on 01902 844032 to book a place. To get further information please contact Leisure Services on 01902 696533.



## The way forward for sports clubs

A special event to help local sports clubs make progress was held in South Staffordshire.

It was organised by the Council's Leisure Services and South Staffordshire School Sport Partnership in conjunction with Sport Across Staffordshire & Stoke on Trent.

The Sports Club Development Night, held at the Council Offices in Codsall in September, gave sports clubs a chance to gain information on a number of issues including how to access funding, how to set up effective school-club links and how to access volunteers.

The event was of great benefit for all involved, and helped to identify specific areas in which Leisure Services and the School Sport Partnership can assist sports clubs to develop in the future.

For further information or to register an interest in attending a future Sports Club Development Night, please contact Lee Booth on 01902 696499 or e-mail [l.booth@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:l.booth@sstaffs.gov.uk).

# Annual Report 2008

# South Staffordshire

A Community of Communities

## Progress against our Corporate Aims 2003-2008:

**Aim One:**  
To be a Council which celebrates and improves South Staffordshire's distinctive environment.

**What we achieved:**

**Air Quality**

We completed a further assessment of air quality and set up a working group to tackle poor air quality in the air quality management areas (AQMAs) in the District.

**Local Development Framework**

We continued to work on the development of the Local Development Framework.

**Climate Change**

- We produced a Climate Change Strategy.
- We have given away over 5000 energy saving light bulbs at events across the District saving 130 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- We conducted energy audits of 4 parish council buildings, and ran 3 workshops at the 2007 South Staffordshire Parish Council Summit.
- We completed the Open Space Audit.
- We are currently producing a District Waste Strategy in support of the Countywide strategy.



**Aim Two:**  
To be a healthy and safe District in which to live, work and visit.

**What we achieved:**

- The 'Make a Difference Project' in Perton and Bilbrook involved residents in identifying hot spots for crime related incidents. The

- information has now been used to inform patrol routes for neighbourhood policing teams.
- The Community Carpenter in Action scheme, affectionately known as the "Bobby Van", is now operational and fits security measures to 6-10 properties a week.
  - We started the first Community Pride initiative in Featherstone which supported groups of residents to improve the area. A litter pick day was held, the community centre was made more accessible and alternative activities were developed for children and young people.

**Domestic Violence**

- The South Staffordshire Domestic Violence bus was deployed 15 times in South Staffordshire to raise awareness of domestic abuse, with 2800 packs handed out to potential victims of domestic abuse. We also staged a play within the District called "And he brought me red roses". 6,000 leaflets were distributed through the letterboxes of houses in the District advertising the domestic violence helpline.
- We held 4 multi-agency training days here at South Staffordshire last year to train front line staff such as the police, leisure centre staff, housing staff and staff from the PCT. We also held a Sexual Violence awareness training day to raise the profile of sexual abuse with front line staff.
- Last year we provided advocacy support in the specialist domestic violence court in Cannock and Stafford.

**Other**

- The Fitness Suite at Cheslyn Hay Leisure Centre was refurbished. This included enabling customers to have access to quality changing facilities throughout the day. In addition, disabled access has improved with the installation of a lift down to the suite.
- The rolling programme of minor improvements at the Council's public car parks has been completed, enabling all 12 sites to be put forward for accreditation under the national "Safer Parking" award scheme.
- Further significant advancement on street cleansing performance has been achieved. BVPI 199a (% of sites where levels of litter and detritus fall below a prescribed figure) has been improved still further from 12% in 2007-08 down to 10% in 2007-08, heralding a dramatic improvement over the last 3 years.
- We have entered into a cross-Staffordshire partnership to introduce a "Staffordshire Healthy Eating Award" scheme for local businesses
- The Leisure Services 'Get Set' scheme, in partnership with Environmental Health (Commercial) Services, have run the revised Home and Leisure Quiz aimed at school children.
- We provided a generic support service in partnership with South Staffordshire Housing Association and Carr Gomm, a specialist Housing Support service, to provide housing and support for people with specific needs, including the frail elderly, people suffering from mental illness and people escaping from domestic violence.



**Aim Three:**  
To be a prosperous District with thriving communities.

**What we achieved:**

- We worked with Housing Associations to enable development of a range of affordable housing from bungalows, through to flats and houses.
- We started delivering an outreach housing service from Wombourne Leisure Centre in July 2007. Work is ongoing with other partners to further develop the scheme in other locations.
- Proactive work commenced during 2007/08 to educate our customers with regard to reporting changes in their circumstances promptly, in order to ensure that they are in receipt of the right amount of benefit.
- We will have completed the capital improvements to the industrial estates and Hinksford Mobile Homes Park by September 2008.
- A Housing Market Assessment was undertaken in 2007 so we now have a lot of very good housing needs information which has primarily highlighted the large unmet demand for affordable housing. It also raised the ageing population issue which will present us with significant strategic housing issues in the next 20 years. If you would like more information, then the Housing Market Assessment is available on our website at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

**Aim Four:**  
To be a District which encourages and promotes lifelong learning opportunities.

**What we achieved:**

- The programme of Spring Concerts have continued to be delivered at a variety of venues across the District, and we have now expanded the programme to include Autumn Concerts.
- The Children and Young People's Board is now well established and has a clear focus on Access, Engagement and Family development, supported by a strong action plan for future work.



- The District Youth Council are also acting as a Shadow Board to the Children & Young People's District Board and are fully integrated into the structure. Through this we are continually consulting and engaging with children and young people on a variety of different issues, including a Young People's Housing Protocol and developing a website. Work continues to develop a 'young people's tool kit' in conjunction with the Shadow Board.

**Aim Five:**  
To be a well managed council and community leader.

**What we achieved:**

- Baggeridge Country Park has achieved the Green Flag status demonstrating the quality of the service offered. Each of the four Leisure Centres maintained their Quest accreditation and in cases where full re-assessment was required, they improved on their previous assessment.
- The Council approved a restructuring and the appointment of Membership Officers and Membership Administration staff to operate at each of the Leisure Centres.
- We achieved Charter Mark accreditation for our homelessness advice service.
- We introduced Choice Based Letting in partnership with the Housing Associations.
- Performance across the Revenues and Benefits Service has shown continuous improvement during the year 2007/08, which has been achieved by an improvement in workflow monitoring and control, together with the hard work and commitment of the whole team.
- We continued to increase the number of interactions available on-line, including job applications.
- We introduced a Council wide Print Policy to increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- The Concessionary Travel Scheme was amended to meet new legislative requirements of the national bus pass scheme. The scheme is subject to further review later this year to consider the outcome of the Rural Transport Review.

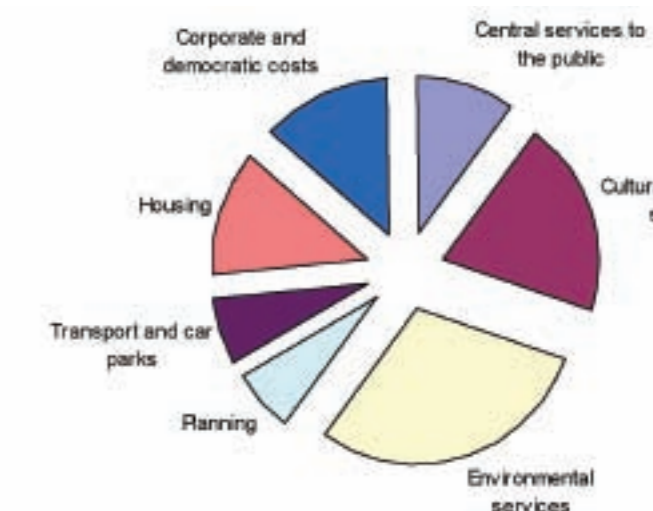
## Day to day spending

### What did we spend the money on?

We show the cost of running our services in our revenue account. This account shows you the net costs in 2007/08 of the Council's main services and the amount left to be financed from local and national tax income.

### What we spent

	Net expenditure £000s 2007/08
Central services to the public - council tax collection and elections	£1,687
Cultural and related services - such as leisure centres and parks	£2,906
Environmental services - such as waste collection and recycling	£4,268
Planning	£1,170
Transport and car parks - including travel tokens	£1,307
Housing	£1,030
Corporate and democratic cost	£1,604
<b>Net cost of services</b>	<b>£13,972</b>
Less: income from cash investments	£1,677
Less: net transfers of money from revenue and capital reserves	£2,432
<b>Cost of local services met by local and national taxes</b>	<b>£9,863</b>



**All this for £87.24\***  
the lowest Council Tax in Staffordshire!

\* South Staffordshire District Council's proportion of the Council Tax bill (based on average Band D property)

If you would like a full copy of South Staffordshire Council's Annual Report, or you have any comments, queries or ideas about it, please contact:

**Fiona Cozens,**  
Senior Policy and Performance Officer  
Tel: **01902 696114**  
or e-mail: [f.cozens@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:f.cozens@sstaffs.gov.uk)



# Cash help for the CAB helpers

**South Staffordshire's Citizens Advice Bureau service has been secured for another four years, thanks to a £294,000 funding package from South Staffordshire Council.**

The service is also being backed financially by the County Council which provides funding for money advice and, through its Closing the Gaps for Communities Fund, the new outlet at Featherstone, and Parish Councils. Further cash support is being provided by the Big Lottery up until the end of this year.

The Leader of South Staffordshire Council, Cllr Brian Edwards, says the CAB provides a valuable service to local residents.

"I am very pleased that we have once again been able to continue to invest in the CAB as we have done since its inception in April, 2000, when the Bureau was set up as a wholly independent bureau dedicated to providing a first class advice service for the people of South Staffordshire," he said.

"The CAB has continued to provide a valuable service which is much appreciated by our residents, and this latest commitment will increase the Council's total investment in the Bureau since April, 2000, to over £600,000 by the end of the new funding arrangement."

In welcoming the Council's continued backing, David Hough, Chairman of South Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau, said: "The Citizens Advice Bureau is delighted that the District Council has felt able to increase its support for



**Cllr Brian Edwards, Leader of the Council and David Hough, CAB Chairman, outside the CAB offices at Wombourne.**

the Bureau over the next four years. This will enable us to continue to provide an excellent and much needed advice service to the residents of South Staffordshire."

The service helps people to resolve their legal, money, and other problems by providing free, confidential and impartial advice and aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their needs effectively.

South Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau is a registered Charity based at Wombourne. The service is currently provided by six full and part time paid staff and twelve volunteers.

The Bureau has, since its inception, gone from strength to strength and now provides its advice services from outlets at Codsall, Cheslyn Hay, Featherstone, Kinver, Penkridge,

Perton, and Wombourne.

Since its inception the Bureau has received over 30,000 client contacts mainly in the areas of debt/money advice, welfare benefits, employment, and housing with debt/money advice representing around 40% of the Bureau's work.

The service relies on people being prepared to give their time as volunteers whether as members of the Management Committee or as volunteer advisors and support staff.

If you are interested in volunteering, and can spare just six hours a week contact Kevin Armstrong or Cathy Barlow on 01902 897757 for an information pack, or write to South Staffordshire CAB, The Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Wombourne, South Staffordshire, WV5 9HA.

## South Staffordshire Dementia Support Service

**South Staffordshire's Dementia Support Service has now been running for just over a year and had its 100th referral in August.**

The service gives help, advice and support not only to sufferers themselves, but also to family and friends and those who care for them, in a completely confidential manner.

This is a typical case study of how the service works (although names have been changed to protect confidentiality).

"Sam" contacted the service after his wife was diagnosed with vascular dementia. Sam had been to a dementia awareness talk, given by Helena Payne, the Dementia Support Worker, earlier this year. He had kept the information leaflet and rang to ask for advice.

As a result of a visit to Sam and "Janet's" home, Helena identified the need to apply for Attendance Allowance for Janet. Sam also asked about the possibility of his wife going to a day care centre once a week, so that he could have a few hours break from his caring role.

On a second home visit, Helena helped Sam complete the Attendance Allowance application. Sam was given some tips on coping with changes in Janet's behaviour and how to enable her to carry on doing the things she could, such as helping Sam to prepare a meal. Janet agreed it would be a good idea to try out a day centre. With Sam and Janet's agreement, Helena made a referral to Social Care and Health so that Janet could be assessed to see if a day centre would meet her needs.

Helena will stay in touch with Sam and Janet to offer further support as and when it is needed.

- **Are you concerned about memory loss or worried about changed behaviour?**
- **Do you need information or advice about dementia?**
- **Have you, or someone you care for, been diagnosed with dementia?**
- **Do you need someone to talk to about coping with the effects of dementia?**
- **Are you troubled at the thought of having to find a care home?**
- **Would you like to talk, in confidence, about your feelings as a carer?**
- **Would your community group like a short dementia awareness talk?**

You can call Helena Payne, Dementia Support Worker, on **01902 851900**

## South Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau Services Opening Hours

Advice can be sought at any of the following outlets: -

<b>Monday</b>	<b>WOMBOURNE</b>	The Civic Centre, Gravel Hill Tel: 01902 897757
	<b>KINVER</b>	Moss Grove Surgery, High Street Tel: 01384 872999
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>FEATHERSTONE</b>	Whitgreave Primary School, The Avenue (Telephone advice not available at Featherstone at the present time - please telephone 01902 897757)
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>CHESLYN HAY</b>	The Village Hall, Pinfold Lane Tel: 01922 413338
	<b>PERTON</b>	The Community Centre, Church Road Tel: 01902 745667
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>PENKRIDGE</b>	The Haling Dene Centre, Cannock Road Tel: 01785 716767
	<b>CODSALL</b>	Codsall Village Hall, Wolverhampton Road Tel: 01902 843412
<b>Friday</b>	<b>WOMBOURNE</b>	The Civic Centre, Gravel Hill, Tel: 01902 897757

## Parish news just a click away...

**Lower Penn is leading the Internet revolution among parishes in South Staffordshire.**

The village's Parish Council is the first to get its own mini-website on the District Council's Parish portal.

The pilot project was set up by the Council's ICT Services team in response to suggestions from residents for improving the online service.

One idea was to provide more information to the public with the aim of improving the communication and participation between parishioners and their Parish Council.

During the summer the ICT Services team, working alongside Councillor Robert Reade (Chairman of Lower Penn Parish Council), designed and implemented a mini-site for the Parish of Lower Penn.

This pilot scheme introduced the following features:

- Latest News & Events for the Parish
- An outline of Community Facilities available in the Parish
- Published Agendas & Minutes from monthly Parish Council Meetings
- An Image Library of past Parish events
- And much more...



The next step will be to provide other Parish Councils in South Staffordshire with the same opportunity for a presence on the web.

You can see the parish portal and the improved Lower Penn mini-site, by visiting [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/parish](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/parish).

If you have any comments on the portal in general or the pilot scheme please let us know by e-mailing [webteam@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:webteam@sstaffs.gov.uk)

For further information contact Leigh Brookes, ICT Services Manager on (01902) 696614 or e-mail [l.brookes@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:l.brookes@sstaffs.gov.uk), alternatively contact Cllr R Reade, Chairman of Lower Penn Parish Council on (01902) 762593 or e-mail [r.ream@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:r.ream@sstaffs.gov.uk).

# PREPARING FOR NEXT YEAR'S BUDGET

A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN FORMULATING THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET FOR 2009/10 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY.

## Overview:

This overview sets the scene for South Staffordshire Council's budget and is circulated to all members of the authority's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Parish Councils and to members of the Local Strategic Partnership.

It is published here in South Staffordshire Review, in shortened form, and on the Council's website [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk) so that anyone 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 2nd December, 2008.

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 over four weeks - until 13th January, 2009 - to respond.

The initial Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered at a joint meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Audit Committee at a meeting on 9th December 2008.

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 13th January and submitted to the Council on the 24th February, 2009.

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](mailto:budgetconsultation@sstaffs.gov.uk)

## District Council Budget

### - important note:

It is important to bear in mind that this document and the budget setting process it refers to are 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 twenty-seven 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.

South Staffordshire District Council, as "billing authority", acts as the tax collector on behalf of all these bodies, sending out a combined bill to the local taxpayers, collecting the payments and passing on the agreed shares to the other bodies mentioned, throughout the financial year.

IT HAS NO CONTROL OVER THE BUDGETS OR LEVELS OF COUNCIL TAX SET BY THEM.

Authority	Budget Requirement £	2008/09 Tax Levied £	% of Total Bill
Staffordshire County Council	38,169,874	985.44	72.89
Staffordshire Police Authority	6,435,820	166.16	12.29
Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire Fire Authority	2,449,326	63.24	4.68
<b>South Staffordshire Council</b>	<b>3,480,637</b>	<b>89.86</b>	<b>6.64</b>
Parish Councils	1,832,446	47.31	3.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>£52,368,103</b>	<b>£1,352.01</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The table (above) 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.)

As the table 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 three district councils set a lower level of council tax than South Staffordshire in 2008/09.

(Source: CIPFA Council Tax Demands and Precepts 2008-09).

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.**

## Aims of the Budget

**In setting its budget, the Council faces many challenges, some beyond its direct control. The Executive of the Council will propose 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 that people need and value.**

## Advance Briefing

The outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 has been widely reported. Central government support for this Council in 2009/10 will be less than one percent more than in 2008/09. This has a high impact, as 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 (£6.202m in 2008/09) and revenue support grant (£0.864m), a total of £7.066m.

It is known that there will be a further rise of less than one percent for 2010/11 and it has been assumed that future rises will also be at one percent. 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 such as health, crime and disorder, transport, education, social benefits, etc.

A Local Strategic Partnership has been formed of representatives of bodies with an interest in public services in South Staffordshire and the input of citizens 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 2012/13 was approved by the Council on the 26th February, 2008. 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 consultation 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 2013/2014 and a budget and council tax requirement for 2009/10.

Some of the factors to be taken into account are inflation, interest rates and pay awards. 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 2nd December.

## Service Challenge 2008

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, on or before:**

**16th November, 2008.**

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

# HERE'S TO GOOD HEALTH



## Don't invite a rat to dinner

South Staffordshire's rat pack is looking for somewhere warm for the winter.

Just like humans, these vermin don't like the cold and, as Autumn descends, they move to sheltered spots with a handy food supply - houses and gardens are ideal!

South Staffordshire Council offers a FREE pest control service to homes in the District, but prevention is always better than cure.

If you like to feed birds throughout the winter, care should be taken not to attract unwanted wildlife.

Here is a quick ten-step guide to keeping rats at bay this winter:

- 1 Keep an eye on the food you put in your garden for feeding the birds. If food takes days to clear, reduce the amount you put out.
- 2 Use a bird table or hanging feeder. Rats are attracted to left-over food, especially if it's lying on the ground.
- 3 Clean and wash your bird table and feeders regularly with a 5% disinfectant cleaner.
- 4 Move your feeding stations around every month.
- 5 Don't overfill your feeders and try to make sure that they're empty at night.
- 6 Keep your garden free from windfall fruit.
- 7 Cut back your trees and hedges. This will help cut down the places where rats like to live.
- 8 Don't throw pieces of bread on to the lawn. Rats love this sort of convenience food.
- 9 Don't put meat, fish, cooked food or whole newspapers in your compost bin. "Scrunched-up" newspaper, however, can be added to compost bins. For advice on composting visit [www.recyclenow.com/home\\_composting](http://www.recyclenow.com/home_composting)
- 10 Never put dog or cat mess in your compost bin.

For more information on the Council's Pest Control service, contact 01902 696204 or e-mail [env.commercial@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:env.commercial@sstaffs.gov.uk)



## Spelling out the message of the F(ood Safety)-Word

Budding Jamie Olivers and Gordon Ramsays from schools across South Staffordshire were served up some kitchen nightmares in a bid by the Council to improve food hygiene in the home.

South Staffordshire's Environmental Health (Commercial) Team doesn't mince

its words when it comes to food poisoning, and created its own Calamity Kitchen to impress on young minds the need for care in preparing meals.

As part of National Food Safety Week, the team went back to school to work with local children and demonstrate the risks of food poisoning when food isn't handled or prepared properly.

The Calamity Kitchen featured just about every known gaffe and bad practice when it comes to handling food, and the youngsters were shown what nightmares they can produce.

The pupils took part in a series of interactive activities, games and quizzes and also had the chance to see, under a special ultra-violet monitor, the germs and bacteria that can be transferred by handling food.

During National Food Safety Week, the team and their Calamity Kitchen went to:

- St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School
- St Benedict Biscop CE Primary School
- Huntington Community Primary School
- Bhylls Acre Primary School and
- Westfield Community Primary School

If you would like any further information on food safety, then please telephone (01902) 696665 or visit the website [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

## Our youngsters have all the answers

The final of South Staffordshire Council's annual Schools Community Safety Quiz produced an entertaining, and ultimately electric, battle of wits and knowledge.

The two teams, St Benedict Biscop of Wombourne and St Christopher's of Codsall, were evenly matched after winning through from the preliminary rounds and the semi finals.

In the final reckoning, it was the youngsters from Wombourne who came out on top, but only by the very narrow margin of 57-55.

The winning team from St Benedict Biscop comprised Hannah Clarke, Jack Tomlinson, Sam Cartwright, Frances Hopson and Gemma Sutton, who were each presented with a gold medal and certificate as well as a £35 gift voucher.

The team also had the highest individual scorer in the finals, Sam Cartwright, who was presented with the 'JSM Individual Trophy' and a further £35 gift voucher.

The runners up from St Christopher's, Rebecca O'Leary, Akmal Rafiq, Amy Hunt, Emma Hayes and Joelle Horton, were each presented with a silver medal and certificate and each received a £25 gift voucher.

Both schools were presented with cheques for £300 for their school. St Benedict Biscop was also awarded the Winner's Trophy and the Council's engraved commemoration plaque.

Along with the quiz final presentations, prizes were also awarded to the winners of the Schools' Community Safety Quiz 'Design a Poster' competition - Rachael Morgan, Elysia Robinson, Scarlett Rose and Eloise Wood of Brewood Middle School - for their outstanding entries in this section.

### Presentations

The trophies and prizes were presented by Cllr Robert Marshall, Deputy Leader (Community Services), together with Jenny Rhodes, Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) Services.

The Community Safety Quiz is now in its 24th year and as well as providing competitive fun for youngsters taking part, it also helps to promote positive messages about social



The winning team from St Benedict Biscop: Gemma Sutton, Hannah Clarke, Frances Hopson, Sam Cartwright and Jack Tomlinson.

behaviour, caring for the environment and healthy lifestyles.

This year, it was sponsored by South Staffordshire Housing Association Limited, JSM Engravers International Limited and Wates Construction Limited.

The Quiz competition has evolved over the years to take account of the school curriculum and to ensure it remains relevant and focused and a continued success.

We have set up a working party of our sponsors and interested parties to look at ways we can improve on what we already do, in order to make this worthwhile league competition even more exciting and relevant to the ever changing world in its 25th anniversary year. We're hoping too that with a changed format, even more schools in South Staffordshire will want to participate in the event than ever before.

## Kick the habit -

with a little help from your friends

timetoQuit

If you REALLY want to stop smoking you can do it - but you will need a bit of help along the way.

Research has proved that the kind of support offered by the NHS, combined with aids for stopping smoking, can be up to four times more effective than will-power alone.

One in two people who use the NHS Stop Smoking Service are not smoking four weeks later.

timetoQuit is a FREE 12 week support programme combined with medications on prescription and a choice of service tailored to suit your needs.

You can sign up in the following settings:-

- with your GP
- at your local Pharmacy
- with one-to-one 'drop ins'
- via the Virtual service
- through your Workplace
- through Pregnancy services.

For more information contact:

timetoQuit

South Staffordshire NHS Stop Smoking Service  
CALL 0800 0434304 OR TEXT 'Quit' to 60777

## Safer Food = Better Business

Food safety standards in South Staffordshire are set to rise as a result of specialist 'coaching' for people working in or making a living from the food business.

Over 250 businesses throughout the District have sent staff to workshops organised through South Staffordshire Council's 'Safer Food Better Business' programme.

The 17-month long project, which finished in April, was funded with a £41,000 Food Standards Agency grant.

A total of 13 workshops were set up where people directly involved in food businesses could receive specialist one-to-one coaching from food safety experts. Feedback from participating businesses was overwhelmingly positive, with over 80% stating that the project and system has significantly improved food safety management in their business.

Comments included:

- 'Very good & helpful and made it very easy to understand'
- 'Training very good on a one to one basis. Procedures explained very well.'

The Council's food safety officers are continuing to evaluate and monitor implementation of the Safer Food Better Business system during all programmed food safety inspections.



Graham Merrington, Environmental Health Officer, presents Emma Simm of Food Food Food with her 5 star certificate.

Completion and implementation of a food safety management system is a key factor in the 'Star Rating' assessments now being undertaken for all food businesses within South Staffordshire.

This rating, together with the inspection report, is available to the public via the 'Rate My Place' website.

One business to benefit from Safer Food Better Business is Food, Food, Food, a delicatessen in High Street,

Owner Emma Simm moved to the premises, previously a women's clothes shop, in Spring this year and carried out a lot of work to convert the premises so it is suitable for selling food.

Emma achieved 5 stars this summer and now joins the select group of businesses in the top grade.

The website can be accessed at [www.ratemyplace.org.uk](http://www.ratemyplace.org.uk) or via the link on the Council's website home page at [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

## Know the way? Then lead on....

Volunteers are needed to lead the Council's programme of organised health walks.

It's a great way to help people take up this outdoor activity.

Some people in South Staffordshire would love to go walking, but are put off by things like

- Fear of walking in parks or countryside areas;
- Lack of knowledge about where to walk;
- No one to walk with;
- Feeling unable to walk very far, perhaps due to a medical condition;
- Lack of confidence.

Become a Volunteer Health Walk Leader and you can help overcome these obstacles. By leading short, friendly and local group health walks, you can remove many of the barriers preventing people from going on walks.

You will provide people with the opportunity to come together for a short walk, where they can become fitter,

healthier and happier, make new friends and discover their local environment.

Leading health walks can really make a difference to your own and your walkers' lives.

As a Volunteer Walk Leader, you would work closely with South Staffordshire Council's Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator and your fellow Volunteer Walk Leaders to:

- Lead or back mark weekly short, safe and friendly health walks for the general public;
- Help promote the Walking the way to Health scheme to local communities;
- Support your fellow Volunteers and any new walk leaders.

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Health Walk Leader, simply contact Richard Upton, the Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator on 01902 696682 or e-mail [r.upton@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:r.upton@sstaffs.gov.uk).



## A step in the right direction

Walking is one of the best and easiest ways of becoming more active and the Council is stepping up its programme.

South Staffordshire Council holds free health walks, in parks and countryside spaces across the District.

The benefits of regular - or even occasional - walking are now proven. It can:

- help weight loss
- ease back pain
- reduce the risks of heart disease
- increase bone strength
- improve muscle tone and joint flexibility
- lead to improved balance and co-ordination helping to prevent falls
- increase your confidence, stamina and energy
- help with anxiety and stress and increase relaxation
- provide a social environment to make new friends.

Walking doesn't require any special clothing or equipment, it doesn't cost anything and it can be done by everyone, anywhere. So what are you waiting for?

There are a variety of walks organised by the Council:

### Wyrley Walk & Talk

Join the Wyrley Walkers for a short Walk & Talk every Wednesday at 10am. Walks are held at a comfortable pace and are ideal for people who are wishing to increase the level of physical activity they do. Just turn up at the Wesley Chapel on the A34 at Great Wyrley and enjoy your walk. Tea and coffees are available after the walk at the Chapel.

### Essington Healthy Walks

Join this friendly group for a brisk walk around Essington every Friday morning at 11am. Walks last around 45 minutes and are suitable for all abilities. The group meets at the Minerva Pub, Wolverhampton Rd, Essington and refreshments are available after the walk at the pub. Just turn up and have a good walk.

### Perton Walk & Talk

This long established, friendly walk leaves from the Library at Perton on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month at 11am. The walk lasts for around 30 - 45 minutes and is a great way to meet new people whilst getting active at the same time.

### Baggeridge Wednesday Wanders

A great way to explore more of this Green Flag Award Winning Country Park. Two walks leave from the Rangers office every Wednesday at 10.30am. So, depending on how energetic you are feeling, the choice is yours. Please note that there is a small charge for parking at the site.

To join any of the walks, simply turn up at the start location fifteen minutes before the walk start time, where the walk leader will ask you to register and fill-in a brief health questionnaire.

If you haven't exercised for a while, or have a medical condition and are unsure about starting something new, please seek advice from your GP prior to starting.

Please make sure that you wear appropriate footwear and dress according to the weather when walking. It may be advisable to bring a drink such as water with you if you think you may need it.

For more information regarding the health walks scheme, please contact Richard Upton, Health and Wellbeing Co-ordinator on 01902 696682 or e-mail [r.upton@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:r.upton@sstaffs.gov.uk)



Baggeridge Ranger, Steve Gallis and Cllr Pat Griffin lead a local walk.

# Tourism 'In Focus'

A new addition to South Staffordshire Review will be 'In Focus', a regular feature on Tourism taking an in-depth look into the District's tourism products.

This first feature will be themed on 'Animals' with particular focus on The Animal Zone at Rodbaston College and Cannock Chase Trekking Centre.

Staying with the theme, Review's word search competition (*opposite*) is on animals. How many can you spot?

## Rodbaston Visitor Centre and Animal Zone



Cllr David Billson with Sophie the Iguana

Located at Rodbaston College, the Visitor Centre and Animal Zone houses a wide variety of exotic, farm and companion animals.

This relatively new attraction welcomes visitors to explore the Animal Zone and get up close to some rather beautiful creatures - some that you may have as pets at home and others quite rare in England!

Animals include, lemurs, iguanas, raccoon

dogs, rabbits, tortoises, exotic birds, wallabies, sheep, goats and pigs to name a few!

The Animal Zone also has educational activities throughout the day, offering 'Animal Encounters' and 'Meet the Keeper'. Here you get the chance to come close to a number of animals and ask the professional any questions you may have.

After your experience with the animals, why not stop off at the tearoom to enjoy a hot or cold drink and choose from a selection of sandwiches, cakes and ice cream? Where possible, the food and drink is locally produced in Staffordshire.

The onsite shop also sells a variety of pet products and a range of educational toys for children, as well as food and gift items for the whole family.

### 2008 Admission Prices into the Animal Zone

Adult	£4.00
Child & Concessions	£3.00
Family	£12.00
Under 3's	FREE
Access to shop and Tea Room	FREE

### Opening Times - Tea Room

Until 2nd November 2008 10am-5pm daily

3rd November 2008

- 7th March 2009 10am-4pm daily

(Closed over Christmas and New Year)

### ANIMAL ZONE - OPEN WEEKENDS & SCHOOL HOLIDAYS ONLY

For further information contact:

Tel: 01785 710560 or visit their website

[www.rodbaston.ac.uk/visitorcentre](http://www.rodbaston.ac.uk/visitorcentre)

## Following in the footsteps of a King

South Staffordshire Council, in partnership with The National Trust and English Heritage, have created a new visitor package called 'Footsteps of a King'.

The package, which was launched at the Group Leisure Show at the NEC in Birmingham, is primarily aimed at the groups market and tells the tale of the Royal fugitive, King Charles II, and his escape from Cromwell's men; how he hid in The Royal Oak Tree at Boscobel House and The Priest Hole at Moseley Old Hall.

Anyone not with a group can also explore this exciting, romantic and daring story of a young king's escape by visiting firstly Boscobel House, then Moseley Old Hall.



King Charles II

## Promoting South Staffordshire's hidden gems to the Group Market!

South Staffordshire Council, in partnership with Cannock Chase, Tamworth and Lichfield, invited group organisers from across the country to come and discover more about Southern Staffordshire and the fantastic attractions we have to offer the group market.

Over 45 group organisers took up the invitation for the weekend of 18th, 19th and 20th October, with accommodation provided by Folio Hotels and The Roman Way Hotel on the A5.

It was organised by Steve Reed Tourism, and the visiting group were given a whistle stop tour of the area, taking in Weston Park, Moseley Old Hall and Halfpenny Green Vineyards.

Businesses not visited on the whistle stop tour got the opportunity to talk with the group at a 'meet the buyer' session on the Monday morning.



## Trekking across Cannock Chase

Cannock Chase is one of England's largest country parks covering 3,500 hectares (almost 14 square miles!) Its mixture of forest and open heathland was designated an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB) in 1958 with the open heath classed as an extensive Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

As well as enjoying the area on foot or by bike, South Staffordshire is proud to have within its boundaries a wonderful attraction that invites you to experience Cannock Chase on horseback!

A visit to Cannock Chase Trekking Centre offers a relaxed, friendly and enjoyable experience, trekking on horseback through some spectacular countryside.

The Centre was established in 1995, and proprietor Lisa Hyde has a lifetime's experience with horses. Having worked with horses since the age of two, Lisa has handpicked and trained all of her animals and specialises in Natural Horsemanship.

To enjoy trekking on Cannock Chase, you don't need any previous horse riding experience - you will be allocated to a horse that meets your ability and age. Novice riders usually book a one-hour trek that will incorporate walking and

## AUTUMN & WINTER EVENTS IN SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE - 2008

### NOVEMBER

- 1st Himley Bonfire and Fireworks - Himley Hall and Park
- 2nd Bonfire Extravaganza - Weston Park
- 7th Classic Vehicle Show - Himley Hall and Park
- 8th Evening Garden Tours - Wightwick Manor
- 25th Beginners Birds - Baggeridge Country Park
- 30th Swags, Wreaths & Pudding Stir - Moseley Old Hall
- 30th Christmas Flower Workshop - Weston Park

### DECEMBER

- 2nd Literary Suppers: Charles Dickens - Wightwick Manor
- 5th Salvation Army Carol Service - Chapel Square, Cheslyn Hay
- 7th Christmas Flower Workshop - Weston Park
- 7th & 14th Country Christmas - Moseley Old Hall
- 13th & 14th Winter Wonderland - Himley Hall and Park
- 21st Carols in the Barn - Moseley Old Hall
- 27th Winter Steaming - Bratch Pumping Station  
Breakfast with Santa - Baggeridge Country Park T-Shop  
Reindeer Trail - Baggeridge Country Park
- Throughout Christmas at Wightwick - Wightwick Manor
- Throughout Father Christmas at Wightwick - Wightwick Manor

For more information about any of the above events, please contact the venues direct.

For more events in South Staffordshire visit the 'WHAT'S ON' page on South Staffordshire Council's website.

[www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)

However big or small the event within South Staffordshire, organisers can add their event to this listing for FREE via the "What's On" page of the website!

## Interesting Facts about South Staffordshire!

Not a lot of people know this (about South Staffordshire):

- 1 The Giffard family came to Chillington in 1178 and live there still!
- 2 In 1575, Chillington Hall entertained Queen Elizabeth for 3 days!
- 3 The village of Codsall stands on a sandstone rock/slab, deposited during the last ice age, that originated from Russia!
- 4 The flower called 'Fritillary' (Snakes head) grows wild in Wheaton Aston and no further north in Britain!
- 5 Patshull Park was originally in Shropshire, but the Earl of Dartmouth moved the boundaries so he could take a seat in the Houses of Parliament!



Treks include: two hour mixed ability, two hour experienced trek; all day trek and evening trek to name a few. Gift Vouchers are also available for anyone seeking a stocking filler for Christmas or a birthday treat!

For further information please telephone 01785 711177 or visit their website [www.cannockchasehorsetrekking.co.uk](http://www.cannockchasehorsetrekking.co.uk).

# Sign up to Save the World

**World Environment Day was celebrated in South Staffordshire with the Council asking residents to pledge their commitment to tackling climate change.**

An open invitation went out for people to visit the Council headquarters in Codsall on the Day (5 June) to sign up to the pledge.

Those who did were able to pick up some top tips on how to 'go green' - starting with some FREE energy saving lightbulbs.

To give people a start on their new green lifestyles, residents were encouraged to enter a free prize draw in exchange for pledging to change at least one unsustainable habit.

This might mean insulating your property, turning down your heating by 1°C or buying re-usable bags instead of taking the plastic carriers given away by supermarkets.

Three prizes were up for grabs: an energy saving kettle won by Mr M Reynolds, a solar charger won by Mrs D Brotherton and an energy saving Fluffy Lamp won by Mrs J Walters. Congratulations to you all!

If you missed out this time and would still like to get hold of some 'green' goodies, the Council is giving away a number of 'Powerdowns' throughout the District. Powerdowns save energy by turning off all electrical equipment associated with your home

computer. So when you turn your computer off, it turns everything else off that's plugged into the same socket. The Powerdowns are available free to anyone in receipt of an income related benefit including:

- Council tax benefit
- Income support
- Attendance Allowance
- Housing benefit
- Income based job seekers allowance
- Disability living allowance
- War disablement pension
- State pension credit
- Disablement pension (inc. attendance allowance)
- Child tax credit (income less than £15,460)
- Working tax credit (income less than £15,460)

Powerdowns are available from Brewood, Wombourne and Kinver libraries whilst stocks last.

More information on what you can do to reduce your energy use is available from: [www.sstaffs.gov.uk/energy/efficiency](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk/energy/efficiency)

or from the Energy Advice Centre on **0800 512 012**.



**Prize draw winners: Mr M J Reynolds (above left) who won an energy saving kettle; Mrs J Walters (above right) who won an energy saving Fluffy Lamp; & Mrs D Brotherton (right) who won a solar charger.**



# V-Festival rocks again!

**Once again South Staffordshire welcomed the V Festival to Weston Park in South Staffordshire this year. The festival took place over the weekend of 16 and 17 August. Unfortunately, for the third year running, the event suffered heavy downpours of rain, however, the event was still a big success.**

It is estimated that 85,000 people came into South Staffordshire to enjoy the event and saw a wide range of musical acts including Muse, Prodigy, Amy Winehouse, Girls Aloud and the Verve.

The Council is responsible for licensing the event and works closely with the event organisers and other agencies such as Staffordshire Police to monitor compliance with the licence and to ensure a safe and enjoyable festival.

Councillor Kath Perry, Chair of the Council's Licensing Committee commented: "I am delighted that, despite the



weather conditions, the event has again proven to be such a success. It is a testament to all those involved that an event of such scale and valued economic contribution to the local and wider community, can take place in such an impressive, organised and professional manner. I would like to thank those who put on the event and all their staff and contractors, the statutory authorities and the local and visiting public who have done so much to deliver an outstanding event and I look forward to next year!"



# PARTNERSHIPS EARN PRIZES

**South Staffordshire scored a double top in this year's prestigious Southern Staffordshire Regeneration Awards 2008.**

The awards went to the District's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the work it has done in its new Locality Project.

The Partnership won top recognition for 'Innovative Engagement', with partners such as South Staffordshire Council, the Police, County Council, and PCT, all working together to help deliver better and more targeted services for communities up and down the District.

Featherstone is just one local village to benefit from the renewed partnership approach thus far. It has seen community-wide clear-up operations and the introduction of a new Village Agent to help bring together and develop local community groups including a youth forum and senior citizen group.

South Staffordshire's Community Safety Team, which is part of the LSP, also won the 'Effective Partnerships' Award for the work they had done at Quinton in Great Wyrley.

The Quinton project had seen the Community Safety Team and all its partners come together to help make the area cleaner, greener and safer.

Councillor Brian Edwards, Leader of South Staffordshire Council said: "The awards for the Quinton project and our lead on the Localities Project represent just a small amount of the work we are doing to help deliver better services to our residents.

"We know that the needs of our residents differ up and down the District, but we are confident that by working closer with our partners and our local communities, we are now in a position to deliver the right services, to the right people, at the right time".

Debbie Griffiths, Chair of the LSP added: "These awards recognise the real differences that we are helping local communities to make."

## THANK YOU FOR ENTERING

The correct answer to the word search in Issue 40 of Review was **HERITAGE**. 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 **animal names** in the grid? They may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal and could be backwards or forwards.

- FALLOW DEER
- HORSES • PONIES
- APPALOOSA • COLOURED COB
- HERDWICK • SHEEP
- GOATS • HIGHLAND COW
- IGUANA • MEERKAT
- MONGOOSE • LEMUR
- GUINEA PIG • RABBIT
- RACCOON • FERRETS
- TORTOISES • CHIPMUNKS

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

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

**10th December, 2008,**  
 will win a  
**£25 Prize**

## WORDSEARCH WINNER:

Congratulations to **K. Simmons** from Perton who won £25 in the Word Search Competition in the Summer 2008 Edition of the South Staffordshire Review.



# SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REVIEW



## Top marks for the Council's Housing Team

**South Staffordshire's Housing Operations team is celebrating after getting another Charter Mark award for its outstanding customer service.**

The Charter Mark award is given to organisations which show that they are improving the way they work and always putting their customers first.

South Staffordshire Housing Operations, first received its official Charter Mark award in 2007 but, after a recent inspection, were told that they could retain its status for the next two years.

The team is responsible for offering housing advice to residents across the District as well as dealing with emergency homelessness.

The most recent progress report carried out by the awarding body, SGS, concluded that the service had improved over the last 12 months, commending the Council's 'Stay Safe' scheme and its involvement in the Youth Service Partnership.

Councillor Robert Marshall, Deputy Leader (Community Services), said: "Retaining our Charter Mark shows that the Council are offering a top class service on housing and debt advice."

"We are always looking at ways to improve the service we offer to our residents and this award shows that we are on the right track."

If you would like more advice on housing, or how to cope with debt homelessness, then you can call 01902 696507, e-mail [homes@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:homes@sstaffs.gov.uk) or visit [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

## Party at the Palace

**The Chairman of South Staffordshire Council, Cllr Alan Hinton, was among the guests honoured by an invitation to this year's Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace.**

He was accompanied by his Consort, Mrs Jackie

Hinton, together with District Councillor, Jim Gosling and his wife, Jill, who also received invitations to the event.

The party had the privilege of being taken to London in the Council's official chauffeured car.

Councillor Hinton said: "I

was very honoured to be invited to the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. My wife and I enjoyed the day in such splendid surroundings. It was a very memorable day, and one of the highlights of our year."

Cllr Jim Gosling said:

"My wife, Jill, and I were delighted to have been invited. I am appreciative of the fact that my contribution as a back-bench member of the District Council over the last 17 years was recognised in this way."



**Pictured going to the Palace are Chairman of the Council, Cllr Alan Hinton and his wife Jackie, and Cllr Jim Gosling with his wife, Jill.**



**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:

<b>Monday</b>	8.45am to 5.00pm
<b>Tuesday</b>	8.45am to 8.00pm
<b>Wednesday</b>	8.45am to 5.00pm
<b>Thursday</b>	8.45am to 5.00pm
<b>Friday</b>	8.45am to 5.00pm
<b>Saturday</b>	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 ڈکری میں سزاوار ہے کہ میں اس کا کاپی کرنا چاہتا ہوں۔  
 اگر آپ اس کا کاپی کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں۔  
 یہ ڈکری میں سزاوار ہے کہ میں اس کا کاپی کرنا چاہتا ہوں۔  
 اگر آپ اس کا کاپی کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں۔  
 یہ ڈکری میں سزاوار ہے کہ میں اس کا کاپی کرنا چاہتا ہوں۔

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

**South Staffordshire Council, Council Offices, Codsall, South Staffordshire. WV8 1PX**  
**Tel: (01902) 696000**  
**E-mail: [thereview@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:thereview@sstaffs.gov.uk)**

## CHRISTMAS CLOSING TIMES

### COUNCIL OFFICES

South Staffordshire Council will close for Christmas at **4pm** (3.45pm for payments) on **Wednesday 24th December, 2008**

The offices will reopen at 8.45am on **Monday 5th January, 2009.**

### LEISURE CENTRES

All Leisure Centres in South Staffordshire will be closed on:  
**25th, 26th, 27th December, 2008 and 1st January, 2009.**

The opening times for each centre, on the other days, are as follows:

**Cheslyn Hay & Wombourne Leisure Centres:**

28th & 29th December	9am-5pm
30th & 31st December	CLOSED

**Codsall & Penkridge Leisure Centres:**

28th & 29th December	CLOSED
30th & 31st December	9am-5pm

*Please note: Times may change and pool bather numbers may be restricted due to staffing.*

## WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

### South Staffordshire Council

Your contribution to recycling makes all the difference and means that we are now recycling nearly 47% our waste! With your continued help we can do even better!

paper	food & drink cans
cardboard	plastic bottles
mixed glass	garden waste

**recycle for South Staffordshire**  
[www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk) tel: 01902 696203

Look out for the leaflet (coming soon) which will tell you everything you need to know about the refuse and recycling collection service for the Christmas & New Year period.