

# REVIEW



Autumn 2005

Issue No. 32

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**Recognition for Partnership work attracts over £140,000 of external funding**

# A sporting chance for our youngsters

**Young people in South Staffordshire are set to reap the benefits of a three year sports and activities coaching scheme secured by the Council.**

More than £140,000 worth of external funding will pour into the project, to provide seven community sports coaches. The long-term goal is to improve the health, strength, skills and self-confidence of local children.

The two full time and five part time coaches will develop programmes covering netball, dance, martial arts, rugby and multi-skills.

South Staffordshire Council has been instrumental in securing the funding. Match funding was made available by the Department of Culture Media and Sport, through Sport England.

The successful bid follows the huge impact of the first appointment of a multi-skills coach last year.

The local sports partnership which includes the Council and the South Staffordshire School Sport Partnership, joined with South Western Staffordshire Primary Care Trust to apply for a second full time position.

Another application was made for a part time netball coach to support the current work delivered through the

Get Set programme.

Having successful applications in each of the three phases of the national funding programme was an achievement in itself.

The projects received regional recognition for excellence and innovative partnership work. That has resulted in further funding for the additional four part time coaches.

*The Council will be increasing the amount of sport and physical activity for young children within South Staffordshire.*

Over the three year period, the coaches will work in 'cluster' areas around each of the District's High schools and their feeder Primary and Middle schools.

The programmes will target 'health hot spot areas' identified in conjunction with the local NHS Primary Care Trust.

The first three schools targeted by the multi-skills coach in the Cheslyn

Hay 'cluster' have been Landywood Primary, Havergal Primary and Whitgreave Primary schools.

One day a week, for a five month period, the multi-skills coach has been able to offer a structured programme to children in reception and years 1 and 2, covering the ages 4 to 7 years.

The second phase of the project is in the Penkridge area, including St

Paul's First school, St Mary's First school, St Michael's First school and Marshbrook Primary school.

So far, over 1,400 young people in South Staffordshire have benefited from the multi-skills programme.

In addition to the main programme, the community sports coaches will be looking to establish local weekly clubs at South Staffordshire leisure centres and will be offering holiday

club activities through the Council's SUSSED schemes.

South Staffordshire Council's Communities Team based in the Leisure and Tourism Service Unit, has many new and exciting projects and initiatives taking place within the local communities of South Staffordshire and include: - Get Creative and Spring Concerts. See page 7 for further information.

## Get Set, Get Fit



Community Sports Coaches working with children at Corbett Primary School

Your Community Safety Partnership bulletin ...

# True Vision for Operation Angel

## Victims of crime in South Staffordshire are being urged to report incidents to the police.

The plea has come from the South Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership, who want to identify "crime hotspots" in the District.

Reporting crime is important so that an accurate profile of the District can be built up, leading to more effective crime reduction strategies.

To help victims of hate crime, a special reporting pack called True Vision has been made available.

If you have been a victim of hate crime such as bullying, harassment, assault, damage to property or graffiti due to your race, religion, sexuality, age, or disability, pick up a True Vision pack from Libraries, Leisure Centres or at South Staffordshire Council offices.

To report any incidents of crime or disorder in the strictest confidence ring Crime Stoppers on **0800 555 111**.

The Partnership is already having a marked impact on South Staffordshire's troublespots: since April 2005 there has been a marked reduction in burglary, with 18% fewer offences than last year, while theft of motor vehicles has also decreased with 2% fewer offences than last year.

On the downside, thefts from motor vehicles has seen a 33% increase on last year, along with robbery and violent crime which have also increased by 7% and 13% respectively which reflects the national trends.

Staffordshire Police are now implementing 'Operation Angel', which is a reminder to residents to protect their property in relation to burglary and vehicle crime.



**Guard against burglary**

- Always secure windows and doors
- Keep valuables and car keys out of sight, away from windows or letterboxes

**Guard against car crime**

- Always secure your vehicle
- Never leave keys in the ignition
- Remove all valuables

**Chase division - working in partnership to create a safer community**



www.staffordshire.police.uk




"Making South Staffordshire a safer place"

The non-emergency telephone number for Staffordshire Police is **08453 30 20 10**.

If you wish to contact the Community Safety Team please ring **01902 696501** or e-mail [communitysafety@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@sstaffs.gov.uk)

Problems relating to road defects/street lights, signs, blocked drains on roads and roadside trees should be reported to CLARENCE on **0800 23 23 23** or e-mail [Clarence@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Clarence@staffordshire.gov.uk).

## Security cameras cut crime in South Staffordshire

South Staffordshire's investment in closed circuit security cameras for our communities is paying dividends in a big way!

In the four years since the cameras were switched on to protect citizens in our villages, the number of crimes in those areas has dropped by almost a third.

The video surveillance system cost £500,000, but the vast majority of law-abiding South Staffordshire residents might consider it money well spent.

The Council made a big investment, with the help of a grant made as part of the Government's national initiative to tackle crime and disorder and make communities feel safer. More than two-thirds of the cost was funded by the grant, with South Staffordshire Council paying for the remainder. Help was also provided by some of the Parish Councils.

The scheme is proving to be a real success. In the 12-month period before the cameras went live, nearly 1000 separate incidents were reported to the Police. The number has now steadily fallen, with just over 700 incidents being reported in the same areas last year. A reduction of some 30%.

The scheme has 30 cameras covering ten of the main villages across the District and the Council is set to "keep the cameras rolling" as part of its commitment to reducing crime and disorder and making South Staffordshire safer.

Working closely with Staffordshire Police from the central control room at Codsall, the camera operators provide round the clock

monitoring and recording. The system also produces evidence for use in court. The operators, who are employed on the Council's behalf by Remploy, not only deal with criminal or anti-social behaviour, but also keep an eye out for various other types of incidents e.g. traffic snarl-ups, missing persons, runaway animals etc.

The system is also fitted with ANPR (automatic number plate reading) equipment that helps the Police to identify and track down suspect or illegal vehicles. A direct link to the Police's radio network means that all incidents, especially emergencies, can be dealt with promptly.

The cameras have delivered an extra bonus to the Police, as the CCTV operators are able to act as an extra pair of eyes to check out and filter some of the reported incidents that could send a patrol car out on a "wild goose chase". Last year's figures alone show that the Police responded 265 times to CCTV-related incidents.

All in all, the Council's CCTV system is proving to be a big hit in helping to make South Staffordshire safer.

For further information contact Steve Poyser on 01902 696503 or e-mail [s.poyser@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:s.poyser@sstaffs.gov.uk)

Or contact the Community Safety Team on 01902 696501 or e-mail [communitysafety@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:communitysafety@sstaffs.gov.uk)



## Enterprise Centre boldly goes all out for business



South Staffordshire Council's new £1.2 million development of high quality industrial units at Four Ashes is now officially open for business!

Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire, Mr James Hawley, cut the ribbon on Four Ashes Enterprise Centre at a special ceremony in June.

The Queen's representative in Staffordshire also unveiled a plaque and afterwards was guest of honour at a reception with invited guests and businesses from the estate.

The Lord-Lieutenant paid tribute to the Council's development: "This type of investment provides an exciting opportunity in a top location to businesses looking for the right setting and profile to start up or expand."

Four Ashes Enterprise Centre, off Latherford Close, Four Ashes, provides 13 units specifically aimed at start-up and small businesses.

Thanking Mr Hawley for performing the official opening, the Chairman of the Council, Cllr Michael Hampson, said: "For many years South Staffordshire Council has invested in this type of project to support businesses, promote entrepreneurship and enhance local employment opportunities. These units will provide top quality accommodation to further encourage these aims."

The £1.2m scheme, which is part-financed by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund, provides nearly 16,000 square feet of industrial space in units ranging from 807 to 1614 square feet.

Details of the development are available from the Council's Commercial Development Officer, Glen Parker on 01902 696117 or e-mail [g.parker@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:g.parker@sstaffs.gov.uk)



SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

## BENEFIT FRAUD HOTLINE

**FREEPHONE 0500-658-008**

**Benefit cheats are breaking the law by claiming money to which they are not entitled. Each pound fraudulently claimed is a pound not available to someone in genuine need.**

**YOU can help us to stop THEM**

**You can call anonymously.**

**All information will be treated in confidence.**

**All cases will be investigated.**

**Remember! Benefit Fraud is a crime**

**- do not tolerate it!**

**FREEPHONE 0500-658-008**

# Click for on-line planning

*South Staffordshire's planning application process has now entered the electronic age with an on-line application facility up and running.*

*By logging onto the Planning Portal's website [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) people seeking planning permission can send their applications directly to the Council.*

*The service went 'live' on August 23rd this year. To use it, applicants must fill in the on-line forms and attach electronic versions of their plans.*

*Some agents are already making use of the service, which saves time and the expense of printing and posting large documents. Payment of planning application fees can also be made over the phone by credit and debit card.*

*For some time internet users accessing the Council's website have been able to view current planning applications being considered by the Council and what decisions have been made.*

*A link to this information is on the website's Home Page and also under the "Planning" link. It provides details of the application, who has made it, who the Ward Councillor is and also a location map showing the site.*

*A future feature, coming soon, will include images of the actual plans so that these can also be viewed and copied on the website.*

*There is a mass of other information about planning generally on the website: how to make an application, what needs*

*permission, how to make an objections and how applications are dealt with. There are direct links to other sites to give you even more help and information. This is all aimed at de-mystifying the planning process, making it easier to understand and to use, as well as making it more efficient.*

## NEW PLANNING SUPPORT TEAM

*The Council has adopted a new approach to Planning by setting up a combined team to "fast track" all of the administration process.*

*It will give Planning Officers more time to deal with applications, leading to quicker decisions, improved service to the public and improved performance.*

*The Team will be the first contact point for telephone enquiries and visitors coming to Solutions, the Council's one-stop service shop.*

*Heading the team will be Esther Cuthill, who has joined the Council following a long career with Marks & Spencer dealing with customer service.*

*The team is now undergoing training from external consultants and internally by Peter McHugh, who has transferred from being an Area Planning Officer to a training and support role for the team to enable them to administer the applications and deal with customer enquiries.*

*For more information contact Bill Meredith, Head of Development and Building Control on (01902) 696419 or e-mail [b.meredith@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:b.meredith@sstaffs.gov.uk)*



## Methodist church makeover complete

**The refurbishment of a South Staffordshire methodist church has given a boost to one of the District's village communities.**

Work on Gospel Ash Methodist Church in Bobbington was recently completed.

The makeover includes the refurbishment and modernisation of the church's facilities. The existing toilets have been modernised, a new kitchen, access and toilets for the disabled provided and the community room refurbished.

South Staffordshire Council gave a grant towards the cost of the disabled toilets and financial support was also provided by the Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust, SITA Environmental Trust and the Church's own funds.

The Church's facilities are available to the local community and anyone interested in using them should contact Mrs Nora Venables on (01902) 332105 or Roy Walton on (01902) 892207.



**Pictured outside the Church are Angela Haymonds from Ibstock Cory Environmental Trust, Mrs Nora Venables and Councillor Mrs Kath Perry, Vice Chairman of South Staffordshire Council.**

## South Staffordshire Citizens Advice Bureau Services

Registered Charity No: 1087382

### Opening Hours

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| <b>Monday</b>    | <b>WOMBOURNE</b><br>9.30am - 12.30pm<br>Tel: (01902) 897757                 | Civic Centre,<br>Gravel Hill,<br>Wombourne        |
| <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>KINVER</b><br>9.30am - 12.30pm<br>Tel: (01384) 872999                    | The Health Centre,<br>High Street,<br>Kinver      |
| <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>CHESLYN HAY</b><br>10.00am - 4.00pm<br>Tel: (01922) 413338               | The Village Hall,<br>Pinfold Lane,<br>Cheslyn Hay |
|                  | <b>PERTON</b><br>9.30am - 12.30pm<br>1.00pm - 4.00pm<br>Tel: (01902) 745667 | The Periton Centre,<br>Church Road,<br>Periton    |
| <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>PENKRIDGE</b><br>9.30am - 12.30pm<br>Tel: (01785) 716767                 | Haling Dene Centre,<br>Cannock Road,<br>Penkridge |
| <b>Friday</b>    | <b>WOMBOURNE</b><br>9.30am - 12.30pm<br>Tel: (01902) 897757                 | Civic Centre,<br>Gravel Hill,<br>Wombourne        |

# AT YOUR LEISURE

## Baggeridge's Magnificent Seven

Baggeridge Country Park has been awarded the prestigious Green Flag for a seventh consecutive year.

The Green Flag is awarded to parks which meet the highest standards and only 17 parks in the whole of the West Midlands region will get the accolade this year.

Baggeridge, with its valuable wildlife habitats, exciting play area, miniature railway, tea shop and wide range of activities and events, is one of the best.

It appeals to people of all ages and abilities. Over 135,000 people visit each year and the numbers are rising year on year.

The award is recognition for all the hard work of the rangers and the commitment of the Council to this beautiful friendly park.



It's been another summer of fun and enjoyment in South Staffordshire with the success of the Council's Community Services' activity programme.

Children from all over the District joined in throughout the summer holidays as Leisure Centres ran some crazy fun activities such as circus skills, colour explosion, cycling proficiency and magician visits!

The established SUSSED Out and About programme was also well supported, with some extremely popular and new activities taking place in Parishes across the District.

These included 'Music Making' where children released their musical talent on parents who were overwhelmed with their enthusiasm.

Some young budding photographers were also discovered: with a little help from a professional photographer they could be on their way to a successful career!



Photograph taken by Ryan Bickley at the skate park in Great Wyrley.



## Student art goes on display

Art work by talented students at a South Staffordshire school will be going on exhibition as part of a new partnership project with the Council.

The artwork, which will be displayed on the walls at the newly refurbished Codsall Leisure Centre, will change as the students prepare new pieces, using different materials, themes and ideas.

Why not call in at the Leisure Centre and admire the students' work - it's really worth a visit!

The address is: Codsall Leisure Centre, Elliotts Lane, Codsall, WV8 1PG

Called Art Fusion, it's an exciting new partnership between South Staffordshire Council and Codsall Community High School. The Council's Community Services and the Art Department at the school have liaised to exhibit work created by students.



## Take a new look at Codsall Leisure Centre

Codsall Leisure Centre is now fully up and running after its extensive refurbishment.

The Centre has had a total revamp with a fantastic new Dance Studio, extended and refurbished Fitness Suite, new reception area and new wet-side changing rooms!



Why not pop down and visit the Centre where a member of staff will be happy to show you around. Or alternatively call on 01902 844032 for details of opening times, facilities and any special events.



## Council's financial support schemes

A wide range of grants and loans are available to community groups, sports organisations and individuals in South Staffordshire, funded by the Council.

### SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE SPORTS COUNCIL - COACH / OFFICIAL EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

South Staffordshire Sports Council aims to assist potential and current coaches/officials working in the District to gain or develop their qualifications.

Scholarships are available for up to 50% of the cost of the course(s) and applications are considered by the Sports Council Executive Committee every 6 weeks throughout the year.

### SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE SPORTS COUNCIL - SPORTS GRANTS FOR INDIVIDUALS

South Staffordshire Sports Council supports achievement in sport by assisting individuals with costs covering training, equipment and competition.

### SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE SPORTS COUNCIL - GRANT AID FOR CLUBS

The aim of the Sports Council grant aid scheme is to assist local clubs to develop participation opportunities in sport within South Staffordshire. The Sports Council uses the following criteria to help assess applications:-

- Clubs located within South Staffordshire must have a minimum of 60% of members living in South Staffordshire.
- Clubs from outside the District must have at least 75% of members who reside in South Staffordshire.
- The club should be a voluntary organisation.
- The sport must be recognised by Sport England and any equipment provided shall be for the betterment of the club.

### ARTS GRANTS FOR GROUPS

Organisations from South Staffordshire can apply for money towards a diverse range of arts activities, including all performing and visual arts. This could be dance, theatre, music, photography, writing, textiles or glass painting. The maximum you can apply for is £500. The application must be for an arts led activity and must take place within the District and primarily for the benefit of the residents of South Staffordshire.

### ARTS GRANTS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Arts grants are for establishing or developing an activity or project that benefits the community or for expenses incurred during training for the purpose of improving your arts practice.

Any permanent resident of South Staffordshire can apply for a grant, however, the art form must be recognised by Arts Council England.

For further information on all South Staffordshire Council Community Grants contact Leisure and Tourism on (01902) 696531, by e-mail [leisure@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@sstaffs.gov.uk), or visit [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

### CAPITAL GRANTS AND LOANS SCHEME

Parish councils, community organisations and private clubs can apply for grants up to £20,000 or interest-free loans up to £20,000 under the Capital Grants and Loans Scheme.

The South Staffordshire Council operated scheme exists to support local communities in the provision and improvement of community facilities. Capital grants and loans may be granted to those wishing to build new facilities, extend or improve existing facilities, purchase land for community use or buy buildings for conversion into community use.

For further information on all South Staffordshire Council Capital Grants and Loans Scheme telephone (01902) 696110, e-mail [j.goodall@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:j.goodall@sstaffs.gov.uk), or visit [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)

## The mark of a quality sports club

Three South Staffordshire-based clubs have recently received a quality-mark award from their sport's governing bodies.

Brewood and Swindon Cricket clubs have been awarded the 'Clubmark' award and Willenhall Rugby Club has recently received a 'Seal of Approval' because they are considered to be child-friendly, as well as being safe effective clubs for local communities to participate in sport and physical activity.

In order to gain this national accreditation, clubs have to show that they have policies for child protection and they have qualified coaches as well as a future development plan.

The national accreditation schemes are being used by sport's governing bodies to examine, maintain and improve the provision of youth sport.

Brewood and Swindon Cricket clubs are the first two clubs in the District to gain the 'Clubmark' from the English Cricket Board. Both cricket clubs have gained support through their accreditation application process from the local cricket development group, consisting of representatives from clubs from across the District who meet monthly to discuss cricketing issues and develop future improvements in South Staffordshire.

For further information please contact Community Services on 01902 696519 or e-mail [leisure@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@sstaffs.gov.uk)

## Doctor's orders for exercise

South Staffordshire's Exercise on Prescription referral scheme has a new look.

With backing from the Council, local GPs are handing out prescriptions for a 12 week program of exercise for those patients who need it.

Exercise may benefit people who have high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma and those whose GP feels they need to lose a little weight.

With current figures showing that 80% of South West Staffordshire PCT residents are not taking the recommended levels of exercise, the scheme is obviously needed.

The programme of exercise is written by a highly qualified exercise professional who will guide the recipient through the 12 weeks, giving advice where needed.

The GP referral is not the only health-related exercise being supported by the Council, it is also funding, in partnership with South Western Staffordshire Primary Care trust, the training of two exercise professionals to set up and deliver a Phase IV Cardiac Rehabilitation Scheme.

This training will equip the instructors with the appropriate knowledge and skills to prescribe and deliver safe and effective exercise for individuals with coronary heart disease (CHD) who have progressed through rehabilitation in hospital after a cardiac event.

For more information on Exercise Referral or Phase IV Cardiac Rehabilitation please contact Marc Neeld on 01902 696802 or e-mail [m.neeld@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:m.neeld@sstaffs.gov.uk)



## Bag Pool's hidden depths

A much-loved water showpiece in South Staffordshire is set to return to its former glory as a wildlife habitat.

Dredging work has been going on throughout the summer at Bag Pool, in Baggeridge Country Park, which was slowly being suffocated by silt.

The pool has always been a popular attraction for families and school groups as an ideal spot for pond dipping.

Over the years, thousands of excited children have been at the waterside, scooping sticklebacks and water boatmen into jars, learning to appreciate wildlife.

Since the pond was recreated 25 years ago it has been slowly silting up to the point where, this year, the water was only about a foot deep.

With the help of Baggeridge Brick plc, the pond has been dredged to its original depth and a new island created in the middle.

With the lovely dry weather in September the pond took a while to refill but the work is now complete. It has the winter period to settle down and allow the wildlife to return.

By spring next year everything should be ready for all those children and their nets!



Digger at work in Bag Pool

Dredging day

# BUDGET FORECAST

A SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE FACTORS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN FORMULATING THE BUDGET FOR 2006/07 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY.

This financial overview is being published so that everyone with an interest in the Council's budget may put forward their views and comments for consideration as part of the budgetary process BEFORE decisions are made.

It sets the scene for the Council's budget and is circulated to all members of the Council's Scrutiny Committee, Parish Councils and to members of the Economic Vibrancy Group of the Local Strategic Partnership. A shortened form appears here and on the website [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk).

The Executive's Medium Term Financial Strategy, incorporating its initial budget proposals, will be approved for consultation by the Executive at its meeting on 6th December, 2005. This will include a balanced budget, taking account of all relevant matters, including the consideration of any representations received in time. Consultees and the Scrutiny Committee will have four weeks - until 10th January 2006 - to respond.

The initial Medium Term Financial Strategy will be considered by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 15th December, 2005.

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 10th January and submitted to the Council on the 7th March, 2006.

There is no set format for comments.

Comments may be made in writing to

**Budget Consultation,  
SSC  
FREEPOST MID21881  
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

It is important to bear in mind that this document and the budget setting process that it refers to is concerned solely with the budget and council tax for South Staffordshire District Council. The 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 when their budgets are set. The District Council, as "billing authority", acts as the council tax collector on behalf of all these bodies, sending out a combined bill to the local taxpayers, collecting the payments and passing on the various shares at agreed stages throughout the financial year, but it has no control over the budgets or levels of council tax set by them.

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

| Authority  | Budget Requirement<br>£ | 2005/06<br>Tax Levied<br>£ | % of<br>Total Bill |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Staffordshire County Council                     | 32,986,692              | 860.27                     | 72.61              |
| Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire<br>Fire Authority | 2,097,460               | 54.70                      | 4.62               |
| Staffordshire Police Authority                   | 5,570,755               | 145.28                     | 12.26              |
| <b>South Staffordshire Council</b>               | <b>3,153,470</b>        | <b>82.24</b>               | <b>6.94</b>        |
| Parish Councils                                  | 1,619,708               | 42.24                      | 3.57               |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>£45,428,085</b>      | <b>£1,184.73</b>           | <b>100.00</b>      |

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

Putting this in a nationwide context, only four district councils set a lower level of council tax than South Staffordshire in 2005/06 and of those four, three had a higher percentage of their requirements funded directly by central government. (*Source: CIPFA Council Tax Demands and Precepts 2005-06*).

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.

## Budget Aims

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

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

## Setting the Scene

Government has imposed many new duties and changes on local authorities without always

providing a compensating increase in funding. Significant work has had to be put into these new areas by the Council, for example the regime of Best Value Reviews and requirements to collect data for statutory performance indicators and Comprehensive Performance Assessments.

Some developments have received specific and targeted funding to enable the Council to make initial progress, such as recycling and the advancement of electronic government. Activities such as these will involve continued revenue expenditure by the Council in future years.

## Partnerships

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

deliberations will be sought and welcomed.

## Medium Term Financial Strategy

The current strategy covering the period up to and including 2009/10 was approved by the Council on the 1st March, 2005. It is based on a detailed projection of current service provision costs and known new developments and takes into account the effects of inflation on both pay and prices. This report marks the first step, following the approval of the Budget and Policy Framework and Timetable, in updating the current strategy for factors and developments that have changed since then. The end result will be a new strategy covering the period up until 2010/2011 and a budget and council tax requirement for 2006/07.

There are many factors to be taken into account. These include the level of financial reserves, assumptions on inflation and interest rates and spending requirements identified since the budget was set.

All of these, and any others that emerge over the coming weeks, will be evaluated and taken into account before the next stage of the process which is the publication by the Executive of the new Medium Term Financial Strategy and initial budget proposals at its meeting on 6th December 2005.

## Service Challenge 2005

This member led process took place during September and saw close scrutiny of current and proposed plans across the Authority. Once again the emphasis was focussed on enhanced service provision in pursuit of Council objectives through increased efficiency. 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 not look kindly on council tax increases that were more than 5%. This Council took that message on board with an increase of 4.00%. Several authorities around the country did not heed the warning with the result that eight councils have been capped. As a result, 360,000 houses will need to be rebilled at a cost of over £500,000.

Although capping rules are not announced until deep into the budget setting process it would be prudent to keep any proposed increase below the 5% level.

## Central Government Funding

Almost 64% of the Council's funding comes from central government in the form of this Council's share of the national business rate pool (£3.047m in 2005/06) and revenue support grant (£2.643m). The latest advice received on these amounts is that the funding formula currently being used to calculate grants will remain the same for next 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 services, 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 the **24th November 2005**.

Thank you in advance  
for your time.

# Coming to a Community near You

## Spring Concerts 2006

Each year, South Staffordshire Council organises a series of Spring Concerts in village halls and residential accommodation throughout the District.

The concerts allow local people, who are normally unable to travel to larger towns, to hear professional music live in their own village.

Last year, 17 concerts were held across the District, with over 850 people benefiting from the performances.

The musicians booked to appear vary greatly in style and performance, but the concerts have a few things in common - they are all light-hearted, great fun, and are performed to a very high standard.



'Newfolks' at Codsall Village Hall with Cllr Robert Marshall

The concerts are available free of charge to groups throughout the District, with the only commitment being to provide a venue and refreshments for the audience.

Ticket prices are entirely up to the group and range from being completely free, to charging £1 entrance. The 'host' group is allowed to keep the

ticket money, as a contribution towards the refreshments provided.

If your group would be interested in hosting a concert, please contact the Arts Development Officer on 01902 696534 for more information.



A number of new and exciting dance and music projects have been launched in South Staffordshire communities by the Council's Community Services Team.

Among them is an arts project called Get Creative, a new development to the established Get Set scheme which is already operating in 25 schools in the District.

Get Creative will focus on arts activities, primarily for students studying at Key Stage 2.

The first year will focus on Contemporary Dance, with taster sessions in schools as well as Saturday Clubs, where children can explore their new skills.

Contemporary Dance is theatrically

based, telling a story through dance. Participants are encouraged to choreograph their own piece, learning about structure and form as well as styles and 'moves'. So far, participants have explored themes of friendship.

The project is being linked to the Healthy Promoting Schools scheme delivering key targets of the curriculum.



# Leisure Linx

## Linking you to a healthier Lifestyle

A great new discount card has just been launched by South Staffordshire Council called Leisure Linx. This could open the door to a healthier lifestyle for residents in the District. The card scheme offers excellent savings of up to 50% to concessionary groups on individual leisure activities.

### To qualify for a Leisure Linx card, you must be:

- Unemployed in receipt of working tax credit, income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit.
- Or:
- A registered job seeker and in receipt of job seekers allowance.
- Or:
- In receipt of incapacity benefit.
- You must also live in South Staffordshire.



Leisure Linx is offered at Codsall, Cheslyn Hay, Penkridge and Wombourne Leisure Centres.

For more information please contact the Programming and Promotions Officer on 01902 696525 or e-mail [a.oleary@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:a.oleary@sstaffs.gov.uk)

# Display of safe car park awards just the ticket for the Council!

A trio of Council-run car parks in South Staffordshire will be proudly displaying the prestigious "Park Mark" safety award this year.

The car parks - two in Kinver and one in Codsall - have been recognised in the National Safer Car Parks Scheme, run by the British Parking Association in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers.

The scheme is aimed at reducing the fear of crime and the opportunity for criminal activity. Only car parks which meet clearly defined security standards are entitled to the Park Mark.

Two of South Staffordshire's award-winning car parks are at High Street, Kinver and the third is at Station Road, Codsall.

However, the Council is not content with this achievement: its goal is to get similar awards for the rest of its village centre car parks over the next five years.

Cllr Mrs Joan Williams, Deputy

Leader (Environmental Services) said: "I am delighted that the Council has received these awards which recognise that we mean business in tackling community safety issues and

making our residents feel safer."

For further information, contact Steve Poyser, Head of Engineering Services, on 01902 696503 or e-mail [s.poyser@sstaffs.gov.uk](mailto:s.poyser@sstaffs.gov.uk)



PC Darrell Burns, Staffordshire Police Architectural Liaison Officer, Cllr Mrs Joan Williams and Steve Poyser in the award winning car park at Station Road, Codsall

# WORD SEARCH COMPETITION

Can you find the following words in the grid? They may be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal and could be backwards or forwards.

- MARCUS • TRESCOTHICK • STRAUSS
- MICHAEL • VAUGHAN • IAN BELL
- ANDREW • FLINTOFF • PIETERSEN
- JONES • GILES • HOGGARD • HARMISON
- ASHES • TEST • SERIES • WINNERS
- LORDS • OLD TRAFFORD • EDGBASTON
- TRENT • BRIDGE • OVAL • LANGER • HAYDEN
- PONTING • MARTYN • CLARKE • KATICH
- ADAM • GILCHRIST • WARNE • MCGRATH
- BRETT LEE • GILLESPIE • TAIT

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

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:

Chris Mantle  
Word Search Competition,  
South Staffordshire Council,  
Council Offices, Codsall,  
South Staffordshire. WV8 1PX

The first correct entry picked after the closing date of  
**19th December, 2005,**  
will win a  
**£25 Prize**

# WORDSEARCH WINNER:

Congratulations to  
**Mrs J Ward**  
from Great Wyrley  
who won £25 in the  
Word Search  
Competition  
in the Summer 2005  
Edition of the  
South Staffordshire  
Review.



# SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE REVIEW



## A right Royal treat at the Palace

A visit to Buckingham Palace was the highlight of the year for South Staffordshire Council Chairman, Cllr Michael Hampson.

Cllr Hampson and the Council's Principal Development Plans Officer, Paul Collings, were privileged to receive invitations to the Royal Garden Party this summer.

Escorting their respective wives, Sheila Hampson and Janet Collings, they travelled to Buckingham Palace by chauffeured car.

Cllr. Michael Hampson said: "It was a great honour and privilege to be invited to a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and my wife and I enjoyed our day in such magnificent surroundings. This was the main highlight of our year and we have wonderful memories which we will recount for many years to come."

Mr Collings said: "My wife and I were honoured to have been invited to Buckingham Palace."



Off to the Royal Garden Party are Chairman of the Council, Cllr Michael Hampson and his wife Sheila, with Paul Collings and his wife Janet.

## Chairman's Challenge

My charity this year is the **ACORNS CHILDREN'S HOSPICE**; therefore I would like to appeal to you to take up my challenge.

There are approximately 40,000 Domestic Properties in South Staffordshire and it would be appreciated if every household could donate £1.00. This would help these children and their families to enjoy that something extra special. Unlike ourselves, these children will not see adult life, as their life expectancy is just 18 years of age.

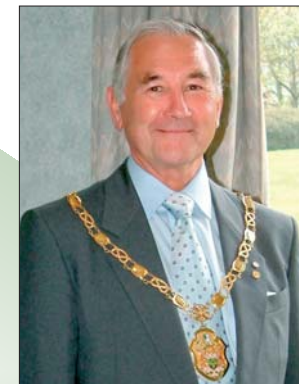
If you would like to take part in this worthwhile cause then please send your donations to Ms Elaine Swadling, Chairman's Secretary, or drop your coins into the box that will be placed by the Cash Desk in the Main Reception, at South Staffordshire Council Offices.

If you would prefer to offer a donation by cheque, then please make it out to:-

**"South Staffordshire Council (Chairman's Charity)"**

Thank you for reading this plea and I hope that you will help to make these children's short lives and their parents time more bearable.

*Councillor M. R. Hampson*  
Chairman of Council



## Green Arc shapes Toll Road future

A "Green Arc" is being drawn around the M6 Toll Road to protect and enhance the local landscape.

A partnership of organisations, including South Staffordshire Council, has joined together to ensure the recently-opened motorway does not wreck the Green Belt buffer that protects much of the District.

The project, funded by local authorities, Government agencies and the owners of the Toll Road, will also promote the areas adjacent to the road and support local landowners and businesses.

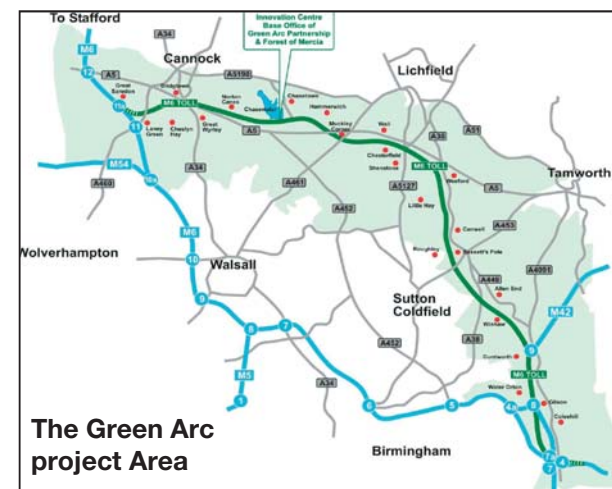
The Green Arc project covers an area defined by the route of the new road and is so-called because of the way the motorway curves in a crescent around the north and east of the West Midlands conurbation.

This sensitive Green Belt area has now become an important boundary between the urban parts of the West Midlands and the rural counties of Staffordshire and Warwickshire.

- The aims of the Green Arc project are to:
- Ensure the urban rural fringe is preserved as a viable and valued place to live, work and travel
  - Promote new opportunities for use and enjoyment of the countryside
  - Encourage interest in the landscape, bio-diversity and heritage
  - Support landowners and businesses in developing renewable and sustainable economic activity

The Green Arc Team has come up with a number of ideas that will enhance the environment and seek to influence future decisions affecting the quality of our countryside.

To find out more about Green Arc, or to



The Green Arc project Area

discuss any ideas that meet the project's objectives, please contact Jane Rochelle or Pat Colgan on 01543 379041, email them at [greenarc@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:greenarc@staffordshire.gov.uk) or write to them at Green Arc Partnership, Innovation Centre, Chasewater Country Park, Pool Road, Brownhills, Staffordshire WS8 7NL

Funding for the Green Arc project is being provided by South Staffordshire Council; Staffordshire County Council; Birmingham City Council; North Warwickshire Borough Council; Warwickshire County Council; Lichfield District Council; Cannock Chase District Council; The Countryside Agency; The Forestry Commission and Midland Expressway Ltd.

## For Further Information:

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

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

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم رابطہ کریں

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਇੱਕ ਨਕਲ ਅਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

अगर आप इस दस्तावेज की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं तो कृपया सम्पर्क करें

જੇ તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં ખેંચતી હોય તો કૃપા કરીને સંપર્ક કરો

যদি আপনি এই দলিলের আপনার ভাষায় প্রতিলিপি চান অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন

假如閣下希望索取中文版的本文件，請聯絡

**SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CONTACTS:**

**Tel: (01902) 696000**  
**Fax: (01902) 696800**  
**Website: [www.sstaffs.gov.uk](http://www.sstaffs.gov.uk)**

**OPENING TIMES**

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