

**DEVOLUTION  
UPDATE**

PAGE 5

St Helens Council's  
community magazine

# St.Helens first

Spring  
2016

**BUDGET  
SPECIAL**

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**JOBS  
BONANZA**

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# T U G H C H O I C E S

**HOW WE'RE BALANCING THE BOOKS** SEE PAGE 7

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for more details

# Recycling Rewards

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St. Helens  
Council

watch  
your  
waste!



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St. Helens  
Council

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## TALKING PAGES

St. Helens First is now available in talking book form for visually impaired people.

**For details contact the Press and Public Relations office on T: 01744 676164/5/6**

## Hate Crime

Any form of hate crime should not be tolerated. If you or someone you know is being victimised or targeted because of age, disability, gender, sexuality, race or religion this can be reported confidentially to the following numbers:

- St. Helens Council  
**01744 676789**
- Crimestoppers  
**0800 555 111**
- Merseyside Police  
**0151 709 6010**
- Emergencies only:  
**999**

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## CONTACT

### St Helens Council

Whether it's finding out how to recycle your household waste, check what's on, pay your Council Tax or to request a specific service, the way you contact the council is up to you!

## Contact Centre

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contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk  
**Online:** www.sthelens.gov.uk  
Please contact us to request translation of council information into Braille, audio tape or a foreign language.

## Libraries

Council tax payments can be made using chip and pin cards at any library in St Helens.



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE | Gold



## St Helens Council Leader's column



**Let me start by wishing everyone a slightly belated Happy New Year!**

**Looking forward, I think 'bittersweet' probably best sums up how we, as a council, might describe the year ahead.**

As you'll see in this issue of St Helens First, we'll be taking a hit of nearly £8.9 million in Government grant reductions in 2016-17, which means we have no option but to raise Council Tax by 3.99 per cent.

Over the next few months we'll be looking at how we can protect those services most valued by the people of St Helens - and maintain our statutory duties to the most vulnerable.

But we're optimistic too. As you'll see on the following pages, we're entering an exciting new era as part of the Liverpool City Region and I'm delighted that I'll be able to play a key role in its development as its Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning for Growth.

We'll also start to see things happening on the economic development front with a range of projects that will bring more jobs for people here in St Helens.

We want to make sure it's a healthy New Year too - so why not turn over a new leaf and get involved in some of the great activities outlined on the centre pages.



**Online Info...** Ollie the Octopus helped celebrate the launch of the new technology at Parr Swimming & Fitness Centre with Go Active staff Jade Booth, Dawn Hastings and young swimmers.

## Swim students 'tech' the plunge

Up to date information on how their child's swimming lessons are going is now only a keystroke away for parents and carers - thanks to the launch of 'On Course' at pools run by St Helens Council.

Every youngster enrolled with the 'Swimskool' programme - which provides swimming lessons for over 2000 children a week in the borough - will be given the opportunity to use the new technology.

Following a simple online registration process parents and carers will be able to see how their children are progressing against the Amateur Swimming Association National Standards used on all courses. Swim instructors use an iPod poolside to

record each standard completed and progress against each award. To celebrate the launch of the new technology, every 'Swimskool' customer will be able to collect a special free goody bag containing online joining instructions, a discount voucher for swimming equipment and enter a colouring competition for some great prizes.

St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jeanie Bell said: "This is a very exciting use of new technology - and a great way for parents and carers to follow the progress of their children during swimming lessons."

For more information contact Jade Booth at Selwyn Jones Sports Centre on **01744 677230**.

# Stars shine at switch on



Thousands braved wet weather to help celebrate the countdown to Christmas at our big lights switch on event in Victoria Square.

Hometown girl and X Factor star, Kiera Weathers performed a medley of songs before former Girls Aloud star Nadine Coyle took to the stage with the St Teresa's Primary School Choir to close the show.

This year's event also saw X Factor Finalists Alien Uncovered, Britain's Got Talent finalists Entity Allstars - along with singer-songwriter Calum Scott - and appearances from Emmerdale star and Inside Soap best actor winner, Michael Parr (Ross Barton); St Helens Rugby League star Alex Walmsley and the Tyrers Department Store Father Christmas.

## Don't suffer in silence!



Service users at Addaction, Lincoln House, have spoken of the overwhelming sense of fellowship and understanding they have received from staff and other service users while seeking support to address their drinking and drug misuse.

One service user said: "If only people could see how friendly people here are and how people help each other to learn and grow, they would not be frightened to ask for help in getting their life back on track."

Many people have overcome their challenges and now have a

better quality of life. Some even volunteer at Lincoln House (see 'Volunteers Matter' on page 15), working with the council to shape services for the future. It is over three years since the council made considerable investment in modernising services and the Recovery Centre at Lincoln House can offer effective support to people with mild to severe problems with interventions that range from medication to problem solving, to singing!

Think you could benefit from some support? Make it a New Year's resolution to contact Addaction

on **01744 61055**. It's free and confidential and if you are finding those first steps difficult, they even have people who can accompany you to your appointment! If you have a view on how we can make local services even better and how we can encourage St Helens people to access support please take part in our local survey which can be accessed via reception at any local library or online at <http://applications.sthelens.gov.uk/ConsultationSuite/> until 31 January 2016.

## Keep up to date with YAZ on Facebook!

St Helens Council's Youth Action Zone (YAZ) is now on Facebook! Those who like the page can find out what's going on in the borough and how they can get involved with the Youth Service - which provides local activities and projects for 5 to 18 year-olds through weekly sessions and enhanced services over the school holidays.

There's also plenty of advice and information from the TAZ (Teen Advice Zone) Outreach Team and the council's Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team.

Helpful links signpost visitors to advice and support on issues affecting children and young people in the borough - such as internet safety, challenging stereotypes, drug and alcohol

misuse, and staying safe when out and about. In response to a suggestion by young people during a previous Democracy Debate the page also posts regular motivational quotes. The new page gives children, young people, and parents the opportunity to easily access information about what's going on in the borough as well

as showcasing the fantastic contributions made by children and young people.



Follow YAZ on Facebook by visiting: <https://www.facebook.com/yazsthelens/>

You can also visit their website at: <http://yaz.sthelens.gov.uk/>





SIGNED AND SEALED...City Region council Leaders approve the historic deal. (picture courtesy of Liverpool Echo)

# It's a deal!



Council Leader Barrie Grunewald

St Helens Council approved the Liverpool City Region Devolution agreement at the end of last year. But even though the deal brings six Merseyside councils closer together on key issues like planning, transport and economic development, it's still business as usual as far as St Helens residents are concerned. In this issue of St Helens First, Council Leader Barrie Grunewald spells out why closer ties with our neighbours are essential.

***“Quite simply it was the best possible deal we could have secured for the people of St Helens”***

## **Why did we sign?**

Quite simply it was the best possible deal we could have secured for the people of St Helens. It's a deal that will give people here in St Helens – and the rest of the city region – greater control and more decision-making powers on big issues like economic development, transport and skills. It will also give this borough a share of £30 million a year, every year, for the next 30 years. I've often said that our borough's best days lie ahead – and I believe we can be at the heart of the next industrial revolution. It's something this administration regards as a priority.

## **Won't it mean a loss of power locally?**

Absolutely not. I know some people fear that devolution is a means for a takeover – but that's simply not true. We are too strong a body to be put under such pressure and I will ensure that that remains the case. We've managed to ensure that

local Leaders will retain their influence over both the combined authority and mayoral plans and that we can reject such if necessary – on a two-thirds majority vote basis. There will also be a veto available on certain issues.

## **Will it make any difference to our residents?**

Only in a good way – and I'm talking jobs. In industries such as logistics and in manufacturing we can once again lead the way as a centre of economic growth. Devolution will give us more control over skills, more controls over transport, and more influence on how Government money is spent locally. Specifically it will be a major boost to the Parkside project (see page 8) and I'm sure that over the next few months we'll start to see things happening as a result of the agreement. Housing too will benefit – with a newfound ability to create a spatial plan – as will the local transport infrastructure

## **Should the public have a voice in this?**

Definitely! Devolution is all about ensuring people in their localities have a greater say on the matters that affect them. The scrutiny function that will form part of the Liverpool City Region agreement will allow members of the public to be involved. Whoever becomes the Mayor must embrace both democratic challenge and public scrutiny.



# Your Council Tax



**Council Tax is set to rise by 3.99 per cent for 2016-17 – subject to consultation with the public and our key stakeholders.**

**Why is it going up? Well, councils across the country are again having to bear the brunt of Government spending cuts. St Helens is no exception.**

Put simply, we're getting less money to provide the services that people depend on. So we have no alternative but to make up the shortfall by raising Council Tax.

Here in St Helens the reduction in Government grant for 2016-17 is £9 million. It takes the total lost since 2010-11 to £74 million.

We're also facing other financial pressures. The

removal of opted-out status for pensions means that our National Insurance costs will rise by 3.4 per cent.

Councils like St Helens, which have social care responsibilities, have been allowed to raise Council Tax more than the two per cent threshold that normally requires a local referendum. The maximum is just below four per cent – with the condition that the extra funds are used for care provision.

**We're doing all we can**

The council has been busy trying to generate more revenue. Last year we beat our targets by getting 632 new homes built in the borough (see page 9). That helped to generate more Council Tax income. We've also seen more tax revenue from a higher level of commercial activity in St Helens.

And of course we've also made major efficiency savings. We've changed the way we deliver services, the way we purchase services and maximised value for money at every opportunity. The council workforce is also significantly smaller than it used to be.

And this situation is unlikely to change. So we've already started work on a major policy review of our spending priorities that will help us to deal with the challenges we'll face beyond 2017.



# THE COST OF CARE

## What reductions have already happened in Children and Young people's Services?



## Demand and Risk are always there

- 24%** Living in poverty
- 26,400** School aged children
- 17,700** Annual contacts with children's social services
- 271** Children with protection plan
- 399** Looked after children

## What reductions have already happened in Adult Social Care and Health?



## And what are the demand pressures on adult social care?

- Significant growth in older people: 2012 - 2025
  - 70-79: 32% INCREASE
  - 80-89: 51% INCREASE
  - 90+: 64% INCREASE
- Approx 2,500 people with a moderate / severe learning disability and approx 1,050 with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Increasing pressure on the NHS
- Growth in people with Dementia
- High numbers of children with disabilities (3,634)

## The council view

St Helens Council Leader Barrie Grunewald says the latest Local Government Financial Settlement has confirmed his worst fears – with government grant support now reduced by a further £25 million over the next four years.

“We will have lost 75 per cent of the support that we used to be able to count on from central government,” said Councillor Grunewald. “Yet at the same time we face additional spending pressures.

“The Government claims that it is providing greater clarity with this grant settlement – but as far as we’re concerned all it does is confirm our worst fears. Once again we’re seeing deprived areas like St Helens come off far worse. In less well-off boroughs the cuts amount to £220 per head of population – while in affluent areas in can be as little as £40 per head.”

Significant challenges lie ahead. As well as cost pressures in the care sector these include general inflation, increases in the number of adults and children needing support and rising levels of need, increases in demand for everyday services as the population grows and pressure on homelessness budgets.

## Budget at a glance

- St Helens Council faces an additional £8.9 million (16 per cent) reduction in Government grant.
- It means a potential 3.99 per cent increase in Council Tax to protect services and invest in the social care that the Government expects the council to provide.
- The council faces additional costs due to the introduction of the National Living Wage and higher National Insurance costs.
- There will be a 0.8 per cent increase in business rates.
- There’s now a national freeze on general funding for schools.

## Highlights

Despite the pressures we’re under, the council has still managed to:

- Invest in new, energy-efficient street lighting
- Attract investment in sports development at Ruskin Drive
- Boost highway improvements by attracting regional investment
- Maintain investment in our school estate
- Support large scale commercial developments

## Have your say

The council will continue to consult with local people every step of the way and listen carefully to your comments to help us find the best option for St Helens’ future.

Our online budget simulator ([www.sthelens.gov.uk/budget](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/budget)) gives you the chance to try and balance the council budget and get a feel for some of the tough choices we have to make as part of the budget setting process.

Alternatively, if you would like to comment on any aspect of the budget proposals, please write to the council at: **Town Hall, Victoria Square, St Helens, WA10 1HP** or telephone **01744 676789** before **Friday 5 February 2016**.



# Taking Shape



**Council Leader Barrie Grunewald (left) has made jobs a priority. And over the next five years we could see more than 5,000 new roles open up for the borough's residents as major new developments start to move off the drawing board.**

To varying degrees all are linked to the borough's vision of becoming a major logistics centre – which in turn connects with wider city region projects such as the SuperPort, Halton's Mersey Gateway and Atlantic Gateway.

It's a long-term strategy, but here we take a look at the major St Helens projects due to get underway in the next year or so.

## Parkside

The Parkside development will be one of the biggest projects of its kind in the UK. It could create up to 4,000 news job in St Helens, replacing 2,000 former mining jobs on the site – lost in the 1980s and 1990s – and bringing a range of training and employment

opportunities to the local community.

It will be of strategic importance to the whole Liverpool City Region - providing a comprehensive warehousing, freight and distribution resource for the Liverpool City Region SuperPort.

So what will it look like? Well, think of that stretch of the Omega development alongside the M62, multiply it several times, fill it with units of a similar size and you get the idea.

Council Leader Barrie Grunewald said: "Parkside represents an extremely attractive proposition for logistics, freight and warehousing companies looking for a prime location on the motorway network."

The scheme is being driven by Parkside Regeneration - a joint venture between St Helens Council and developers Langtree. A huge amount of preparation work has already been carried out and a formal planning application is expected next year. If successful, it's anticipated that the first units could be open for business in 2017.

## Newton-le-Willows Interchange

A brand new £16 million station facility – on the site of the existing one – will play a key role in the Parkside project. New park and ride facilities will make it easier to access Parkside as well as making life easier for people working in Liverpool and Manchester. Journey times have already been cut by the newly electrified line.

The new development is an example of Merseytravel's Long Term Rail Strategy - a 30 year vision to improve connections within the Liverpool City Region and beyond. This, in turn, fits with plans to improve connections across the whole of the north.

As well as a bus interchange it will offer more than 400 car park spaces, step-free access to both platforms, secure cycle parking and new on-platform waiting facilities.

In a further boost, recent Government franchise announcements confirmed more frequent and better quality rail services for St Helens. See the next issue of St Helens First for more information.

SHOWN BELOW: Newton Interchange



## Road connections

Getting to – and around in – St Helens is set to become a whole lot easier.

Major investment on local stretches of the M6 motorway continues – totalling more than £250 million. This includes the creation of a 'smart motorway' to increase traffic flow. A further £50 million has also been allocated to

improving junction 22 in addition to the recent works at junction 23.

Plans have also recently been approved to improve access to St Helens at the Windle Island junction. Work on the £4.3 million scheme - 90 per cent of which is being funded by the Liverpool City Region Growth Fund – is

expected to get underway in autumn 2016.

Councillor Grunewald said: "Windle Island's unique position - at the centre of both the St Helens and Liverpool city region strategic road network - will enable it to serve a number of sites in the City Region, including Haydock Industrial Park and the SuperPort."



### The town centre

New life is being breathed into the town centre with the arrival of top national retailers like H&M, Fat Face and USC. There has also been big investment by Sports Direct, Pandora and Thorntons on new premises.

On the other side of Linkway West a new Aldi supermarket will soon be joined by new leisure facilities that include Bella Italia, Costa Coffee and a bowling alley.

“The town centre has had a difficult time in recent years,” said Councillor Grunewald, “but the arrival of stores like H&M and Fat Face will, I’m sure, pave the way for other big names to follow - and invest here in St Helens.”



SHOWN ABOVE: Church Square

### Housing

Last year 632 new homes were built in the borough – and the number is expected to increase further this year.

The provision of a range of house types – from affordable to executive – is crucial to the council’s aim of attracting new business to the borough.

Work is currently underway at the site of the former Broadway Community High School on 88 new dwellings - being built by Countryside Properties UK. It’s a mix of 22 two bed, 58 three bed and eight four bed houses – all for private rent which tenants will be able to occupy from March this year.

At the other end of the scale the Eccleston Grange development in Millfields, Eccleston, offers contemporary mews style homes and stunning detached properties.

“Building more new houses reduces social problems, improves public health and helps the local economy,” said Councillor Grunewald, “so we are delighted to see this upturn in the number of new homes being built.”



SHOWN BELOW: Eccleston Grange



SHOWN ABOVE: One of the new units at Haydock

### Room to grow in Haydock

Warehousing capacity in the borough continues to grow – with over three quarters of a million square feet of new space in Haydock either built in the last six months or the subject of planning applications.

Units like this one at Haydock are already proving attractive propositions for companies looking for bases with great regional transport connections.

At the other end of the scale the Eccleston Grange development in Millfields, Eccleston, offers contemporary mews style homes and stunning detached properties.

“Building more new houses reduces social problems, improves public health and helps the local economy,” said Councillor Grunewald, “so we are delighted to see this upturn in the number of new homes being built.”



# When every day's a DISASTER



ABOVE: A recent multi-agency exercise  
BELOW AND RIGHT: Last month's Exercise Resolute



## Assessing the risks of terrorism, chemical spills, flu pandemics and major power cuts – it's all in a day's work for St Helens Council's Risk and Resilience Manager Vicky Finch.

The former Royal Navy officer is used to dealing with crises – or at least preparing for them if they do occur. Her role is ensuring that the council and its partners have plans in place to deal with major problems and their aftermath.

The council has a statutory responsibility to be prepared for a major emergency – and take the appropriate action when necessary. "It's an important responsibility," said Vicky "and having effective response arrangements in place is imperative.

Having a plan that is fit for purpose, up to date and is able to be shared with our partners is a key component in the response to – and recovery from – emergency incidents.

In most cases, the council's role would be to provide humanitarian assistance to those affected. This could mean emergency accommodation and welfare support for people evacuated from their homes, accident survivors or relatives and friends of those killed, injured or missing.

However the council also has to have plans in place to ensure the authority itself can keep functioning during an emergency. During a major disruption, effective communication between council staff and partner agencies like the police and fire service would be essential.

Vicky said: "Hopefully it's reassuring for our residents to know that we have effective plans in place, that their safety during an emergency incident is our priority and that we can provide support in times of need."

The council stages regular exercises to test its preparations. Realistic scenarios are constructed, dramatic updates unexpectedly introduced and multi-agency control rooms brought into play (see pictures above).

One recent successful exercise – Exercise Resolute – involved the council's partners from across Merseyside and tested how effectively they recover from a major incident.

"It never ceases to impress me how well all the agencies involved can adapt and respond to unforeseen

situations," said Vicky. "There's never a perfect solution in any of these examples, but every time we put the authority through its paces in this way we acquit ourselves well and the professionalism of our officers shows through."

With Vicky's guidance, the council continues to enhance, test and exercise its responses to minor and major incidents - allowing the authority to maintain services to residents even in difficult circumstances.

"It enables us to become more robust, disruptions are less likely to become disasters – and because we know what the risks are, we're prepared for them," said Vicky.





**STEPPING OUT** Mill Green students test the new crossing with the Mayor and Mayoress of St Helens Councillors Steve and Lynn Glover, while guests look on

# A state of independence

**Students at Mill Green School in Parr are being given the confidence and skills to get out and about – with the launch of a new travel training facility in the school grounds.**

Funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) – which helps provide sustainable transport solutions that support economic growth while reducing carbon emissions – the project has also been backed by engineering and technology giant Siemens, which has donated both equipment and staff time.

To help students at the school, which caters for people aged 13-19 with special needs, the new training area contains realistic replicas of pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, street furniture, bus stops and timetable information.

Mill Green Headteacher Colin Myers said: "The idea was to make it as realistic as possible within the space we had – and I think that has certainly been achieved.

"The area can be used for travel training and road safety training before some of our students make their own way around near real roads. We also have the potential to train

some students to use public transport to and from school – giving them increased independence, freedom and confidence.

"It also promotes further independence in travelling to work experience placements as well as general access to the local community.

"The outdoor work will be supplemented by classroom-based learning on route planning, road safety, timetables, personal safety, public transport and ticketing."

St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, Councillor Jeanette Banks said: "As far as we know there are only a handful of such facilities across the country.

"We hope that it will also be used by students from other schools across the borough as well as other organisations. It will be useful for many students with special educational needs (SEN) to help them become more independent."

For more information on travel training please phone the travel training team on 01744 67 1619 or email [sustainabletransport@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:sustainabletransport@sthelens.gov.uk)



**ALL ABOARD:** Students get used to bus travel.





## St Helens shares its beauty

A St Helens meadow, nominated to be part of a green initiative led by HRH The Prince of Wales, shared some of its floral wealth with Wigan Flashes Local Nature Reserve last year, in an effort to add to the latter's natural beauty and diversity.

Stanley Bank Meadow, Blackbrook, was selected as one of just 60 such places nationwide to be part of Prince Charles' Coronation Meadows scheme in 2013, honouring the 60th anniversary of the crowning of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

The council-owned meadow, designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1986 due to it being a damp and unimproved grassland – a rare natural habitat in Merseyside – has been painstakingly managed and improved over a period of 15 years by the council's Ranger Service, bringing it in line with Natural England SSSI regulations, as a site 'favourable' for encouraging plant and wildlife diversity.

Throughout the year, the meadow, part of the wider Stanley Bank Local Nature Reserve, is maintained by the Ranger Service, and receives an annual cutting to reduce and remove unwanted and invasive weeds. This year, the cuttings from Stanley Bank – one of just 14 SSSIs in Merseyside, and the only one in St Helens – were donated to Wigan Flashes, in the hope that in years to come, the latter will grow to be as rich an environment as the former.

Councillor Seve Gomez-Aspron, St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Green, Smart



and Sustainable Borough, said: "Our Ranger Service does a job to be proud of in caring for Stanley Bank Meadow, and all other green spaces under our remit across St Helens Borough for people to enjoy.

"By donating our green hay and seed from Stanley Bank to Wigan Flashes, we're fulfilling the Coronation Meadow programme's secondary ambition – after celebrating existing meadows – to create new ones at recipient sites.

"Research has shown that we've lost a staggering 97 per cent of meadows nationally within the last century, so we're glad to be doing our bit in this vital regeneration process."

## Healthy profits?

**St Helens Council's Public Health Service is proud to announce two new awards, to be presented to local businesses that contribute to a healthier St Helens.**

For the takeaways that go the extra mile to offer healthy menus there's the Healthier Option St Helens Takeaway (HOST) Award, proof of your healthy food preparation methods – linked to the established and successful Chip Fryer Awards.

If you're a child-minder who promotes a healthy diet for those in your care, perhaps using a fresh and fun approach to teaching the importance of different food groups, there's the Childminder Award, which would make a great addition to your professional résumé.

Teresa Mercer, Community and Business Health Promotions Officer said: "I am so proud to be working with the businesses of St Helens. We feel that many businesses are working hard to keep the community healthy and these awards will give them the recognition they deserve."

If you're involved in either of the above and would like to be considered for a Healthy Businesses award, contact Teresa on **01744676333** or via **teresamercer@sthelens.gov.uk**, and see **www.sthelens.gov.uk/healthybusiness** for details.

## Rainhill's history highlighted on new passport

After the release of the new style British passport in December, a part of St Helens can now be with you wherever you are in the world.

The new, highly secure passport - which highlights 'Creative United Kingdom' - explores the best British achievements in innovation, architecture, art and performance over the last 500 years.

Featured within is a unique double-page design celebrating 'Steam Transportation Iconic Innovations' – with pictures of Stephenson's Rocket travelling across the Sankey Viaduct and a map of Rainhill.

St Helens Council Leader and Rainhill ward councillor, Barrie Grunewald said: "A passport is one of the most important documentations a UK citizen can hold, with millions of people owning one - so for Rainhill to appear in the new design is a great testimony to the history of the area."

## HOSPICE FUNDRAISERS ON THE MOVE!

Willowbrook Hospice's fundraising team is on the move from its current location on Claughton Street. From 1 February it will be open for business at its new premises at the Living Well building on Borough Road, St Helens – the old Alexandra House site.

The new address will be: The Living Well, Borough Road, St Helens WA10 3RN Telephone:

01744 453798.

Staff there will organise events, accept and acknowledge donations, while the new building will be the location for future fundraising activities such as the Moonlight Walk, summer festivals and table top sales.

The Living Well building has been renovated thanks to a government grant and, in time,

will be home to other hospice services such as complementary therapy and advice, guidance and support. In addition, there will be a new charity shop, café and community room which will be available for use by local groups and organisations.

For more information about The Living Well, contact the fundraising team on 01744 453798



**BEAR ESSENTIALS** Willowbrook mascot Brookie promotes the change of address



# Green scheme gets going

**St Helens Council's Recycling Rewards scheme is officially up and running – with top town centre retailers signing up to play their part!**

Leading local stores like Jones & Hoffman have announced they will be part of the voucher and incentive scheme run by Local Green Points – a specialist provider of services for local authorities focused on waste and recycling.

Funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government, Recycling Rewards will allocate prizes based on the amount of material we recycle both individually and collectively.

Welcome packs have been sent to homes throughout the borough with details of how to activate your account – and containing a card that entitles holders to exclusive offers and discounts from local businesses.

Each month, the top performing recycler and runner up in their community will win £50 and £25 respectively to spend on a choice of vouchers - including Tyrers, Marks and Spencer and iTunes products, family experiences or local charity donations. Jones & Hoffman is offering ten per cent off purchases and free jewellery cleaning (maximum five items). November winners were Louise



**GREEN TEAM:** Those attending the official launch of the Recycling Rewards scheme included (left to right) Alison Usher (Willowbrook); Ali Tyrer (Tyrers); Martin Blondel (Steve Prescott Foundation); Lynn Duffy (HoneyRose Foundation); Graham Simmonds (Local Green Points); Councillor Seve Gomez-Aspron; Ryan Hoffman-Jones (Jones & Hoffman); Gill Birmingham and Paul Sanderson (St Helens Council).

Ford from Rainhill and Jeanette Chandler of Sutton.

Charities will also be among the winners – with all ‘activated’ members of the recycling scheme able to vote for the good causes they’d like to see get a share of £10,000 at the end of the scheme.

St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Green Smart and Sustainable Borough, Councillor

Seve Gomez-Aspron said: “We’re all aware of the need to recycle what rubbish we can – and reduce our impact on the environment.

“The more you reduce, reuse and recycle – the better chance you have of winning rewards for yourself and for local charities like HoneyRose Foundation, the Steve Prescott Foundation, the Hope Centre and Willowbrook Hospice.”

## Get on board

Power boating, sailing, football and music – what’s not to like? And they’re just some of the activities available for young people joining the local sea cadets. As part of their training they will also get the chance to drill, pick up nautical know-how and acquire other skills that will give them a head start in life and boost confidence.

There are currently vacancies with both the St Helens and Newton-le-Willows groups. In Newton meetings take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays (6.50pm to 9.10pm) at 9-11 Cross Lane, Newton, while the St Helens cadets gather at TS Scimitar, Mill Street Barracks, on Monday and Thursday evenings (7pm to 9.30pm).

Other activities include adventure training, camping, canoeing,

communications, diving, first aid, fieldcraft, marine engineering and meteorology. There’s also mountain biking, physical training, seamanship and much more.

Development worker Helene Storey said: “All of our training courses are designed to stretch and develop our young people and provide them with new life skills. They are carried out by highly qualified instructors who are either employees of the charity or volunteers.

“We are also currently looking for volunteers aged 18 plus to help out with various roles. If you are interested in becoming a cadet or instructor, just turn up to the sessions.”

Find out more at [www.sea-cadets.org](http://www.sea-cadets.org)

## The Patron’s Lunch

St Helens Council and the Merseyside Lieutenancy would like to hear from any residents, businesses and organisations who may wish to hold local events in the spirit of ‘Charity, Celebration and Community’ on the momentous occasion of HM The Queen’s 90th Birthday.

Elizabeth II’s weekend-long birthday celebrations will include the Patron’s Lunch, on Sunday June 12 2016. The Mall in St

James’s Park, London, will be transformed for its largest ever street party to celebrate HM The Queen’s patronage and support of over 600 charities and organisations across the country, during her 63 year reign.

Parties or persons wishing to celebrate concurrently to the Patron’s Lunch should contact the council’s Events team on 01744 676731 to discuss their celebration ideas.

## Schools tackle bullying with Tootoot



**TACKLING BULLYING:** Cowley students helped launch the tootoot app in St Helens – watched by (left to right) the school’s Year 7 Coordinator Roy Mason; Councillor Jeanette Banks, Headteacher Cameron Sheeran; Head of Care, guidance and Support Paul Livesey and Marketing Manager Dawn Ratcliffe.

St Helens Council’s Children and Young People’s Services team is rolling out a new safeguarding and prevention app – tootoot - to every school in St Helens to tackle all forms of bullying and ensure that pupils across the borough feel safe.

The national initiative gives young people an online platform to securely and anonymously report any incidents direct to their place of learning.

St Helens Council’s Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning, Councillor Jeanette Banks said: “Having measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying, and a clear process for reporting incidents, is incredibly important for the safety of vulnerable children.

“Tootoot is an effective tool to help in these situations and, by giving all education settings in St Helens access to this platform, we will have a much better idea of the scale of a particular problem. Hopefully we will see a significant reduction in the number of cases as our knowledge and understanding increases.”

The tootoot app is accessible 365 days a year and is part of a suite of resources which schools can use to ensure that pupils make some noise about bullying issues. There were launch activities in secondary schools during National Anti-Bullying Week (16 to 20 November) - while the primary phase of the programme was rolled out during December 2015.



# Memorial for Mill Green School gardener

A St Helens family has raised over £2000, fundraising for good causes locally following the tragic passing of husband and father, Phil Allen, who died shortly after a cancer diagnosis early in 2015.

The 57 year-old's wife of 30 years, Karen Deane, set out to raise money in Phil's memory for Cancer Research UK – raising £680 in the Race for Life at Haydock Park – and Willowbrook Hospice.

Twin sons Michael and Martyn, 25, have also been hard at work. Both were pupils at Mill Green School, where their father worked as a gardener teaching horticulture.

Michael has secured a position at the Willowbrook charity store in St Helens town centre, which raises much-needed funds for the hospice. Meanwhile, Martyn – having obtained his own certificate in horticulture at the school – intends to follow in his father's footsteps. He's currently planning a sensory memorial garden at Mill Green as his first horticultural project as a volunteer, using the £1250 fundraising proceeds donated to the school by the family.

Head teacher at Mill Green School, Colin Myers, said: "It was such a tragic loss when Phil died – he was a big part of the school and a firm believer in its ethos. Needless to say, we're keen to support Martyn

to create his memorial garden, and we hope that it will be a peaceful place for Mill Green pupils to enjoy for years to come."

Michael and Martyn raised further funds for Willowbrook Hospice after taking part in last year's Movember campaign.

Karen, a Parent Partnership/IASS Co-ordinator at Sutton Children's Centre, said: "We've been deeply moved by the generosity of family, friends and members of the public for their support and donations, and we're ever grateful.

"We want to remember Phil in the right way, and building a garden in his memory at the school he loved so much, where the young people can unwind amid nature seems a fitting tribute.

"Phil was a great adventurer; he loved travelling – we met on a kibbutz in Israel in 1986. He took us on many long walks and camping trips, and through his love of the outdoors he raised money for several local charities, climbing Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa and also completing the Great British 24-hour Three Peaks challenge.

"Phil was a very special person. He was a kind and committed husband and father and he is so greatly missed by all who knew him."







# Could YOU make a difference?

## Volunteers matter

**Could you be the person to brighten someone's day? Do you have the skills and mindset to improve the health and wellbeing of others? St Helens Council's Healthy Living Team is searching for the gems in our community, to fill new and exciting volunteering opportunities.**

The Healthy Living Team believes that there's no one more able to lift your spirits than someone who truly understands what matters to you – volunteers have that potential. Becoming a volunteer could also boost your confidence and provide an opportunity to make new friends; whilst the experience you'll gain would look great on your CV. If you are considering a volunteer placement, the team would love to hear from you. You've nothing to lose and so much to gain!

Melanie Pilling, the council's Volunteer Coordinator said: "Volunteers are at the very heart of our organisation. They raise awareness of available services and help us to deliver them. Their voices help us to shape and improve the health of our town. In short, they're essential to everything we do! It's our ambition to make sure anyone who gives their time to us feels valued, understood and proud to be part of Public Health."

It's a really exciting time to be a volunteer and new opportunities open up frequently. From breastfeeding support groups (see 'Mum's milk is best' below) to getting more active, there's an opportunity for everyone. Don't take our word for it; check out the website to see what current volunteers are saying about the experience.



## Mum's milk is best!



**One key way volunteers are making a difference is with the Healthy Living Infant Feeding team. A mother's milk gives babies all the nutrients they need for around the first six months of life – but is important beyond six months too. It helps to protect babies from infections and other diseases, helps mums avoid some illnesses later in life and strengthens the bond between mother and baby.**

That's why the Infant Feeding team from St Helens Council is working towards improving breastfeeding rates within the borough, making

support for mums available on the hospital ward, in the home and the community, and via telephone.

All pregnant women and their partners will be invited to take part in an exciting new antenatal programme in children's centres that will cover a range of topics, including feeding your baby. The infant feeding team are working with midwives, health visitors and children's centres to provide the programme. Casual weekly support group meetings are also available with assistance from a team of experienced female volunteers (pictured left) to help mums continue to give their babies the best food for longer.

For more information about volunteering and breastfeeding support call **0300 300 0103** or visit [www.healthysthelens.co.uk](http://www.healthysthelens.co.uk)



# Let's make it and healthy 2

## YOUR PULL-OUT AND KEEP GUIDE TO HEALTH AND FITNESS IN 2016



### Well, you've decided... It's time to turn over a new leaf.

So let's make 2016 the year you left your old lifestyle behind – and became healthier, fitter and more positive about facing whatever the New Year can throw at you.

You can do it. But if you've got any doubts, don't worry, because here in St Helens you've got a great team right behind you.

The council's Public Health Department has a team of experienced and friendly workers ready to help, advise and motivate on being healthy and active in a range of ways.

You don't need to do it all at once. Changing just one small thing and sticking with it can make a difference.

### I WISH... I could lose some weight

It's easier than you think. Our community food workers offer a four week 'Cook and Taste' course that helps families and individuals with basic cooking skills, nutrition knowledge, recipe ideas and cooking on a budget. One-to-one and small group 'Foodie' sessions offer tips and ideas on trimming down and losing that holiday weight. Why not also see what's on offer to get fitter too? Call 0300 300 0103 to find out more.

### I WISH... I could get fitter

There's nothing stopping you. We've got activities for all ages and abilities – from Fit4life and Teen Gym to the Fit Forever programme for over 60s. Even if you've got a long term health condition, it doesn't matter. We can support you as you take those first few steps to getting active.

### Contacts

Call **0300 300 0103** to book a sign up appointment and Teen Gym (14-19 year olds) induction.

Call **01744 675400** to find out about other youth sports activities.

Call **01744 675400** to find out about the Fit Forever (over 60s) activity classes

Call **0300 300 0103** for advice regarding long term health conditions

Call **01744 671726** for Go Active leisure centres and golf course

Call **01744 675400** for Women's Sports Sessions

Call **0300 300 0103** for exercise classes or park guided walks

Call **01744 675400** for the 10 week Couch-5K running plan





# a happy 2016



## I WISH...

### I could give up smoking

More and more people are doing just that. But often they need a bit of help. And luckily for you we've got some of the best people around when it comes to help with quitting. The Smokefree St Helens service offers one-to-one support, group sessions and drop-in clinics as well as telephone, text and online services. Call 01744 586247 for support.

## I WISH...

### I knew my health was OK

So why not have a health check? They're completely free and our local health trainers – or your GP - can tell you exactly where you stand. It's really straightforward – with a few questions about your general health, lifestyle and family history - and some measurements such as height, weight, blood pressure and cholesterol. You will then receive health advice and support based on your results. Call 0300 300 0103 to book in for your health check, or contact your GP surgery.

### I know I should drink less

After the Christmas and New Year excesses, there's no better time to start having a re-think about drink. Often though, it can be those close to you who you're worried about. Either way, expert help and advice is available.

## Contacts

Call **01744 610555** if you or someone you know over the age of 19 needs help or support regarding alcohol.

Call **01744 675605** for help with drug and alcohol problems for under 19s.

Call **01744 808212** for support if it's someone else's drinking that's affecting you.

## I succeeded...

"One of the main things that kept me motivated to not smoke was my decision to get fit for a British Heart Foundation cycle ride that I successfully completed with my sister in June 2015.

The stop smoking service was very good, they have really supported me. I'm financially better off, my health has improved and I can now smell and taste my food again."

Local man Stephen Landers



## I succeeded...

"I was getting headaches and if I hadn't come for a health check, I'd never have known my blood pressure was high! Andy gave me lots of advice on lots of things to do and how to improve and lower my BP. He also informed my doctor so they could keep a check on it. My last reading was 138/86 and my resting pulse was 55, so the nurse was very happy.

All I did was alter my diet and exercise – and the headaches have also now ceased. -

MJ, St Helens



For help and advice go to  
[www.healthsthelens.co.uk](http://www.healthsthelens.co.uk)







ABOVE: A recent winter warmth event at St Helens Town Hall

# Keep warm and well this winter



**St Helens Council and Age UK Mid Mersey don't want to see anyone struggle this winter. Since the launch of this year's St Helens Winter Warmer Campaign in October almost 6,000 Winter Warmer packs have been distributed to vulnerable people across the borough.**

It's important to make sure you stay warm and well, particularly in the winter. In 2014-2015, there were an estimated 43,900 extra deaths over the winter period in England and Wales. Older people who may be frail, or who have existing health conditions, are particularly at risk.

Being too cold can cause serious problems for your breathing if you have a bad chest. Sitting for long periods in a cold home can lead to very serious problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression.

Heating homes to at least 18C in winter reduces the risk to your health. If you have reduced mobility, are over 65, or have a health condition, such as heart or lung disease, then having room temperatures slightly higher than 18C is especially important for your health.

Please remember the needs of friends, family and neighbours who could be at risk. Many people are not aware that by not keeping warm enough, they may be putting themselves in danger.

## Top tips:

- Check whether you meet the criteria and register for priority service with your energy and water suppliers.
- Get financial support to make your home more energy efficient, improve your heating or help with bills.

- Have your heating and cooking appliances checked regularly.
- Wear a few layers of thin clothing rather than one thick layer and wear shoes with good grip when outside.
- Keep active, eat well and get your flu jab.
- For more advice, call the St Helens Cold Weather Advice Line on 08000 355 878.

Free Winter Warmer packs may still be available, which include a 2016 calendar with essential information and other winter items. Call the St Helens Cold Weather Advice Line for details.

## Fuel Debt

Many households in St Helens are struggling to heat their homes to adequate levels. If you are in debt with your energy supplier help may be available. Many energy companies have trust funds that can help reduce your debts. St Helens Citizens Advice Bureau has advisors available to assist making applications to various trusts. For more information call 01744 751380.

## First time heating offer

Properties that have never had central heating could qualify for a free system under the Government's Central Heating Fund programme. Applicants for the limited, "first come, first served" offer need to qualify through means testing. For further details contact St Helens Council's Affordable Warmth Unit on **01744 671638 or 676211**.





**RETAIL BOOST**....Council Leader Barrie Grunewald (centre) helps the Mayor and Mayoress of St Helens, Councillors Steve and Lynn Glover, and H&M staff open the new Church Square store.

# Crowds welcome new H&M store

**St Helens Council Leader Barrie Grunewald believes the opening of H&M's new fashion store in Church Square Shopping Centre will give the town centre a real 'shot in the arm.'**

Hundreds of shoppers queued patiently for the opening of the 14,000 square foot store - ready to snap up first day discounts of up to 25 per cent on womenswear, menswear and childrenswear.

Councillor Grunewald said: "The opening of a quality store like H&M is a massive shot in the arm for the town centre.

"The town centre has had a difficult time in recent years but the arrival of H&M, along with Fat Face, paves the way for many big names to follow suit and invest here in St Helens."

# Healthy hounds head for Newton

**For the canine with a hankering for something healthier, a brand new dog food shop – Slobbery Chops – has opened up in Newton.**

Local owners Carl Fairhurst and Grace Delaney-Segar say they don't stock anything they wouldn't give to their own dog and shop mascot Thor – a chocolate Labrador. They advocate a raw food diet, which they believe to be highly beneficial to canine health if done correctly.

With opening hours to suit working lives, you'll find Slobbery Chops at 12 Wargrave Road, Newton-le-Willows, WA12 9QZ. Thor is always ready to greet you and your best friend at the boutique store, ensuring every visit is a memorable experience. Read their story at [www.slobberychops.com](http://www.slobberychops.com) and search for them on Facebook and Twitter.



**PHOTO:** Deputy Mayor and Mayoress Councillors Dave and Jeanette Banks cut the ribbon with Carl and Grace, joined by Newton Ward Cllr Seve Gomez-Aspron.



# Gold award is icing on the cake

**A St Helens woman has been following her dream of becoming a master sugarcrafter, after winning a brace of five Gold Awards at Birmingham's Cake International competition – the globally renowned crucible for sugarcraft, cake decorating and baking.**

Lynsey Wilton-Eddleston from Nutgrove, a former food technician at Sutton Academy, had been making cake creations for family and friends for years as a hobby before entering the competition – which sees entrants from across the world – and acquiring a taste for competitive sugarcrafting.

Lynsey started using social media to log the progress of her saccharine dioramas, inspired by Walt Disney characters. Soon, requests for group lessons and one-to-one tuition were coming in from as far as Switzerland.

Lynsey couldn't refuse, and started up her own tuition business, 'Sugarwhizz', with classes running through the year, based at the Chalon Court Hotel, St Helens, where her latest award-winning creation (pictured) – the product of three months' intensive work – is currently on display.

Lynsey, a mum of three, said: "The last few months have been a whirlwind! Sugarwhizz has been expanding so quickly, and response from people across the country and beyond has been fantastic. I've had loads of support from my husband Gary, family and friends at Chalon Court Hotel, who have helped me to achieve so much!"

See Lynsey's work at [facebook.com/sugarwhizz](http://facebook.com/sugarwhizz) and on [Twitter @sugarwhizz](https://twitter.com/sugarwhizz), or email [sugarwhizz@outlook.com](mailto:sugarwhizz@outlook.com) or call **07526375561** to enquire about classes.

Lynsey will be running her first classes for children over the February half-term.



# Bowled over by transformation



ABOVE: Putting in the hours... Sports Development Officer Michaylo Fedyk (second from left) with club members (left to right) Roy Pearce, Alan Sims, Jimmy Forester and David Swain.

## **A group of crown green bowlers has been praised for turning a mossy monstrosity of a green into a potential championship standard surface.**

Formerly of the Smithy Manor Bowling Club where they had bowled for over 30 years, club members of the newly formed Bold Bowling Club were given six months' notice to find a new home.

After seeking advice from Dave Boocock, Head of Sports Development at St Helens Council, they set up home at the Bold Miners Community Centre, Fleet Lane, Parr in 2014, only to find that after going years unused, the facilities had fallen into neglect.

But, thanks to the hard work of club members - some of whom are in their eighties, and with a helping hand from 13 local young people from The St Helens College Prince's Trust, great progress is being made.

The team revealed that a big turning point in the operation was when Councillor Andy Bowden visited the green last season to seek some coaching in readiness for a charity bowls match.

After seeing firsthand the state the facility was in, Councillor Bowden helped the club secure grants and funding by introducing Neighbourhood Development Officer, Jill Lynes, who assisted with obtaining funding for a new toilet roof and also by filling in grant application forms.

Commenting on the team's dedication, Councillor Bowden said: "The work put in by Chairman Barry Rolls; Secretary, Ray Bennett; Brian Denson, Roy Cardwell and other members of the bowling club is incredible, with many of them being outside all day in all weathers.

"Jill and the volunteers from the Prince's Trust also deserve special praise for their invaluable

input. To think what the bowling green once looked like and how it has now been transformed is unbelievable - you wouldn't think it was the same green."

Sports Development Officer, Michaylo Fedyk, who has worked with the club for many years on a range of development projects, added: "It's pleasing that they have found a new home and put in some excellent voluntary work to bring the green back up to a good standard and they should be extremely proud of their achievements to date."

Once complete the club made up of some 60 plus members hope to attract new members both male and female to play at Bold Miners.

Anyone who would like to learn the game of bowls would be made most welcome, with tuition and bowls supplied.

**For more information, contact Barry Rolls on 01744 811016 or 07591202965.**



# Youth Offending Service braced for cuts

**St Helens Council's Youth Offending Service (YOS) is bracing itself for sudden cuts that could total more than £40,000 – following the Youth Justice Board's decision to pull the plug on £9 million worth of grants nationally.**

The St Helens service now faces staff cuts at a time when its work is making a real difference in cutting the number of young people committing offences locally and helping to reduce the youth custody population – a key Government goal.

St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People, Councillor Andy Bowden said: "The Ministry of

Justice decision to cut this funding will inflict a great deal of damage on the youth justice system.

"Youth offending services have played a significant role in both preventing offending and supervising young offenders in the community. Their work has also helped our local partners to focus attention on the needs and risks of young people who offend.

"Without this focus, and without local multi-disciplinary teams of police officers, probation staff, social workers, education and health specialists working together the system will lose much of its effectiveness."



## Friendship buddies

**Young people from Derbyshire Hill Youth Club are in training to become 'friendship buddies' after the club's senior members created a safe haven at the centre for sad or isolated friends.**

The new Friendship Bench was thought up by the centre's Junior Club – ages 5 to 11 – and designed and created by Jayne Hill, Robbie Birchall, Codie Walker and Leanne Hardman aged 13, and Briony Kelly, aged 14, all members of the Senior Club – ages 11 to 17.

It's intended for any among the centre's Junior Club who feel they could benefit from a sit down and chat with a designated

friendship buddy – another young person who has worked with the club's staff to develop their communication skills.

Jayne said: "I wanted to make a place where my friends at the club would feel safe. We all worked hard to make the bench look good and stand out, and to communicate better, so that when someone sits on the bench, the friendship buddy will know they want to talk or play or just relax."

There's always plenty going on at Derbyshire Hill Youth Club and others like it across the borough.

**To find out more, call 01744 675 924 or visit [yaz.sthelens.gov.uk/](http://yaz.sthelens.gov.uk/)**

## Honouring local heroes

**St Helens Council is looking to contact family members of four local soldiers who were awarded the Victoria Cross (V.C.) during the First World War, in order to include them in future plans to acknowledge and commemorate their honoured relatives.**

**They are:**

John (Jack) Molyneux V.C. Sergeant, 2nd Battalion, Royal Fusiliers

John Thomas Davies V.C. Corporal, 11th (S) Battalion, South Lancashire Regiment

Norman Harvey V.C. Private, 1st Battalion, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

Frederick William Hall V.C. Company Sergeant Major, 8th Battalion, 90th Winnipeg Rifles

**If you are a relative or descendant of one of the WWI V.C. heroes, contact St Helens Council on 01744676789 or via [contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk), and ask to speak with Simon Cousins, the council's Armed Forces Community Covenant Support Officer.**



ABOVE: VC winner John Molyneux  
BELOW: VC winner Frederick Hall



## Used cars fail safety checks

**Checks on used cars for sale at local motor traders revealed a number of vehicles in an un-roadworthy condition - and not fit for sale to the public.**

**A joint operation by St Helens Trading Standards Officers and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency was conducted at six used car retailers across the borough. It saw five cars issued with an immediate prohibition notice - preventing their sale until the faults were rectified. Further checks were made at each business and advice given on fair trading laws.**

**The faults included tyres worn below the legal limit, issues with braking systems and wheel locking nuts.**

**St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Green Smart and Sustainable Borough, Councillor Seve Gomez-Aspron said: "These are identifiable faults that have a significant bearing on the safety of a vehicle.**

**"I'm disappointed they weren't picked up prior to the vehicles being offered for sale by the businesses concerned. We will repeat the exercise and I expect standards of vehicles offered for sale to the public to improve."**

**Consumers worried about the purchase of a motor vehicle, or who require pre-purchase advice, should contact the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 0345 040506.**





# Care, support and achievement



Under the leadership of new Headteacher Ian Murphy, Haydock High School has redefined its core values. It's a school that says: We Care. We Support. We Achieve.

The school has been completely rebranded and, with a new look frontage and website, presents an up-to-date, modern face to the world. Clear goals have also been articulated to students and staff with the introduction of 'The Haydock Charter'.

Last year's GCSE results saw levels of progress in English again exceed national averages. French students achieved 100 per cent A\* - C grades, PE exceeded their A\* - C target - doubling it in the process - while 98 per cent of music students achieved A\* - C.

"We raised the bar again and increased the level of expectation," said Ian. "Students' targets are now set to put achievement at the top 15 per cent of students with the same KS2 results in English and maths, meaning that they are

expected to make outstanding progress in their time with us irrespective of their starting points in Year 7.

"However one thing that remains unchanged - and will continue to do so - is our relentless drive for high quality teaching and learning. To underline this commitment we've appointed three lead practitioners in core curriculum areas. Their role will be to drive standards in those areas and also coach and support teachers across the school."

Already over-subscribed in Year 7 - and working hard to ensure a smooth and correctly pitched start to secondary school life - Haydock prides itself on its parental involvement. The school hosts an induction day, a summer school and a 'settling in' evening.

Staff also support local primary schools by working closely with them to help 'stretch' their most able students in readiness for their arrival at Haydock. There's also collaboration on the

annual Year 3 health day.

Haydock always goes the extra mile to add value to the student experience. Ian explained: "As a school we believe it's important to enrich the curriculum and offer a host of extra-curricular activities. Accordingly we provide opportunities ranging from reading, creating textiles and computing to trampolining and gardening. All these activities help to build a sense of belonging, commitment and responsibility, very much in line with what we stand for as a community and articulated in our charter."

## Sporting pedigree

Haydock High has rugby league in its DNA - underlined by the school's convincing 58-6 win over Rainford High to lift the St Helens Town Cup at Langtree Park last summer. Captain Brandon Scully, rounded off a great evening's work when he was awarded the man of the match.





The school also won 'School of the Year' at the North West English Schools Rugby League Celebration Awards. Players were invited to the 2015 Champion Schools National finals day, held in London in August.

Five young stars have signed rugby league scholarships with professional clubs - Matthew Foster and Brandon Scully (St Helens), Ryan Forshaw and Jack Kennedy (Wigan) and Aaron Hughes (Widnes).

Haydock High also had a visit from professional skateboarder Neil Danks to coach students as part of the Sky Sports 'Living For Sport' series.



## Community spirit

Haydock High School prides itself on being a part of the local community - holding an annual Remembrance service for local residents. To mark last year's centenary of the outbreak of the First World War students created their own poppy display - 100 poppies for 100 years.

After making the poppies over several weeks they were displayed in the school's front garden - greeting visitors making their way to the service. The design was Haydock's own take on the amazing Tower of London display.

## Planning for the future

Haydock High aims to build a future for its students - working alongside agencies and colleges to create a structured pathway for students when they leave.

Winstanley, Carmel and St Helens Colleges as well as Liverpool Hope University and Career Connect work with the school to showcase the opportunities available.

Mock interview days are held for all Year 11 students as they prepare to harness their aspirations and plan their journey through life.



**Haydock High School, Clipsley Lane, Haydock, St Helens, Merseyside. WA11 0JG  
Tel: 01744 678833 Fax: 01744 678832 Email: [info@haydockhigh.sthelens.org.uk](mailto:info@haydockhigh.sthelens.org.uk)**



# Register revolution



LEADING THE WAY: The Register Office team (left to right) Sally Stanford, Julie Wharton, Anne Atherton and Amy Phillips.

**It's easy to forget just how important civil registration is as a keystone of our society. But it's services like St Helens Register Office that provide us all with a name and identity; a facility for marriage and civil partnership; evidence of our parentage, ancestry and entitlement to inheritance.**

And now, St Helens Register Office has undergone a pivotal change, leading the way to a modernised, digital service which respects and preserves the borough's historic documents.

St.Helens First sat down with

Anne Atherton, Registration Services Manager in St Helens, who demonstrated the newly acquired Registry Entry Gateway (REG) system, a unique software that enables instant retrieval of family registers - with an estimated 540,000 individual images now stored digitally.

"First-time customers may not notice the change, but the new system has made the borough's historic records far more accessible" said Anne. "We're now able to provide a vastly more efficient service for customers wanting to access historic birth, marriage and death records, allowing us to devote more time to our day-to-

day tasks, like the production of new records."

Before REG, the average time to search, retrieve and produce a certificate was 20 minutes, but an officer can now complete the same task in as little as five minutes, with immediate image retrieval, saving time and money.

The system also adheres to the Government's Digital Strategy, re-engineering local authorities to be 'digital by default'.

Anne added: "Previously, we could only provide a hand-written or typed duplicate of a register, copied from the original by our staff to protect

it. Nowadays we can provide a certificate produced digitally from an image of the original document, so the customer can see how their ancestor actually signed their name.

"The company that provided REG capture our registers on film. These analogue or physical versions of our register, along with the digital ones, have a life expectancy of 500 years and are stored off-site as a disaster contingency measure.

"This means we can better protect documents of great personal value that date back to 1837 - when civil registration began - for future generations."

## Project gets more women moving



ABOVE: Sport England's Toby Wood (centre) presents the award to Yvonne Sampson (centre-right), with Gemma Webster (centre-left), Cllr Jeanie Bell (fifth from left, middle row), Director of Public Health, Liz Gaulton (red scarf), Merseyside Sports Partnership representatives and Complete Netballers.

**A St Helens sports project has been named the best in the North West for its inspiring work with young people.**

Complete Netball St Helens, developed by St Helens Council Sports Development and Complete Netball Solutions, was given the top honour by Sportivate, a Sport England programme.

The project was recognised for getting more young women playing netball through 'Get into Netball' sessions - aimed at those not engaged in regular activity. More than 80 young women attended each weekly session - with 54 still playing regularly.

St Helens Council's Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jeanie Bell said: "We're delighted that the project has gained this well-deserved recognition. Getting young people active sets up positive habits for life."

## David's work highlighted

From Saturday 26 March to Friday 22 April, the World of Glass will showcase an art exhibition in memory of talented St Helens born artist David Storey.

Organised by his former secondary school art teacher Fred Leather and World of Glass Curator Hannah Longworth, the 'A Boat Fit for a King' exhibition will highlight the life and work of David, a former artist in residence to all St Helens schools, who passed away in 2014 aged 48.

Fred said: "The purpose of this exhibition is to bring David's unique work to the attention of the people of St Helens. He was the finest I have ever known".

For more information, call **01744 22766**, extension **226**.



# Have your say on new plans

**St Helens Council wants to hear residents' views on the forthcoming St Helens Local Plan – and on the final version of the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan.**

The new Local Plan will help the council assess planning applications and identify areas where development is appropriate. The council wants to hear which issues are important to people, organisations and businesses, which policies the plan should include and which sites - in urban areas and the Green Belt - should be developed or protected.

Suggestions will be considered by the council when preparing its Preferred Options Local Plan - published for public consultation this autumn.

The council has also prepared the Bold Forest Park Area Action Plan - which aims to encourage recreation, leisure and economic

growth in the area around Bold and Sutton.

Comments on this plan will be examined by an independent planning inspector in the summer - after which the council will put the plan into action.

The council wants to ensure that this generation - and those in the future - have the best possible choice of housing and jobs, together with a good quality environment. The comments it receives on these plans will help to make this happen.

The consultation starts on 20 January 2016 and will run for six weeks - until noon on 2 March. The consultation documents for both plans will be at all St Helens Council libraries and online at <http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/planningpolicy>



## Join Go Active

From just £11.95 a month, you can enjoy a great range of leisure activities with a Go Active membership.

Get unlimited access to Queens Park Health & Fitness, Parr Swimming & Fitness Centre and Selwyn Jones Sports Centre swimming pools, make use of modern gyms or take part in group exercise classes.

If golf is your thing, swing into action on Sherdley Park golf course and driving range and check out our competitive Golf membership packages

Whatever your age, ability or fitness level – Go Active has something for you.

For more information, call **01744 671726** or visit [www.sthelens.gov.uk/GoActive](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/GoActive).

# Smash hit!

A weekly session aimed at involving adults with additional needs in a range of activities is proving a smash hit.

Over 20 people attend Queens Park Health & Fitness on Boundary Road every Thursday for games of cricket and basketball in the sports hall, a dip in the centre's 25m swimming pool, arts and crafts and a gym session.

The session has also provided a stepping stone for employment, with four participants currently employed at the centre on a part-time basis.

Organiser Michelle Binns of Go Active, said: "The feedback from the session has been



immense, with people telling me they can't wait for Thursday to come round – it's become part of their life. We're like a family."

For more information, contact Michelle Binns on 01744 677236 or email [MichelleBinns@Sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:MichelleBinns@Sthelens.gov.uk)

## Go back in time and get creative

Following the successful WWI themed creative writing competition last year, St Helens Libraries have joined St Helens Music Service to uncover more creative talent!

A second competition for local young people will invite them to transport themselves back to the outbreak of the First World War.

They will be asked to write a story, poem, letter, diary entry, musical piece or song imagining that they lived in St Helens at the time. Competition organisers want to hear how they feel about the war, if their relatives have gone to fight abroad, if they wish they had gone with them or what life was like in St Helens during this time.

Entrants must be aged between 7-16 years old, and live or go to school in St Helens to take part. Entries must be submitted by 11 February, via email to [kathrynboothroyd@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:kathrynboothroyd@sthelens.gov.uk) or handed in to the Schools Library Service or any St Helens Library.

To find out more, call **01744 677486** or visit [www.sthelens.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/libraries)

# District readers – lifetime achievers!

It can't be overstated just how important reading is to a young person's cognitive development.

And it's something The District C of E Primary School understands very well – where an ambitious project designed to cultivate a 'reading for pleasure' culture is currently ongoing.

The Year of Reading project ran over the last academic year (2014/15), involved fun, outside-the-box activities and saw the installation of some fantastic reading facilities. Its successes have ensured a continuing legacy this year.

The project was so successful that the school was recently presented with an Innovative and Creative Literacy Award at the prestigious Educate Awards ceremony in Liverpool Cathedral.

Head teacher, Diane Bate said: "We've been trying to spark a love of literature in our



pupils, and we've seen great results so far. Most importantly, pupils have given us very positive feedback, and are thoroughly enjoying the Year of Reading activities, thanks to our dedicated staff and parent involvement."

## Can you inspire?



St Helens Council's Public Health team is calling on 13-19 year olds to become Youth Health Champions - and inspire young people to be healthy.

Would-be Champions have the opportunity to learn new skills, increase their confidence and inspire other young people to live healthier lives.

A number of training events for young people who are interested will be held across the borough in local schools, colleges and youth centres.

Young people can apply online by visiting: [www.sthelens.gov.uk/healthchampions](http://www.sthelens.gov.uk/healthchampions), talk to a member of the Health Champions Team on **01744 675665**, or email [HealthChampions@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:HealthChampions@sthelens.gov.uk).





SHARED INSIGHT: Telefónica's Chief Operating Officer Derek McManus with members of the council's Customer Service, Communications and E-learning teams.

# A DIGITAL



WARM WELCOME: O2 staff joined council colleagues for a litter pick at Carr Mill Dam

**An ambitious project, designed to help businesses and residents alike embrace technology and gain vital new skills, has proved to be a soaring success in St Helens.**

Led by digital telecoms giant, O2 - in partnership with St Helens Council - the three-month St Helens Digital Communities programme has seen several businesses such as Bartons Pickles and Unite Healthcare receive 'digital makeovers' resulting in a suite of technologies ranging from smart devices to Office 365 installed free for three months. As well as helping bigger companies, the project

has benefited smaller enterprises and residents too, with workshops and 'inspirational sessions' - from tech tutorials for start-ups, through to coding classes and digital career clinics for young people. They were delivered from a Digital Hub in the Hardshaw Centre, which also hosted a session featuring Telefónica's Chief Operating Officer, Derek McManus - sharing his insights with members of St Helens Council's customer service, communications and E-learning teams on why diversity and inclusion is so important. The Hub, which attracted over 1200 visitors during the project, also hosted O2's 'Think Big' programme, encouraging young people to participate in social action as a way to develop their enterprise and

digital skills and boost their employability. Five young people from St Helens Chamber's Work Ready programme were awarded £300 each to bring to life their ideas concerning homelessness and to help people learn IT skills from each other. A Dragon's Den type event at St Helens College saw a further five young people awarded grants for projects to deliver social media cyber bullying awareness, videos on how to behave on public transport, a trip advisor style music band app, social media training in residential homes - and pamper packages for females living in sheltered accommodation. As part of the Think Big Initiative, around 160 of





**DIGITAL RIBBON CUTTING:** O2 Business Director Ben Dowd (second from right) at the launch of the town centre hub in October with (left to right) St Helens Council Chief Executive Mike Palin, Cabinet Member for Employment, Planning and Growth Councillor John Fulham and St Helens South MP Marie Rimmer.

# BLUEPRINT



'DRAGONS DEN' Grants were awarded to young people for their digital projects.

O2's Small to Medium Businesses team joined up with the council's Ranger Service, Library Services and schools to show their appreciation for the warm welcome they received during their time in St Helens, by joining an organised litter pick around Carr Mill Dam.

Some of the team helped out the borough's older people at Central Library, getting them up to speed with digital technology – opening them up to a world of communication, information and consumer opportunities.

At Sutton Academy, Rainhill High School and St Helens College, the team delivered seminars on digital careers and assisted with students' CVs,

encouraging them to harness their talent and passion to lead projects and campaigns in their local communities – a key Think Big objective.

A lasting legacy of the project is the installation of a free Wi-fi hotspot in the town centre.

St Helens Council Leader Barrie Grunewald said: "This project has provided plenty of opportunities, which will hopefully whet the appetite for greater involvement with technology among our residents, businesses, agencies and other institutions – and I would urge everyone to embrace them."

Ben Dowd, Business Director at O2, added: "We're delighted with the success of our ambitious Digital Communities project in St Helens. The partnership

with the council has helped us understand and demonstrate to other communities what's possible when they put connectivity at their heart.

"We've helped many businesses go digital, up-skilled people of all ages in the local community, and supported the council to offer more digital services, with a view to creating a blueprint for other communities up and down the country. We're working towards a more Digital Britain, where the entire nation can feel the benefits of the UK's growing digital economy, and are excited about the proof points the pilot in St Helens has provided us with."



# FROM THE ARCHIVES



The Local History and Archives Unit at Central Library contains thousands of documents, books, maps, local newspapers and photographs that tell the story of St Helens and its people.

It's a treasure trove of memorabilia that's available for library members to view in the search room, assisted by library staff. In this issue of St Helens First we start to scratch the surface of the vast photo

library with a new regular feature devoted to images of the borough's past. We start with one of the town centre's most familiar landmarks – the Theatre Royal.



ABOVE AND RIGHT The theatre as it looked in the early 1960s... ..And as it is today



ABOVE The second Theatre Royal in Milk Street later became the Salvation Army building ABOVE RIGHT The theatre in Corporation Street, which opened in 1890

## Turned out nice again

Actor, singer-songwriter and comedian George Formby was a familiar face at the Theatre Royal in the 1920s. To celebrate the connection, the Local History Library will be hosting a free event titled 'Turned out nice again' on Wednesday 2 March from 2pm to 3pm which includes information about the entertainer and his songs.

# A Dramatic History

**The Theatre Royal has a special place in the town's affections. However there have actually been four theatres to bear the name over the years.**

The first, opened in 1847, was at the bottom of Bridge Street and made largely of wood. It staged dramatic performances in winter and hosted a circus during the summer months. A build-up of snow in winter 1855 resulted in the roof breaking during a performance!

A second theatre was built in Milk Street four years later, but in 1884 Wallis Revill took

over the lease for the Bridge Street theatre and renovated the building. There, plays like Hamlet and Richard III proved popular, the English Opera Company performed and St Helens saw its first ever panto – Babes in the Wood.

Mr Revill then helped get a new theatre off the ground in Corporation Street – which opened in August 1890. Just nine years later though it burned down, but from the ashes arose a new impressive building.

Fate intervened again though in 1940 when a

German bomb fell nearby. It's believed to have caused structural damage that led to another roof collapse that killed two and injured 26 during a performance.

Dwindling audience numbers threatened the theatre with closure several times in the post war years but stars continued to appear – ranging from George Formby and Keith Harris to Cilla Black and Bucks Fizz.

Today the Theatre Royal regularly enjoys full houses with a varied programme of entertainment on offer.

**Contact:** To view archive material call 01744 676952 or email [localhistory&archiveservices@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory&archiveservices@sthelens.gov.uk).



For more information about what's happening in St Helens, go to [www.whatsoninsthelens.com](http://www.whatsoninsthelens.com)  
For regular updates, go to [facebook.com/whatsoninsthelens](https://www.facebook.com/whatsoninsthelens) and 'like' our page,  
or follow us on [twitter @whatsonsthelens](https://twitter.com/whatsonsthelens). Alternatively, call **01744 676731**.

## February

### THE BRADSHAW "GOOSED"

**5 February**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### ST HELENS VS HUDDERSFIELD GIANTS

**5 February**

Langtree Park

### ALADINSANE

#### (DAVID BOWIE TRIBUTE)

**6 February**

Citadel Arts Centre

### CAST

**11 February**

Citadel Arts Centre

### ILLEGAL EAGLES

**13 February**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### ST HELENS VS SYDNEY ROOSTERS

**19 February**

Langtree Park

### BETFRED GRAND NATIONAL TRIAL

**20 February**

Haydock Park Racecourse

### PUSS IN BOOTS

**21 February**

Citadel Arts Centre

### JOSEPH AND HIS AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAM COAT

**23-27 February**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### LANCASHIRE HOTPOTS

**27 February**

Citadel Arts Centre

## March

### JOE LONGTHORNE

**4 March**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### THE KING OF POP

**5 March**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### GPW RECRUITMENT

### STEVE PRESCOTT FOUNDATION

### ST HELENS 10K

**6 March**

St Helens Town Centre

### T'PAU

**11 March**

Citadel Arts Centre

### MAGIC – A KIND OF QUEEN

**18 March**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### St HELENS VS WIGAN WARRIORS

**25 March**

Langtree Park

### PETER PAN PANTOMINE

**25 March – 17 April**

St Helens Theatre Royal

## April

### LAUGHTER FACTORY COMEDY NIGHT

**2 April**

Citadel Arts Centre

### ST HELENS VS LEEDS RHINOS

**22 April**

Langtree Park

### The ELO EXPERIENCE

**22 April**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### ICICLE WORKS

**23 April**

Citadel Arts Centre

## May

### THE DUBLIN LEGENDS

**8 May**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### MISS ROYAL BEAUTY COMPETITION

**14 May**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### DOORS ALIVE

**21 May**

Citadel Arts Centre

## June

### St HELENS VS WARRINGTON WOLVES

**3 June**

Langtree Park

### JOHNNY CASH ROADSHOW

**5 June**

St Helens Theatre Royal

### SPACE

**10 June**

Citadel Arts Centre

### GLASS TIME RACEDAY

**30 June**

Haydock Park Racecourse

## Cultural Hubs Spring and Summer events

### THE GRUMBLING GARGOYLE

**3 March -7pm**

St Helens Central Library

**FREE**

### ACTION TRANSPORT THEATRE PRESENTS - HAPPILY EVER AFTER

**18 March – 4pm**

St Helens Central Library

**£3 or £8 for a group of four**

### SUBTLE KRAFT DANCE COMPANY PRESENTS – MOMENTS REVISITED

**6 May – 6pm**

St Helens Central Library

**£6 or £5 for library card holders -  
£3 concessions**

### ZEST THEATRE PRESENTS – BOY MEETS GIRL

**29 June – 6pm**

St Helens Central Library

**FREE**

For more information on the events listed or to  
book tickets, please visit [www.culturalhubs.  
eventbrite.co.uk](http://www.culturalhubs.eventbrite.co.uk) or call into any St Helens library.





# What's your problem?

Unless we know about your problems, we can't help. We really do want to hear from you if something is wrong. It may be a fly-tipping or dog fouling issue, or even a missed bin collection. Whatever it is, we can only see to it if we're made aware!

A very big thank you to everyone who contacted us since the last edition of First. Here's a sample of the issues you raised, how we reacted and how you responded. Your feedback is readily received and always appreciated!



Your Problem	Our Solution	Your Feedback
Litter along Marshalls Cross Road.	Street Sweepers made that area a priority.	Resident called to thank the Street Sweeper for "doing such a good job."
Faulty street lighting on Millbrook Lane, Eccleston.	Lighting was fixed following report.	Resident remarked upon the team's "prompt action."
Missed assisted bin collection in Holly Crescent, Rainford.	Our team returned on Saturday to make the collection.	Resident involved was "extremely grateful."
Request for a new road sign on Hill School Road, Eccleston.	New sign was installed.	Compliments came in via Twitter for our "prompt service."
Fly-tipping on Penny Lane, Haydock.	Street Cleansing team removed the rubbish.	"Extreme thanks" were passed on from residents who can now access their gates.
A potentially hazardous tree was reported near Martindale Road, Moss Bank.	Our Parks & Open Spaces team cut down and cleared away the tree in question.	Residents got in touch to say "a big thank you to the crew."

Remember, in addition to using the form on the opposite page, you can download the free app to your mobile device, searching 'St Helens Council' on your respective app store - it's a handy way of alerting us to issues in the borough on the go!









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 Daily home deliveries from stock held in store.

### ST HELENS ABLEWORLD

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140 Rathbone Road,  
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17 Caroline Street,  
 Wigan, WN3 4EL,

Email: [info@ableworldwigan.co.uk](mailto:info@ableworldwigan.co.uk)

**T: (01942) 233200**

Mon - Sat 9.00am - 5.30pm

To see more stores, please visit:

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