

St. Helens First

June 2009 – October 2009
St. Helens Council's
Community Magazine

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it's easy to contact us

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At the library: Call into any library in St.Helens to pay your Council Tax.

Online: www.sthelens.gov.uk
Email: contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk

Telephone: 01744 456789/676789 (8am – 8pm, Monday – Friday and 10am – 2pm, Saturdays)

Minicom: 01744 671671
Face to Face: Contact Centre, Wesley House, Corporation Street, St.Helens (open 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday).

St.Helens Council offers a translation and interpretation service including foreign languages, British Sign Language, Braille and Audio Tape. All public areas in the Town Hall have disabled access.



St.Helens Council

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For more information contact us on:

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St.Helens
leader's column



Welcome to another edition of your community magazine which, once again, is packed with information about local services.

Feedback from our last 'credit crunch' edition has been overwhelming with people seeing a massive up take in services, and for help and advice in accessing jobs, training for further education. Residents found the edition very helpful.

Carrying on from this we have included a round up of economic local success stories with some businesses bucking the national trend, which is great news.

We have also, due to demand, reiterated information about where to go to find out about accessing employment and training. Our apprentice scheme has also proved very popular with school leavers so we are carrying information about this as well.

I hope you enjoy reading St.Helens First which aims to provide a one stop shop of news and features to benefit residents.

Council Leader
Brian Spencer

College well equipped to respond to change

St.Helens College is responding to the challenges created by the recession with exciting new developments which will benefit the College, business and the local community.

Phase 1 of the College's impressive new project to redevelop the Town Centre Campus is due to be completed early in July this year and will be welcoming its first students in September.

The new facility will include:-

- specialist provision, including science laboratories, performing arts, music technology, systems technologies and supported learning
- a customised nursery
- light and airy study and dining areas
- safe and secure 'user friendly' environments
- landscaped 'social gathering' areas
- facilities for community use.

The development is being undertaken in stages in order to avoid disruption to students, staff and local businesses.

The next few years will see enormous changes to the qualifications young people have available to them, as well as changes to the minimum age of compulsory participation in education and training.

St.Helens College is working in partnership with St.Helens Council and all other local education providers, to ensure that these changes are effective and help young people in St.Helens achieve their best.

Principal Pat Bacon is confident that the College possesses all the attributes required to adapt to changing circumstances:

"As one of the largest providers of further and higher education in the North West, we are well equipped to respond to change" said Pat. "The new campus development has been well received by stakeholders, community groups and local businesses. We really look forward to Phase 1 being opened in September." She also added "The recession, and impending curriculum changes, have provided challenges for the College and its partners; however, I am confident that by working together we can further improve the opportunities for young people, as well as those who have recently been made unemployed".

For further information on the range of provision available at St.Helens College ring Student Services on 0800 99 66 99.

For a virtual tour of the new campus go to www.sthelens.ac.uk/home/facilities-management-redevelopment.asp



Youngsters to take their energy concerns to Government

A special Climate Change project bringing together schools with energy efficiency and environmental officers is being held with the ultimate aim of bringing pupils' views to the attention of national and local government.

Part of a partnership between nine primaries and one high school around 100 pupils and 20 teachers attended the first Climate Change event at The Thompson Centre, Allanson Street Primary School.

The ethos of the project is to raise awareness of climate change through positive interactive projects to see that the ideas, concerns and worries are of local children.

At the end of the 12 month programme it is hoped to create one voice from the 10 schools with the concerns and aspirations raised forwarded to government.

New site proposal for Saints tribute statue

St.Helens Council is proposing to temporarily place the statue of a favourite 'son of Saints' Kieron Cunningham in Chalon Way until the new stadium opens in 2011.

Two years ago the Council announced plans that it would dedicate a statue of a favourite 'son of Saints' to be voted on by townsfolk which would be placed in a prominent position in the Borough.

Captain Kieron Cunningham polled the most with over 10,000 people voting for him. He pipped Tom van Vollenhoven at the post with 8820. Third was former Man of Steel Paul Wellens with 1501, followed by Alex Murphy on 1284, Alf Ellaby on 249 and Vinty Karalius on 203.

Several temporary sites have been looked at but many are unsuitable as underground infrastructure, such as cables and pipes, would have to be moved at great expense which has been ruled out as the statue will only be temporary before it is moved to the new Stadium. The Council has also ruled out locating the statue in Victoria Square

following consultation with the Royal British Legion to avoid any clash with visitors to the Cenotaph.

The statue consultation proved to be the single biggest ever response to a consultation by the Council. Since then well known sculptor Vanessa Marston has been working on the one and a half times life size statue which could be in place late Summer.



One for the Lads

A leaflet for young fathers and male carers has been launched. It aims to improve the support and information available to young men about fatherhood.

Supported by Saints and commissioned by St.Helens Council's Teenage Pregnancy team, the leaflet aims to get lads in the know about their rights and responsibilities around parenthood and the importance of being involved with their child.

The leaflet also hopes to encourage

more young fathers and male carers to access the services of M.A.T.CH (Men and their Children) who currently have 20 clubs across the Authority providing a range of activities aimed at men and their children.

If you would like more information contact the team on 01744 675665.

If you are an expectant father, father or male carer and want more information on M.A.T.CH activities call 0800 952 9523.

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We want
your views
and ideas

Fill in the reader survey inside your polywrapped St.Helens First and you could win £100 of High Street vouchers.

See leaflet for full details.

Open from
12 noon

Don't miss the family event of the year.

The St.Helens Festival

4th & 5th July
Sherdley Park.

Make sure you keep the Festival dates free in your diary. That's because you will not want to miss this year's premier event. It's a free-to-enter event and a guaranteed great day out. What better way to spend a Summer weekend! Bring your friends and family down for a guaranteed good time!

The Festival will be full to the brim with activities for everyone to get involved in. The fast-paced, high adrenalin **Main Arena** includes motorbike and horse stunt shows and dog displays, whilst the popular **Children's World** (every child's heaven) will have a beach, Punch and Judy, donkeys, facepainting, circus skills, a stage and crazy golf to keep the little ones busy!

There'll be a **Community, Country and Heritage** area featuring

craft, flowers and wildlife; where you can enjoy a Wildlife display, Sheep Show, Hollystone Hawks & Heavy Horses, Civil War Society, Rangers Service, RSPCA Fun Dog Show, Craft and Flower Marquee. Also, find out more about CEN, CVS, Scouts and Guides, Emergency Services, Friends of Parks, Heritage Network and RAF / Army / Sea Cadets!

In the **Creative St.Helens** area you can enjoy generous helpings of musical, artistic and theatrical talent including a visual art exhibition, dance groups, music groups, poetry, theatre, street entertainers, Music

Network, break Dancing, urban arts and more.

For the more sporty there's an ever growing **sports area** featuring Rugby coaching by Saints RLFC, football and basketball tournament, Primary Schools Triathlon, Break Dancing, urban sports, skateboarding / BMX and Cheerleaders, whilst for those pursuing a healthier lifestyle there's a **Healthy Living** featuring Healthy School Meals, Go Active, Health Checks, PCT, Performance Arena and more.

As if that's not enough, there is a new for 09 **Kite Festival**, the annual

equestrian, military displays, classic cars, super jumper, go-karts, quads and funfair. Truly something for everyone!

Information (such as maps, full entertainment timetable, travel information) will be regularly posted and updated on the Festival website www.sthelens.gov.uk/festival, and the Council noticeboards. Keep checking for the latest updates. Alternatively, you can always contact the Festival Team in Marketing Services on 01744 675326 / 671746.



St Helens Chamber

Your success is our business



Halton and St Helens

Puppets, plays and poetry



St.Helens First takes a look at why traditional skills are helping to boost literacy levels among pupils.



As part of the national Literacy Week campaign the Council launched a series of events aimed at helping pupils across the Borough to boost their literacy skills.

Creative writing workshops, a Black Box Theatre, puppet shows and storytelling were among the popular activities aimed to interact with each pupil.

Well known names from the literacy world included Neil Griffiths, a children's story expert; Nick Briscoe, who delivered workshops on oral storytelling; Dinesh Allirajah, poet; Dave Cryer, creative writing workshops and song writing workshops.

The Council would like to thank sponsors Cineworld, Borders (Speke) and Pizza Hut for donating competition prizes.

Winners

Poetry

Raymond Tang 1st Prize
Jack Wolfe 2nd
Lauryn Anders 3rd
Rebecca Gibbons 3rd

Extreme Reading

Lucy Cummins 1st Prize
Cameron Cleworth 2nd
Hannah Coulburn 3rd

I Remember when

Emily Swift 1st Prize
Adam Baldwin 2nd
Rachel Travali 3rd

Spread The Word-Narrative

Andrew Dixon 1st Prize
Isabel McEgan 2nd
Rebecca Rauer 3rd

Journalistic Writing

Ben Verdon

Job opportunities



Have you ever considered a career with the Council? As the Borough's largest employer it has more than 8,000 staff and offers a wide selection of job opportunities across its diverse range of services.

These include working with children and young people, supporting older and vulnerable people, getting involved with the Borough's economic development, environmental issues and offering support to other services. Go to the Council's website to view the current job vacancies at the Authority and in schools – www.sthelens.gov.uk or call 01744 456789.

Apprenticeships are also available across Council departments for young people and currently the Council has more than 60 apprentices on board. A Work Based Learning Co-ordinator has visited schools to explain apprenticeship opportunities for those about to leave school. The apprentices

are well supported, regularly reviewed, study for NVQs and have access to in-house training too.

The Council's Environmental Protection department is also working with St.Helens Chamber and Connexions to develop a tailored apprenticeship package for young people not in employment, education or training. To find out more call Julie O'Neill on 01744 676947 or email julieoneill@sthelens.gov.uk

If you have lost your job or been out of work for some time, Starting Point is a good place to begin. It helps to get people back on the jobs ladder by giving free advice and professional guidance

and information on issues relating to employment, education and training.

Starting Point is run by St.Helens Chamber and offers a 'drop in' service at offices at 4 - 6 Hardshaw Street (01744 698800) and at 526 Fleet Lane, Parr (01744 670280.)

Help finding jobs, training or education.

If you are aged between 16 – 19 Connexions offers information, advice and guidance on finding employment, further education or training.

Connexions is based at The Beacon, 25 College Street, St.Helens. For further information log on to www.connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk/yp/contactus





Shop's success story

St. Helens First takes a look at how one local shop is expanding and gives an insight into other local success stories.

One local company bucking the trend at a time of recession is high quality menswear shop Sidewalk.

Sidewalk, which has been trading in the town centre for 23 years, recently doubled its premises by moving into a vacant property next door. Owner Philip Jackson said he needed more space to display his quality brands which include Armani.

"It may have been a bit of a gamble in a time of recession but we needed more space to properly show off our clothing," said Philip. "We have a loyal client base with customers coming from far and wide and trade is holding up well.

Our regular customers have really embraced our new look shop and we've had a lot more foot flow."

Recent visitors to Sidewalk included Cllr Richard Ferry (right), the Council's Executive Member for Urban Regeneration who said he was delighted to see a well established town centre company expanding and John de Camp (left) from the Chamber which works with and supports local businesses.

Philip said he is keen to work with the Chamber to help improve the town centre environment and applauds the long term success of Sidewalk thanks to a loyal clientele.



Vimto fizzes

Increased sales of its world renowned Vimto brand helped soft drinks firm Nichols drive sales and profits, despite the downturn and a poor UK summer.

Annual results for the Newton-le-Willows-based firm showed revenues rose from £55.27m to £56.22m in the year to December 31, while pre-tax profits came in at £10m against £8m in 2007.

Nichols is also maximising its brand with spin-off products like Vimto chewy sweets, tongue ticklers, bon-bon bags, lollipops and ice-lollies. And has recently announced a new £5m marketing campaign to boost sales of its flagship drink Vimto among teenagers and their parents.

Nichols says the Vimto brand is now worth around £35.5m, and is set to grow further as it takes on its competitors in the soft drink sector.

Brewing up a thirst as local breweries thrive

When it comes to brewing in a recession, it looks like small really is beautiful.

A new study has revealed that Britain's smaller brewers are seeing trade increase and are planning to expand, defying the recession.

It's a trend mirrored here in Merseyside and Cheshire, where small breweries are expanding as people hunt out their local brews.

The George Wright brewery, in Rainford, near St. Helens, is planning to expand as demand for its beers, such as Cheeky Pheasant, keeps on growing. The company started brewing in 2003, and says its purpose-built microbrewery is one of the most advanced of its kind in the UK.

Keith Wright, owner and head brewer, believes real ale is growing in popularity as people with less money to spend choose to spend that cash on quality locally made products.



Newton-le-Willows scheme secures two new tenants

Langtree has announced a further two lettings for its serviced offices at Centrix@newton in Newton-le-Willows.

Morrison Utility Services has taken a 10-person office on a five-year lease and Ordnance Survey, Great Britain's national mapping agency, has secured a five-person office on a two-year lease.

Speedy Hire part for Olympic 2012

Merseyside's largest listed company, Speedy Hire, is part of a consortium that has won a key contract on London's Olympic 2012 site.

The Newton-le-Willows firm and three other companies have formed Construction Site Solutions to operate one of two plant hire centres on the site.

The centres will hire out building equipment from cranes to excavators to contractors on the site.

The Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) says the centres will make the building programme more efficient.

Elite Tele.com consolidates Premier League position

St. Helens business telecoms provider, Elite Tele.com has earned its Spurs after adding another club to its growing collection of Premier League clients.

Elite Telecom has set up a bespoke network system for Tottenham Hotspur to handle calls for all club departments, including ticket sales.

The firm now handles the telephone systems at six Premier League football clubs, including Everton.

St. Helens steel company secures £217,000 investment

Hi-Tech Steel Services, based in Bold Industrial Park, has secured a £217,000 grant to fund an expansion programme from the Northwest Development Agency.

It will put the money towards the cost of a new piece of machinery, which will safeguard 20 jobs and create a further five.

The new purpose-built slitter machine, worth £900,000, will enable the company to increase production.



Historic buildings house units for creative businesses

Units are available for rent in the Catapult Too business centre for creative industries such as web design, fabric studios, photography and crockery and furniture makers.

Located off Corporation Street in the George Street Cultural Quarter, Catapult Too provides 13 work managed workspace units ranging in size from 150 to 550 sq ft.

Two historic town centre buildings within the Holy Cross Church complex were refurbished to create Catapult Too in 2005.

If you are interested in a unit please call Tracey Prescott at the Council on 01744 676193.



Buy local campaign launched



St.Helens Council, together with local business leaders and St.Helens Chamber have been meeting for the past few weeks to come up with a campaign which urges local people to support local businesses.

The campaign covers the retail sector, local businesses and trade and will urge people to 'think local' when they are looking to buy. So whether it be a new washing machine, having their homes improved, needing a solicitor or a car,

buy local to support the Borough's economy.

The idea was originally mooted by the former Mayor, Councillor John Beirne who says: "In these difficult trading times people should be discovering what is available on their doorstep. They might be surprised at what they will find. Be local, buy local and be proud of St.Helens."

The campaign was launched in Tyrers department store, Bridge Street,

St.Helens, a family run business for more than 100 years. Councillor Beirne was joined by business and retail leaders for the launch which saw a balloon release to mark the occasion. The campaign, which has its own distinctive branding and logo, also has leaflets, car stickers and posters for businesses to display.

For further information contact Jeff Owen, the Council's Economic Development Marketing Officer on 01744 671749.

M&Y wins £8.5m contract

Sutton-based M&Y Joinery and Building Maintenance has won its "biggest-ever" contract after Regenda Group awarded it an £8.5m maintenance deal.

The family-run firm beat firms from across Europe for the five-year maintenance contract from the social housing group. The deal makes M&Y the latest firm to benefit from tendering support from St.Helens Chamber, which has enabled St.Helens companies to win contracts worth more than £26m.

M&Y finance director Gillian Kelly said: "Winning tenders is all about having confidence in your business and knowing how to present your company information. I have learned such a lot by going through this process with the Chamber and it will stand us in good stead in the future."

Stadium progress in 'earnest'

Following St.Helens Council's approval in July 2008 of Langtree's planning application to redevelop the former United Glass site into a new home for St.Helens Rugby League Club together with a new Tesco Extra, background work to bring the scheme forward continues in earnest.

Langtree has demolished the former glass processing buildings on the

site, which represents a major step forward for the project. A substantial amount of work is now underway including undertaking detailed ground investigations. Langtree will shortly be seeking tenders for the construction of the project and following the successful identification of a contractor, a start on site for the stadium is targeted for the first quarter of 2010.

St.Helens Chamber marks 1,000th business start up

St.Helens Chamber of Commerce has celebrated the 1,000th new business start under its Entrepreneur Kick Start project. Faye Messham founded the Stroke Support Service after identifying a gap in the market for qualified carers

of stroke patients.

The Chamber set out a business plan and gave a £5,000 grant to Faye, who said: "It would have taken me a lot longer to reach this point without their help."

First couple tie the knot in Town Hall



Congratulations to Martina and Brian McLachlan of Rainhill who have become the first couple to get married in St.Helens Town Hall.

The couple, who have two sons Matthew six and Andrew, four, said it was a memorable occasion in a very special setting which was so much better than other venues they had looked at.

The Town Hall is one of the latest venues to be granted a licence to host marriage ceremonies.

Dating from 1876 the Victorian Town Hall boasts many historic features. Times have been set aside in the Council Chamber for marriage ceremonies on Fridays between 12noon and 4pm and Saturdays from 12.30pm and 3.30pm. The cost is £175 for Friday and £200 for Saturday and excludes the cost of a Registrar.

The gothic Council Chamber

has an expanse of oak panelling, two original sandstone fireplaces and large stained glass windows. The room can cater for 100 people.

If you are interested in booking a special place for your special day contact Chris Dove, the Council's Public Buildings Manager on 01744 456133 for further details or log on to www.sthelens.gov.uk



Henry V111 urges boys to read more books

Henry V111, aka Ray Irving a retired advanced skills teacher, visited Haydock Library to give a boost to the Council's campaign to get more boys reading books.

The Henry Tudor Drama Company has visited over 400 Primary schools across the country. It claims to be the most accurate re-enactor in the world. Ray has 22 years teaching experience.

Pupils from three local schools took part in the event, English Martyrs; St. James' and Grange Valley primaries.

A Tudor workshop consists of: meeting the King, making Eagle wings, brass rubbing on iron Tudor grids, making quills, writing on parchment, learning Tudor dances, walking the royal stick, recording the day on DVD and class photographs. Children are supplied with Tudor hats for the day, and the King supplies materials, a red carpet, throne, scenery and magic flame effect lighting.

The website is recommended by TES, HM Government and the Mary Rose Trust.

Summer fun for all

Look out for your Think Again booklet which is being distributed with this magazine.

It is packed with information about the kind of activities available for young people over the summer.

The Council is supporting the National Free Swimming initiative giving Under 16s free swimming throughout the year. The Cage Football run by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service will be returning

to the Parr, Bold and Sutton areas. Details are available at www.merseyfire.gov.uk

The Think Again booklet is only a snapshot of activities provided by the Council and further updates can be found on the website (www.sthelens.gov.uk) and in the local press.

Also included in your polywrapped St.Helens First is the latest What's On guide.

Cultural Awards 2010

Following the successful first ever Cultural Awards the Council is now planning for next year's event.

Nomination forms will be available this Summer and are open to anyone who lives, works, studies or is involved in a participatory way in local cultural activity.

So if you want to follow in the footsteps of this year's winners, Haydock Male Voice Choir, the Don't Think Twice Collective or Jenny Leyland from Sutton Junior Football Academy, to name but a



few, then watch for more details in the local press.

You can also log on to the Council's website www.sthelens.gov.uk or email marketing@sthelens.gov.uk to register your interest now.

The awards showcased the best of the wide range of cultural activities across St. Helens and gave deserved recognition to winners in arts, sport and heritage.

*Turn to the Teen Talk section at the back of the magazine to read about the Youth Cultural Awards.

Help at hand to tackle domestic abuse

The Relationships Centre offers a wide range of information and advice to anyone who is experiencing or has been affected by violent, abusive or unhealthy relationships.

It offers crisis response and safety planning; legal advice (civil and criminal) options; practical and emotional support and referrals to other specialist services such as housing or support for children.

For further information contact 01744 743200. All information disclosed is treated confidentially.

Off to a tee at Sherdley



Sherdley Park Golf Club, which is recognised as one of the best courses in the North West, is again hosting the Mayor's Charity Golf Tournament on 15th August.

Founded in 1973 it organises regular competitions and welcomes new members. There are no joining fees and this year there is a special offer for new members of 50 per cent off the annual subscription which has been reduced to £125.

The male section offers the worldwide recognised English Golf Union handicap and also has a junior and ladies' section.

The undulating 18 hole course is 5,912 yards, par 71 and provides a challenge for golfers of all abilities.

Members and non members can enjoy food and drink in the club's refurbished Café in the Park. The club also provides pre-ordered refreshments to golf societies when they book golf days through the Pro Shop which is run by the Council.

Next year the club will host the prestigious Merseyside Municipal Championships. To find out more about the club call 01744 815518. To get involved in the Mayor's tournament call Alan Jenkins at the Council on 01744 676818. Deadline for entries is Friday, August 7.

Helicopter surprise for pupils

Pupils at Grange Valley Primary School in St. Helens got a big surprise from ex pupil Stuart Picton.



Stuart is now serving with 815 Squadron and is based at HMS Lancaster. He and his colleagues were on their way to the Gulf and, en route, landed in the school grounds to chat with pupils and give them a quick look at the Lynx Mark 8 helicopter.

Headteacher Ian Hardman said: "It was a great surprise for the pupils and gave them the chance to chat with a former pupil who has carved out a successful career for himself."

Stuart is pictured left with flight colleagues and pupils.

Dream comes true as community celebrates landmark statue



May Queen Nikita Lacey from Sutton Manor

Thousands of local people and visitors flooded into Sutton Manor for the community launch of Dream.

Taking the form of a traditional Whit Walk the official launch was heralded by local brass bands, May Queen, choir and ex-miners and their families whose vision helped turn Dream into a reality.

The 20 metre-high sculpture by artist Jaume Plensa, who was guest of honour, is situated on the site of the former Sutton Manor Colliery.

Bob Hepworth, Director of Urban Regeneration and Housing at St. Helens Council, says: "Dream is the artist's response to the brief and to subsequent conversations with

the ex-miners and members of the wider local community who wanted a piece that looked to a brighter future and created an inspiring and contemplative space for future generations, not least their own grandchildren, at the top of the former colliery."

Marian White from Shining Lights Heritage Group in Sutton Manor said: "This was the conclusion to three years of the Sutton Manor community coming together and working hard towards seeing our dream come true. It's not only a celebration of all our

traditions from the past such as the Whit Walk procession, crowning of the May Queen and the colliery bands, Dream also symbolises our hopes and aspirations for the future."

Dream was commissioned by local ex-miners and St. Helens Council as part of Channel 4's Big Art Project, an ambitious public art commissioning initiative supported by Arts Council England, the national development agency for the arts, and The Art Fund, the UK's leading independent art charity. No Council Tax money was used in the project.



Bands and choirs heralded the historic opening.

"This was the conclusion to three years of the Sutton Manor community coming together and working hard towards seeing our dream come true."

One of more than a hundred children who dressed as miners for the event

The launch of the Shelter was a community event.



New des. Res. where teenagers can hang out

Community spending via Ward Committees smashes through the £1-million mark. St. Helens First takes a look at work taking shape.

A new youth shelter is one of the latest initiatives under the Council's successful Ward Committee programme. This takes the total spend via Ward Committees to more than £1,000,000 for environmental projects across the Borough.

The £8,598 shelter in Birch Grove Playing Fields, Garswood, was approved by the Billinge and Seneley Green Ward Committee.

It's the result of two years worth of discussion about youth provision in the ward.

The shelter offers young people a safe place to meet, it is protected from the weather and is lit so they can watch ball games on land next to the shelter.

More Ward Committee news includes:

Billinge and Seneley Green: More planting and seating; completion of landscaping at Garwood station and a new roundabout at Elm Avenue.

Blackbrook: Road improvements at Scout Hut HQ; Soft play area for Bosworth Road playing fields; Land cleansing in Park Street and a wildlife haven at O'Sullivan Park.

Bold: Tidy up of Dunsop and Wray Avenues and Hornby Crescent; Disabled access to pond on the former Clock Face Colliery site; Tree planting at Four Acre; Drainage for the Walkers Lane allotments.

Earlestown: Pedestrian barrier in Market Street; Alleygates for Viaduct Street; Garden development at Fetra; Traffic improvements Earle Street/ Viaduct Street.

Eccleston: Planting at Broadway and Fiveways as part of the Eccleston in Bloom project; Rockery feature on the Foxwoods estate; Trip rails in Howards Lane; Welcome to Eccleston signs.

Haydock: Street cleaning between Lodge Lane and Church Road; Scheme to 'design out youth disorder' at the Somerfield supermarket; Tidy up of gardens in Penny Lane and Vista Road with further consultation on seating provision.

Moss Bank: Improvements to courtyard and seating at Moss Bank Elderly Persons Home; New lights at the Bassenthwaite Avenue shops and adjacent passageway; Planting out of the Kentmere Avenue play area.

Newton: Improved play area with garden planters at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School; Benches for Mesnes Park lower bowling area; Traffic calming on the Stephenson Road estate; Sensory garden planned for the new hospital.

Parr: Environmental improvements to Gaskell Street; Improvements to land next to the Co-op and Parr Stocks Road; New bin outside Bargain Booze, more planting across the ward.

Rainford: Improvements to Crank Recreation Ground; More benches; More floral displays and hanging baskets; Improvements to Rainford Linear Park.

Rainhill: More public seating areas; Memorial planting in Houghton Street; Home Zone sign for Two Butt Lane, Holt Lane. Work to remove discarded chewing gum on Warrington Road.



The new Nanny Goat Park Nature Reserve is beginning to bloom.

Sutton: Improvements to Dale Crescent footpath; Improvements to Sutton Park including additional footpath; Clean up of Red Lion grotspot; Improvements to the Millennium Green.

Thatto Heath: Shrubs plants Scholes Lane/St. Matthew's Grove; New grassed area at Stevenage and Basildon Close; New fencing around Nutgrove allotments; More alleygates.

Town Centre: More hanging baskets; More alleygates; Duncan Street clean up; Picnic tables at the Recreation Street allotments nature garden.

West Park: Resurfacing of grass verges in Lacey Street, Lugsmore Lane, West Street and Owen Street; More No parking signs; more alleygates.

Windle: Clean up and landscaping of land behind Lowe House Boxing Club; Clean up of Gamble Walk; Improved street lighting in Bishop Road and City Road; More speed limit signs.

Every year each Ward Committee is allocated £30,000 to spend on environmental initiatives voted for by local people. So far more than 3,000 residents have attended Ward Committees.

For further details contact Kirsty Watkinson, Consultations Manager on 01744 676958.



Youngsters plant bulbs in Eccleston.

Strictly come dancing to a 'tea'



The next Tea Dances will be held between 2-4pm on:
 Thursday 2nd July
 Thursday 17th September
 Thursday 1st October

No advance booking is necessary (but is advised) and entry is just £3, which includes refreshments and free entry into a raffle prize draw.
 For further information call 01744 676886 or visit www.sthelens.gov.uk

Popular Tea Dances have made a welcome return to the Town Hall.

A series of afternoon events are back by popular demand in the historic setting of the Town Hall Assembly Hall.

And putting the char back into the cha cha cha is local company Lancashire Tea, of Newton-le-Willows, who provide the tea, coffee, biscuits and delicious freshly baked scones.

A mixture of live Modern Ballroom, Sequence and Olde Tyme music is provided by our host Michael Conradd, a seasoned organist.

Responses to the new tea dances were very positive with enthusiasts, some from neighbouring Widnes and Prescott, calling for more sequence dancing.

Irene and Wallace Dean from

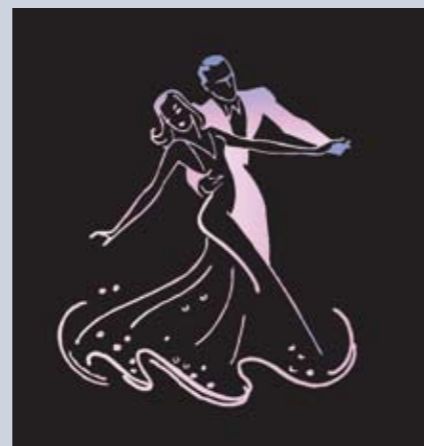
Billinge said: "We've had a lovely time with our friends in the Town Hall. We particularly enjoyed the sequence dancing and the refreshing cups of Lancashire Tea, accompanied with scones and jam. We look forward to returning next month."

Bill Smith from St.Helens enthused: "The facilities here are first class. It is a great venue for Tea Dances and I look forward to coming back."

Carol Bailey from Widnes added: "The building is exceptional - we are having a wonderful time. It's great value for £3, live music, fresh tea and scones and enjoying the company of friends."

Paul Needham, MD Lancashire Tea was delighted at the response adding: "The tea dance has

been wonderful, a superb way of bringing the community together. I am pleased to say that our guests enjoyed the dancing and of course their cups of refreshing Lancashire tea. We look forward to the rest of the programme of events."



Thinking of making alterations to your house?

Did you know that you will probably need Building Regulation approval before starting your improvement project?

At this time of year many homeowners and landlords start thinking about making home improvements – it may be a new extension, a loft conversion, a larger conservatory or even having the house re-wired.

But did you know that you may need the go ahead from the Council's Building Control Section.

Building Regulations were brought in for your health and safety and to make sure that work homeowners/landlords do or have done complies with the regulations.

Failing to apply or comply could mean you may not be able to sell your house in the future or face possible problems with the work you have had done.

If you have done some work on your property already and you do not have permission then you can get permission retrospectively providing the work has been carried out on or after 11th November 1985. Building Control can advise if this can happen in your case.

If you are a local Architect, Builder or Plan Drawer our One Stop Plan Checking Service enables you to submit applications to St.Helens.

For help pop into Planning Reception on the ground floor of the Town Hall or email buildingcontrol@sthelens.gov.uk or ring 01744 676240 or 676242.



Would you like to be an advanced driver?

The St.Helens Group of the Institute of Advanced Motorists is part of a national charity that not only promotes road safety, but also provides a voluntary driving test, which far exceeds the standard of the average driver. Passing this test can also be a passport to cheaper car insurance!

The Group has recently achieved a landmark 500th Test Pass, by a student at Edge Hill University (17-24 year olds are most at risk). It also has a 95% first time pass rate.

They have just completed a project with Age Concern to encourage older male drivers to become more aware. Now, almost all of the participants are taking an assessment drive where they will discover how to take the stress out of their driving, and become a lot safer.

The Institute is also focusing on younger drivers by offering talks and presentations to students at sixth form schools and colleges.

For further information ring Val O'Hanlon on 0151 426 6712

What should Council Scrutiny Committees be looking at?

St.Helens Council has six Scrutiny Committees made up of local councillors and co-opted members.

These Committees work with the Council and other organisations such as the Police and Health Service to make sure that we are all doing a good job for local people

The six committees carry out a programme of reviews each year,

based on the issues that are of most concern.

The Scrutiny Committees are just putting together their programmes for the year May 2009 to April 2010 and they would like to hear from members of the public about the key issues they should be investigating.

So if you have any views on things which need to be looked at, please

contact us by; emailing scrutiny@sthelens.gov.uk or ringing Joanne Heron on 01744 676277 or Rachel Bridge on 01744 676276 or writing to us at the Town Hall, St Helens MBC, Merseyside WA10 1HP

Dates of the meetings over the next 12 months can be found on the Council's website on www.sthelens.gov.uk

Promoting independence, choice and control

The Council's far reaching Adult Support Foundation Plan is promoting independence, choice and control for vulnerable adults. St.Helens First speaks to three people to find out how it is making life better for them.



"Everyone said I was coming on in leaps and bounds as my confidence built and I was able to do lots more things," said Jane.

Twelve years ago hard working, independent young wife and new mum Jane Peet was struck down with a brain tumour which stripped her of a normal life and left her dependent on others. She says she spent six years in a kind of 'wilderness' before finding a place at Windle Pilkington House where she was supported through Day Opportunities.

"Everyone said I was coming on in leaps and bounds as my confidence built and I was able to do lots more things," said Jane.

Her progress was such that she now works voluntarily at Tolver House two days a week where she is back in the office environment that was once so familiar to her. Jane's success story is a result of her determination, the support of her family including husband Stuart and son Adam and the help she has received from professionals such as Council staff who have spurred her on.

Jane wants to progress further and is keen to carry on working, adding: "Adam is chuffed that his mum goes to work. It's a case of whoever is in first makes the tea nowadays, and that, I'm glad to say, is not always me!"

The relationship between Brian Greenall and his elderly, almost blind mum May is one that some people could only imagine. They laugh and joke together, enjoy trips out and are comfortable in one another's company. But it wasn't always like this.

Up until last October Brian was working shifts and the strain was having an effect on his health as he saw his mother's health deteriorate too.

He suffered from stress related illnesses, spent time in hospital and saw the relationship between himself and his mum plummet as he became irritable with her and found it hard to talk – all the while having to spend more time caring for her.

"I was at my lowest ebb," said Brian. "Uncertain about the future, worried that my illness would threaten my job and panicking about how I could work and look after mum too."

Life changed dramatically for Brian and May when they heard of Self Direct Support which involves Brian being supported to be his mum's full time carer. His health has improved dramatically, he has more time to exercise and study but, says Brian: "The best thing of all is seeing mum laugh and smile again."

And May says she feels safer and happier now that her son is caring for her, has more social contact, is not as lonely and feels more confident and mentally stimulated.

"And I eat more healthily too," she said. "Because Brian has become a really good cook!"



"And I eat more healthily too," she said. "Because Brian has become a really good cook!"



"She feels safer and happier now that her son is caring for her at home, has more social contact, is not as lonely and feels more confident and mentally stimulated."

The Foundation Plan supports adults to allow them to continue living in their homes. It sets out to boost people's physical and mental health while improving quality of life and enabling them to make a positive contribution to the community. Put together by the Council and its partners after widespread consultation, the Plan gives people greater control over their lives, allowing them to access services they need while ensuring they have sufficient income and resources.

To view the plan log on to www.sthelens.gov.uk or for more information call Caroline Barlow on 01744 456137.

Have your say

The Council is currently consulting on several important planning documents and would like to hear your comments.

The Core Strategy is the principal document of the Local Development Framework and outlines the vision for St.Helens to 2025.

It will guide all new development.

The Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides more detailed guidance on the provision of affordable housing to meet needs in the Borough, ensuring that local residents have the opportunity to buy or rent a home that is affordable for their income.

Design and Crime SPD sets out the design principles that the Council wish to see incorporated in developments to contribute to a reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour. It will play an important part in improving the quality of life of residents in the Borough by reducing the incidence of crime and fear of crime.

For further information on any of the documents check the website, or contact Planning Policy on 01744 676190

British Dyslexia Association

Charity number 702042

**St HELENS and DISTRICT
DROP-IN EVENING
Every Second Tuesday of Month
@ 7.00pm**

**Millennium House 1st floor
Bickerstaffe Street
St Helens WA10 1DH**

**helpline: 0870 990 7336
Box 42, St Helens WA10 3BR**

Mike makes an impact

Mike Deakin
has won an award for his full time voluntary work.

He received the accolade for his "commitment and contribution to People's Choice and the Hobbies Group". He received his award at the St.Helens CVS.

Mike helps to run People's Choice, a Self Advocacy group for Adults with Learning Disabilities, manning the office and paying bills. One member Tommy

said: "If Mike didn't work at People's Choice I wouldn't be able to come to English sessions. He pushes my wheelchair for me". While William says: "He always does his duties with a smile". Added Michael: "He makes everyone feel as if they are a best friend".

St.Helens People's Choice gives adults with learning disabilities the chance to have their say about services they use and how they live their lives.

The self advocacy group is run by adults with learning disabilities for adults with learning disabilities. Supported by organisations including the Council it has made big strides in recent years. To find out more call 01744 613853.



Branch out with the Trees Community Centre

Can't see the wood for the trees? Then new courses on offer at the Trees Community Centre could be for you.

As well as sessions to improve your Maths and English and basic computing skills there are courses to learn about the internet, beauty on a budget, how to delve into

your family history and learning with young children so you can help your child with school work.

If you are in receipt of benefit some of the courses may be free.

For more information contact Aleks or Lisa on 01925 596108 FREE childcare may be available for all courses.

Get on the road to good health

Go Active members can now get on the road to good health by taking a free body MoT test at their local leisure club. And non-members can buy one for just £1.

The Council devised the MoT (My Own Training) log to promote health and well being then teamed up with partners including Saints, Helena Partnerships and the Healthy Living and Healthy Schools teams to deliver the project.

Look out for flyers in the Council's sports and leisure centres telling you how you can get involved. The Go Active team also want to hear from companies that would like their staff to benefit from the health test.

Go Active's membership has risen in recent months and is now at a record high of 1,700 adults and children. It has also linked up with Central Fitness in the town centre where members can use the squash court and gym.



goactive

Find out more by calling Sue Robinson (who masterminded MoT) or Beth McCartney on 01744 677230 or email goactivesales@sthelens.gov.uk for more about Go Active prices and packages.



Green fingered gardeners boost compost rates

Gardeners continue to benefit from the regular Compost Giveaways organised by the Council.

The last was the most successful ever with more than 800 residents taking home 25 tonnes of compost. A home composting advisor from WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) was also on hand to give advice on making compost at home and over 100 people picked up a new black box for recycling bottles and cans and pink bag for recycling plastics.

In conjunction with WRAP the Council is still offering cut price compost bins. Depending upon size, the bins start from £27 and can be ordered from www.recyclenow.com/compost or by calling 0845 076 0223

A warm welcome in St.Helens

Councillors in St.Helens are calling on local people to ensure that the Borough remains a welcoming and tolerant place where the background, religion, culture, race, disability, age, gender and sexual orientation of all people is respected.

The Council is unanimous in joining the Merseyside Hope not Hate campaign which brings communities together and opposes those who deliver messages of hate aimed at dividing communities and whipping up intolerance and violence.

Anyone for cricket?

St.Helens Cricket Club is holding a Cricket Camp. Boys Under 10 and Girls Under 12 are invited to the event between August 24 and 26 in Windleshaw Road 10am – 3pm.

A one day Pass is £7.50, 3 Day Pass £20.00
Coaching will be available from fully qualified ECB accredited

coaches who will teach you to learn the skills to play the game
Equipment is provided.
For further details contact:
Darren Tyms - 0151 7932654 / 07904924222
Marc Finney - 07734180000
St.Helens Cricket Club - 01744 23931

Centres of excellence

St.Helens is one of just 17 local authorities to have met its 2010 targets for the rollout of Sure Start Children's Centres ahead of time - operating 12 across the Borough which work with families.

Youngsters enjoy the many activities on offer at Moss Bank, Billinge and Rainford Children's Centres.



Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls recognised St.Helens success and said:

"Ten years ago there were no Sure Start Children's Centres, today there are nearly 3,000 thanks to over £7 billion funding and from April 2009, funding for Sure Start Children's Centres will top a billion pounds per year. I am delighted that we can see the real impact this radical reform is having on children and families. The Sure Start generation will grow up with a strong network of health, education and childcare support all aimed to get them the best possible

start in life - while their parents receive invaluable parenting advice and help throughout the first five years of their child's life.

"This new research shows that Children's Centres are accessible and available to all families but it is vital that centre leaders work with health colleagues to inform parents about the excellent range of parenting and health services available to them. This support is particularly valuable in an economic downturn when parents are increasingly reliant upon support and advice from professionals to help them stay in, or get into employment and get the affordable childcare they need."

Councillor Shirley Evans, the Council's Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services added: "Children's Centres give children the opportunity to fulfil their potential. Our role is to identify the needs of the child and offer parents the support to meet those needs. It is really encouraging to know we are ahead of schedule to provide these important services.

"Our centres have on-site staff that can provide parents with advice on healthy eating, or run mums and dads clubs for example. External practitioners, such as midwives and health visitors also come in to the centres to offer additional support and services."

More than 2.3 million children under five and their families now have access to services through 2,900 Children's Centres across England. National research found that:

- The vast majority of parents surveyed found using a Sure Start Children's Centre was a very positive experience. Levels of satisfaction were very high with 92 per cent of all users saying they were satisfied (68% were very satisfied).
- Parents who use Children's Centres access a wide range of activities and are very satisfied with the services they have used including childcare and nursery education, health and family and parenting services.
- Children's Centres are used by all groups within a community, with no groups excluded or failing to access them.
- To find out more about your local Children's Centre call 0800 073 0526.



Scores on the doors



New food safety ratings will give greater insight into the safest and cleanest providers across St.Helens.

Council environmental health chiefs have launched a new five star food rating initiative.

The launch, which coincided with Food Safety Week, translates food hygiene inspection results into an easily understood 5 star Food Safety rating which will be made available to the public via the Council's website and on going publicity.

Retail businesses, catering establishments, mobile traders, school and work canteens, and kitchens such as restaurants, supermarkets and nursing and

residential care homes will be included in the scheme. Food manufacturers and businesses handling low risk or prepacked foods will not be included in the scheme.

All food businesses which handle food are subject to food hygiene inspections, the frequency of which are based on a national code of practice. The inspection rating system is contained in the Food Law Code of Practice (England) issued by the Food Standards Agency.



Scores are awarded for:

- Food hygiene and safety procedures, the food handling practices
- The structure of the premises, which includes cleanliness, layout, lighting, ventilation and the overall condition of the premises
- The confidence which the inspector has in the management of the business and the food safety systems which are in place

The number of stars awarded indicates the standard of food safety found at the premises on the day that it was inspected.

Star Rating Standard of premises



★★★★★	Excellent
★★★★	Very Good
★★★	Good
★★	Fair
★	Poor
No stars	Major improvement needed.

Certificates and window stickers displaying the number of stars will be issued to each business included in the scheme. These may be displayed on the relevant premises for which they have been awarded.

All the star ratings awarded to businesses will be publicised on the St.Helens Council website: www.sthelens.gov.uk, just follow the link to Scores on the Doors

For more information contact the food safety team on 01744 456338.



End of an era but book means that baths will live on



It was the end of an era and the start of a new exciting future for Queens Park Pool, affectionately known as Boundary Road Baths.

Over the years probably half the residents in the Borough learnt to swim there. Now, Queens Park Leisure Centre, named after the park it is sited in, is being rebuilt as part of a £3.6 million project.

The state of the art leisure complex would offer; a five-lane

25 metre pool, dry and wet changing rooms, fitness facility, refurbished sports hall and community meeting room. It replaces facilities built more than 100 years ago.

Staff who have worked at the centre over the years gathered for a fond farewell to the old and a warm welcome to the new improved centre.

For Andy McNicholas, a Lead Assessor in Urban Regeneration and Housing, it brought back very special memories. Andy has been speaking to users past and present and hit upon the idea of writing a book about the history of the baths dating back to the original Rimmer Street pool.

One user Arthur Austin, who is in his 90s used to work at Boundary Road pool and had his daily dip there until recently. Arthur had so many tales to tell

and gave Andy the title for his book Ankle Deep in Pea Soup.

Says Andy: "It referred to the early days of the last century when the pool had no filters. Just before it was emptied at the weekend people were given the chance of a halfpenny dip. Says Andy: "By the time it needed emptying everyone used to say it was like swimming in pea soup."

At first Andy just printed a copy of the book for his own use but as word got round more and more people have asked for copies. So to cover his costs he charges just £5 for the book with a percentage going to the Ronald McDonald House linked to Alder Hey Hospital.

If you would like a copy you can contact Andy on 01744 677375 or 07961020851.



Free cycle maps

A free St.Helens Cycle Map listing summer bike rides is now available.

Around 25,000 copies of these have been distributed to St.Helens Council offices, community centres, libraries, post offices, doctors' surgeries and leisure centres.

The map provides information on cycle tracks, cycle lanes and cycle parking within the Borough and suggests convenient routes for cyclists whether they wish to get from 'A' to 'B' quickly or fancy a more leisurely cycle ride.

For more information on cycling in St.Helens or to request a map contact the Council's Contact Centre on 01744 456789 contactcentre@sthelens.gov.uk

Making LINKs in St.Helens

St.Helens Local Involvement Network (LINK) is a new network which gives people the chance to share their views and experiences on local health and social care services. This information will help to shape local services to meet the needs of local people.

St Helens LINK:

- Gives people the chance to say what they think about local services – what is working well and what is not.
- Helps people to check how services are planned and run.
- Feeds back what people have said about services so that things can change for the better.

What makes LINK different is that it will:

- involve more people
- make it easier for people to get involved
- have certain powers to make things happen
- be looking at social care as well as health services.

For more information or a membership form, contact us at:

St.Helens LINK
St.Helens CVS
4th Floor, Tontine House
24 Church Street
St.Helens WA10 1BD
Tel: 01744 457119 Email: sthelenslink@sthelenscv.org.uk

