

Stockton

NEWS

The Community Magazine of Stockton Council - Spring 2006

Stockton's Blooming

Stockton makes the
Britain in Bloom finals

How did we do?

See how the Council
performed 2005-06

Fostering

Could you take up
the challenge?



Holiday Courses at...



Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre runs holiday courses during February Half Term, Easter, Summer and October Half term. All activities have to be pre booked. Parental consent forms must be completed for each child. Courses run from 1 – 5 days duration 9.30am – 3.30pm

If you are new to Watersports then the Multi Activity course is the best way to start as you will get to try all the different things on offer. Activities included in the Multi Activity Course include Sailing, Kayaking, Canoeing, Raft Building and Bellboating

How old do I have to be?
Courses are for young people from the age of 8 – 16 years.

Can I bring my friends?
YES!
We offer discounts for six or more places booked together.

What courses are on offer and what if I am new to Watersports?
Courses on offer throughout the year range from:-
Multi Activity, Sailing, Kayaking, Offsite White Water Trips, Sailing Residentials and Powerboating.

What should I bring with me?
A packed lunch with drinks, 2 spare changes of clothes, a 50p coin for the locker (returnable) old trainers you don't mind getting wet and dirty and a towel.
For more information about the watersports centre - see address panel at the bottom of this advert.

TEENS GET FIT AT...

Are you between the age of 12 and 16?

Do you want to get fit and make new friends?

Well why not come along and join in our **Teenactiv8** programme.

Teenactiv8 is our health and fitness programme for young people. It involves a programme of gym, fitness classes and swimming sessions. By offering this we are helping you to achieve a healthier lifestyle whilst keeping the emphasis on fun. To make it even more accessible we have developed a flexible approach offering different venues, times and days.

How do I join T8?
You will need to book an induction with our **SHOKK** qualified fitness advisors by contacting reception at the relevant venue.

	Billingham Forum	01642 55 13 81
	Splash	01642 52 72 72
	Stockton Sports Centre	01642 52 82 82
	Thornaby Pavilion	01642 76 09 71
	Thornaby Pool	01642 61 67 27
	Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre	01642 52 86 89

These facilities are supported by Stockton - on - Tees Borough Council and are managed by Tees Active Ltd.

www.teesactive.co.uk

DOES EVERY CHILD MATTER TO YOU?

HAVE YOU GOT WHAT IT TAKES?

Do you believe that children should:

- Have the opportunity to enjoy family life YES NO
- Achieve their potential at school, work and leisure YES NO
- Be supported in their relationships with family and friends YES NO
- Be helped to work through problems in a safe and therapeutic way YES NO
- Be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, be able to make positive contributions and have a positive future as an adult. YES NO
- Have someone committed to them to ensure all of the above YES NO

Do you:

- Have experience of working with children YES NO
- Not work outside the home YES NO
- Have no children under 12 years living with you YES NO
- Have the guts to offer challenging children a stable home YES NO
- Have the ability to work within a team YES NO

If you answered yes to all of this YOU could be part of an INNOVATIVE foster care service for those children in Stockton who have suffered significant trauma and disruption.

We offer:

- Financial support of up to £475 per week
- Professional pre and post approval training
- Team approach to helping a child
- Your own supervisory social worker
- Support groups

For more information please contact the Child Placement Team
On (01642) 526218/16



Stockton Council's achievement at gaining the top 4-star rating for its performance is not simply rewarding for the employees and councillors who worked hard to achieve this result.

The rating, gained in the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), reflects a continuing real improvement in many council services.

The Commission, backed by the Government, introduced harder standards in the CPA to reflect increasing public expectations. Against these, we have to continually raise our performance to deliver what you, the public, expects, continually improving the way we work and provide your services.

This is an important step towards achieving our vision for Stockton-on-Tees and will form a strong platform for further success. And with other authorities across the Tees Valley also performing at the highest level, the outlook is bright for the Tees Valley's regeneration and its emergence as a city region.

To see how Stockton Council performed, see page 2 and our special feature on pages 22/23

What great news that Stockton has reached the national finals of the Britain in Bloom competition for the first time ever. Doesn't it make you feel proud? It isn't only the Council's own Care For Your Area teams that are behind the blooming Borough – many other organisations and individuals have also put in a great deal of hard work.

We can all do our bit to create a floral feast. The inspectors will be here during April and again in August and we hope you'll join in the spirit of the event by creating a colourful floral display, no matter how small. For more details, see page 3.

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Stockton News is published by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and distributed to every household in the Borough free of charge. If you have not received a copy please call (01642) 526098 or e-mail communications@stockton.gov.uk

It aims to provide news and information about the Council, its partner organisations, and local community groups and businesses. Every effort is made to ensure that all information is accurate and up-to-date at the time of publication. Your views and comments are welcome.

Stockton News is produced by Stockton Council's Communications Unit and designed by Bridge Design Group. Pictures courtesy of the Evening Gazette, Peter Mernagh and other sources.

There is an audio version of Stockton News. Please call (01642) 526098 to order a copy or e-mail communications@stockton.gov.uk



Stockton is amongst the top performing councils

Stockton Council has kept its place amongst the country's top performing local authorities, despite a new, tougher test set by Government inspectors, the Audit Commission.

The Council has earned the top rating – four stars – in the nationwide Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for 2005. And, says the Commission, it is improving well.

Public satisfaction with the authority is high, the Commission's report says, with most targets being met and services improving in most priority areas. Value for money is good and efficiency gains are being achieved.

The Council has pledged to continue its drive for excellence in public services. Praising Councillors, employees and the authority's many partners for their part in the achievement, Chief Executive George Garlick said: "The Government made it clear that this year's CPA would be a much harder test for councils, so to pass with flying colours is a tremendous achievement.

"Value for money is good and efficiency gains are being achieved."

"It will be a challenge to maintain our four star rating but in Stockton we have a strong commitment to continuous improvement, and the CPA result certainly shows we are travelling in the right direction.

"I am very pleased at the recognition for our achievements in education,

health, regeneration and other services, along with our drive to place our customers first."

This year the Government introduced new criteria to the CPA, which compares councils' performance across England. These recognise the public's rising expectations of local government and are designed to encourage continuous improvement in services.

Twice under the old system, Stockton had earned the highest classification – then known as 'Excellent'.

What the Audit Commission says about Stockton Council:

- Robust plans are in place with the ability to secure sustained improvements in services
- Education achievement is increasing
- 'Care For Your Area' environmental services continue to be low cost, high standard and award winning and that the Council 'makes an effective contribution towards wider community outcomes'
- the number of child protection registrations has reduced and support for individual children is more effective
- together with the Primary Care Trust, the Council has improved health outcomes for older people
- more homes are decent, benefit processing times have been reduced
- leisure facilities and open spaces have improved
- there is a substantial regeneration programme delivering environmental and economic improvements

The Council received further praise when an auditor's report gave it a clean bill of performance and financial health in an independent assessment.

Presenting the findings of the Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection letter to the Council's Cabinet, District Auditor Steve Nicklin said the authority has a sound financial position and performs well in most areas of financial management.

Congratulating the authority on its rating, he said the Council provides good value for money.

Flying the flag for SIRF



Motorists passing the Horse and Jockey roundabout, on Durham Road, can now see a new landmark acknowledging the cultural significance of SIRF – the Stockton International Riverside Festival. Six banners celebrating SIRF as the UK's finest street arts festival now adorn the roundabout. Designed by Middlesbrough-based Rocket Science, they are sponsored by Barratt and Haslam Homes, Stockton Council's partners in the multi-million pound regeneration of Hardwick.

- *This year's SIRF takes place from August 2–6. Highlights will include Brazilian aerial circus by Circo da Madrugada, whose performance takes place under a spectacular 'Angeldrome' and tells the story of a group of angels who visit the earth every 500 years to sample life's pleasures.*

Polish company Theatre A Part provide the UK premiere of 'Femina', UK company Nutkhut present an extravaganza of song and dance with 'Bollywood steps' and Desperate Men tell a series of shaggy dog stories, building up to the wonderful 'Miracle Show'. Plus the 16th Festival Fringe, providing a riot of music, bigger than ever before but still fresh and edgy!

Bloomin' good news



After last year's Northumbria in Bloom success, Stockton has done it again – beating its rivals to be nominated in the prestigious Britain in Bloom competition.

Stockton will represent the North East in this year's Britain in Bloom finals in the Best City category – beating Newcastle, Gateshead and Durham for the North East regional nomination.

The Borough received five separate awards in Northumbria in Bloom 2005, including the coveted Whitbread Trophy for the Best City for the second year in succession.

Judges will be here to make two inspections between 18 April and 12 May, and 31 July and 11 August.

Britain in Bloom organisers, the Royal Horticultural Society, runs a list of events throughout the year and Stockton Council is planning a

programme of its own to tie in with these.

The Council's own Care For Your Area Awards celebrate the achievements of individual residents, groups, schools and businesses who have done their bit to care for their area. We are also looking for green-fingered residents to be nominated as part of the Best Garden category in this year's awards.

This success follows the news that the Council's Care For Your Area horticultural team has been shortlisted for a top national award, Local Government Chronicle magazine's Management Team of the Year.

The Britain in Bloom results will be announced in Perth, Scotland on 21 September.

For more details and nomination forms for the Care For Your Area awards call (01642) 391959 or e-mail careforyourarea@stockton.gov.uk

Residents move in to Mandale Park

More people are moving into Mandale Park as the £30 million redevelopment scheme continues.

Every week has seen residents move in at Phase 1A, a development on Mitchell Avenue built by both Barratt and Haslam Homes for Nomad Housing Association.

The regeneration scheme is a partnership between Stockton Council, Barratt, Haslam Homes, Nomad Housing and Tristar Homes Ltd.

The development at Pickering Road/Saltburn Road is also progressing well and, with the first courtyard of bungalows complete, older residents have picked up the keys to their new homes.

The creation of a Linear Park at Mandale Park is set to start with initial planting work. Local people are again being involved in consultation for the next stage of the regeneration.

Sue's our new Town Centre Manager

We're delighted to welcome Sue Burgess on board as Stockton's new Town Centre Manager.

Sue, who hails from Ripon, brings a wealth of experience, having previously worked in the public and private sectors. Most recently she worked as a senior regeneration consultant for a company in Leeds and, before that, as Principal Economic Development Officer with North Yorkshire County Council.

Sue said: "This is an exciting time for the whole Tees Valley in regeneration terms. I believe Stockton town centre can really benefit from this if we all pull together to make things happen."



J-Lowe ready to go! It's written in the stars

Swimming prodigy Jemma Lowe departed for Melbourne, Australia, to compete in her first Commonwealth Games, as Stockton News went to press.

Jemma, who lives and trains in Stockton, represented Wales in the Games as her father is Welsh.

Her selection follows an impressive display in Shanghai, China, which saw Jemma break the British junior record with a time of 1:00:08 in the 100m butterfly.

Before leaving for the Games, Jemma's team mates from BOSSS (Borough of Stockton Swimming Scheme) and Tees Active Sports Academy presented her with a Welsh national flag, which will take pride of place at Splash, Stockton, when she returns.

Aged just 15, Jemma is proud to be taking part in such a major tournament: "I feel honoured to be representing my country at the Commonwealth Games, she said.

"It's going to be a fantastic experience and I hope it will assist me in my long term development as a swimmer."

Jemma's coach, Graeme Antwhistle, said: "This is a well-deserved opportunity for Jemma and it will take her to the next level of competition."

See the next Stockton News for an update on her progress.



If you've never visited Wynyard Woodland Planetarium, Thorpe Thewles, now could be your chance.

The planetarium is a fantastic educational and entertainment facility which puts on fascinating public shows.

Amongst the latest shows, presented by Associate Director John McCue, is one about the new space race to land a man on Mars. He said: "In about 25 years, we'll make manned landings on Mars – we have the technology! NASA have a plan and the Russians have a different one, so why not come along and find out what they are and more about the red planet?"

Mars is visible low in the western sky throughout the evening until the summer.

Friday, 28 April, sees the last of the monthly evening telescope club sessions until September. Cleveland and Darlington astronomical society members also meet every clear Friday evening until 28 April and welcome visitors with wonderful sights of the heavens.

Planetarium and observatory staff also work with local amateur astronomers on serious scientific work. Keith Johnson, a regular contributor to BBC's "Sky at Night" programme, recently took the photograph of Mars, shown below. It's the sort of thing that can be seen through telescopes on a public observing night – yet incredibly difficult to capture on film.

Advanced booking is advised for the popular Planetarium Shows, which take place on Friday 21 April, at 7:30pm, then the first and third Sundays of the month from May to August at 3pm. Admission is £3 for adults, £1.50 concessions and £6 for families. To find out more contact Dr Ed Restall on (01740) 630544 or e-mail: director@wynyard-planetarium.net



Hospital fight continues

Leading Stockton Councillors have described the decision by County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority to move specialist maternity services from North Tees University Hospital to Hartlepool as 'flawed and unacceptable'.

Although the plans cover a wide range of services, it is the transfer of consultant-led, specialist maternity and children's services which has raised particular concerns. This would leave only a midwife-led maternity unit at North Tees, with mothers and children needing specialist services required to make lengthy journeys to Hartlepool.

As Stockton News went to press, Stockton Councillors and local MPs hoped to raise the issue with Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt.

The proposals, put forward by Professor Sir Ari Darzi in a review of the area's acute services, met with considerable opposition from the local community, including a 20,000 signature petition.

In December, Stockton Council unanimously voted to oppose the plans, Councillors voicing concerns that the review had not taken value for money into account and that consultation had been flawed. They heard that:

- the review had flawed terms of reference because its emphasis was on retaining services at Hartlepool, rather than the best provision across both Stockton and Hartlepool;
- there was no financial information about the plans;
- families will face additional travel costs and difficulties, particularly affecting poorer residents;
- more women and children live in the Stockton area than in neighbouring areas;
- there is already a maternity Centre of Excellence at North Tees but no guarantee that such quality of service could be replicated in Hartlepool.

Only four years ago, Prime Minister Tony Blair opened the highly-regarded maternity Centre of Excellence at North Tees University Hospital, where specialist facilities had cost millions of pounds.

Council Tax rises in line with nation

Stockton Council has succeeded in agreeing a Council Tax rise in line with the national average, despite receiving one of the region's lowest increases in Government funding.

Councillors have agreed a 4.5 per cent increase for 2006-07, equivalent to 58 pence per week for Band A Council Tax payers (almost half the total in the Borough). And the Council expects the rise for 2007-08 is expected to reduce to 3.9 per cent if outside factors affecting its financial planning remain unchanged.

Figures released by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy indicate this is exactly in line with the rest of England.

For the first time, the overall budget of £125,786,000 does not include funding for schools, which now goes direct to the individual schools.

George Garlick, Stockton Council's Chief Executive, said the increase agreed by councillors would allow improvements in services to continue for the future.

"The budget is well within the 5 per cent limit set by the Government," he said. "The Council has been working hard to achieve efficiency savings over the past year and these are enabling us to increase the level of provision in certain vital services," he said.

The restriction of the Council Tax increase to 4.5 per cent is a

considerable achievement, because Government grant to the Council has risen by just 2.2 per cent (the national average was 3.1 per cent).

Three months ago, the Audit Commission rated Stockton Council at the highest 4-star level for its performance, commenting that we provide good value for money and are improving well. Councillors have pledged to continue in this direction.

Services to benefit from additional funding include:

- £500,000 for additional care for adults with complex learning disabilities
- £300,000 to further expand the green waste service
- £175,000 to improve the Borough's markets
- £60,000 to improve Preston Hall and extend the museum's community outreach programme
- £250,000 for extra adaptations and equipment for disabled people
- £50,000 towards changing facilities at Harold Wilson Recreation Ground in Thornaby

In addition, the Council has expanded its concessionary fares scheme and continue a programme of environmental improvements across the Borough.

The increase in Council Tax will be 4.57 per cent once increases set by Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Brigade and Parish Councils (average figure) are added.

Parking is tops for customer service



Judges at the annual British Parking Association awards named Stockton Council's car parking team tops for customer service. The team was overall national winner of the Exceptional Customer Service category, receiving their trophy from "Kumars at No 42" star Sanjeev Bhaskar at London's Dorchester Hotel in March.

The awards encourage and reward improved performance in the parking industry and are open to private car park operators, health authorities, shopping centres and airports as well as local authorities.

In the last 12 months, Stockton Council has taken over responsibility for street parking enforcement and re-establishing a residential parking scheme. The parking team is based in Gloucester House, Church Road.

'Best possible' bus deal for pass holders

It's all aboard for Stockton Borough's concessionary pass holders as a new deal for concessionary travel exceeds even the Government's new free scheme.

From April 1, concessionary pass holders can travel free not just within Stockton Borough, but – for a one-year trial period – also in the Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland borough areas.

At the same time, the Government introduced a national scheme allowing pensioners to travel free within their own council's boundaries. However,

Stockton Council has been able to work with neighbouring authorities to negotiate an even better scheme that offers travel across their boundaries.

What's more, also for a trial period, the Stockton pass allows free travel at all times, with no restrictions on weekday mornings.

Mike Robinson, the Council's Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy, said: "Stockton has always operated one of the country's best concessionary travel schemes and I am delighted that we can continue to set the pace in this, for the next year at least.

"We were keen to improve on the national minimum scheme and get as good a deal for our pass holders as we could. I am very pleased our discussions with bus companies and neighbouring councils was successful and would like to acknowledge the tremendous co-operation from our local bus operators to make this scheme possible."

Until March, Stockton concessionary pass holders paying £5 for an annual pass could travel in Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and on key Hartlepool bus services for a flat fare of 30p. Passholders make more than 3,000,000 journeys every year.

Waste? Be clear where it goes



A driver is spot checked to ensure he is an authorised waste carrier.

You have some bulky waste to dispose of – what do you do?

Call someone who collects – but, before you do, make sure you use an authorised waste carrier - or it could cost you dearly.

As part of the Government's drive to improve the environment, reduce crime and the costly problem to councils of flytipping, new regulations could now result in fines up to £5,000 for residents who do not use a responsible waste contractor.

It's up to Stockton Council and the Environment Agency to enforce the Duty of Care Regulations and they will take action against those who breach the regulations.

To check a waste carrier's validity, call the Environment Agency on 08708 506506 or go online at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/publicregister

If you have bulky waste to get rid of, call the Council's Care For Your Area Team on (01642) 391959.

Working together for all the children

Stockton's Children's Trust brings together organisations across the Borough providing services for children and young people, parents and carers.

The Children's Trust is an umbrella forum, drawing together organisations such as hospitals, schools, police, social services and community and voluntary groups, to work together and provide a cohesive service for children. At its heart is Stockton Council, the lead organisation.

Launched last month, the Children's Trust takes an overview of everything that is provided for children in Stockton Borough and will drive forward improvements.

There won't be immediate changes in the services children, young people and parents receive on a daily basis. But, as the Children's Trust works to develop its vision for children's services, parents and carers can expect

better and more services to meet their needs.

By integrating services and sharing relevant information with the understanding of parents and carers, it is planned that people would only need to explain their situation once to one lead professional who would then share that information with those other services that need to know to provide useful assistance.

Improvements may not appear overnight but the commitment of every organisation and everyone involved in the Children's Trust is to make services better and more easily accessible for all the children who need them.

Local authorities across the country are expected to set up Children's Trusts in their areas by April 2006. Stockton's Children's Trust will meet quarterly and its meetings will be open to the public in order to allow ease of feedback from the public, community and voluntary organisations.

Listening to what you have to say

There's an easy way to let Stockton Council know what you're thinking – join one of our four Viewpoint Panels.

We want to know what residents think of our current services, how we can improve them and what you think of proposed changes to services. Viewpoint panels allow you to do just that.

Kate Dumain, the Council's Research and Consultation Manager, said: "We look for all sorts of people, who often might think the Council has little to do with them.

"The Council is involved in many aspects of everyone's lives – from schools to country parks, leisure facilities to social care, community safety, looking after roads and pavements to making sure the area is clean and tidy and that your rubbish and recycling gets collected."

There are two main panels – Viewpoint, the adult panel, and Youth Viewpoint, the youth panel, which have nearly 2,000 members in all. Although both have members who are from Black Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities or have disabilities or sensory losses, in panels so large it is difficult for specific views relating to these to stand out. So there are also two sub-panels, BME Viewpoint, for black and minority ethnic residents, and Disability Viewpoint, for residents with a disability or sensory loss, to give people the chance to have their say on more specific issues where the need arises. Residents can be members of more than one panel.

Adult panel members are asked to take part in four surveys a year, which can be completed online or on paper and take about half an hour each to complete. The youth panel is made up to 8 – 18-year-olds and they are sent six surveys, which take approximately ten minutes to complete. The sub panels are consulted as issues arise but are no more than four times per year.

If you would like to have your say, just sign up to become a member of one of the panels. Members receive a newsletter containing feedback on recent consultation.

For more information contact Viewpoint on (01642) 526090 or email pps@stockton.gov.uk and make sure your voice is heard.

Hartburn by-election



Hartburn Ward has a new Councillor after Terry Laing (Conservative) was elected in a by-election in February. The by-election was called following the death of Councillor Stephen Smailes last September, who had represented Hartburn on the Council for 38 years.

Councillor Laing can be contacted on (01642) 587356 or email terry.laing@stockton.gov.uk

Spitfire marks Thornaby's wartime past

Thornaby's aeronautical past will be celebrated thanks to a £50,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant, funding various activities to enable the local community to find out more about the town's aviation history.

The project will focus around a full-size Spitfire model at the roundabout where Thornaby Road meets Bader Avenue. It will highlight the role RAF Thornaby played in World War II. Although Thornaby was home to Anson and Hudson aircraft, Spitfires regularly flew from the base on detachment.

The project will also include family learning classes and a local history course, a play involving Bader Primary School and self-guided walks, bringing the history of RAF Thornaby to life.

The lottery bid was made jointly by Thornaby Town Council, Stockton Council, Thornaby Memorial Aerodrome Committee and Cleveland Aircrew Association. The picture shows an impression of how the roundabout will look when the Spitfire replica is installed in spring 2007; the finished version will have the 'classic' pointed wingtips.



Funding boost for transport

A £3.5 million boost will help the Borough's transport network improve over the coming year.

The funding, from the Government's Local Transport Capital Settlement, includes £2.134 million for integrated transport schemes such as bus priority measures, local safety schemes, pedestrian safety and cycle routes. An additional £1.31 million will go towards maintaining roads, footpaths and bridges.

And further good news came when Stockton Council achieved a top performance rating of 'Excellent' against its first Local Transport Plan in 2004/5. Stockton scored 89 per cent – up from 72 per cent in 2004 – the best in the North-East as well as in the top ten nationally.

The Council's second Local Transport Plan, now submitted to the

Government Office for the North East and the Department for Transport, includes four Area Transport Strategies which will allow services to be tailored to meet local needs.

Major public consultation helped shape each of these strategies – for the Billingham, Central, Eastern and Western areas. The key issue in all four areas (and top priority in three of them) was the need to improve access to jobs and services by extending the coverage of the local bus network.

In Billingham, other priorities include removing through traffic, particularly HGVs carrying hazardous chemicals from residential areas, improving access to healthcare services and reducing traffic speeds in residential areas and villages.

Priorities in the Central area included removing obstructive parking in

housing estates, reducing congestion on trunk roads and at school entrances and improving street lighting.

The Eastern area (which takes in Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick) highlighted priorities including reducing congestion on roads in and around Ingleby Barwick, improving access to schools, reducing school gate congestion and improving footpath and cycleway links.

And priorities for the Western area, which includes Yarm and Eaglescliffe, included improving road safety training in schools, reducing traffic speeds in residential areas, reducing traffic congestion in Yarm High Street and improving access to schools.

Progress towards the priorities in each area will be monitored every six months and the strategies reviewed annually to ensure they still meet local needs.

Trails promote Borough's history

Walk this way to learn more about the Borough's history.

Stockton Council's Parks and Countryside Team has worked closely with Tees Archaeology to produce a series of leaflets celebrating the history of Norton, Yarm and Cowpen Bewley.

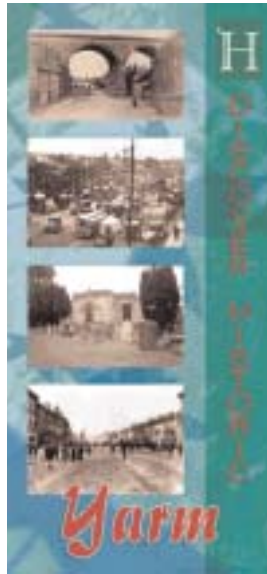
The leaflets are packed with information, pictures and maps to guide walkers around many of the interesting historical features still evident in the three areas.

Each leaflet contains a map of the area with start and finish points and the walk route clearly marked on.

Points of interest include evidence of an Anglo Saxon cemetery in Norton, an 11th Century church in Yarm and 17th Century cottages in Cowpen Bewley.

Leaflets are available in libraries, Tourist Information Centres, Stockton Council reception areas and at Country Park visitor centres. You can also

download a copy from www.stockton.gov.uk or contact the Parks and Countryside Team on (01642) 526871.



Bridge going well

The Highways Agency reports that the scheme to rebuild Surtees Bridge, which carries the A66 over the River Tees at Thornaby, is progressing well.

Work started in March and contractor Edmund Nuttall Ltd will be on site for about 17 months as the bridge undergoes a total rebuild.

However, two way, two lane traffic will remain in operation most of the time, with single lane working and any closures kept to a minimum.

When complete, the works will allow the final two Eastbound legs of the South Stockton link road – 1825 Way – to be opened, finally completing the work started by the Council to improve traffic flows around Stockton.

Highways Agency project manager Arun Sahni said: "We are pleased with progress so far and are confident construction will go according to plan."

Let your fingers do the texting

There are three new ways to keep in touch with what's going on and feeding opinions back to the Council.

Together, text messaging schemes called EZEETEXT, REDTEXT and BENETEXT make up a new Stockton Council pilot scheme which continues until September.

EZEETEXT is aimed at young people and will see the Council use text messaging to contact those registered with the service to ask them about their views on topics such as sports activities and school life. The young people can then reply to the message to express their opinions – under 16s will need the consent of a parent or carer.

You can find registration forms for EZEETEXT at Stockton libraries or download them from www.stockton.gov.uk/ezee. They can be handed in at the library or returned to Allison Davis, Stockton Council, Children, Education and Social Care, PO Box 228, Church Road, Stockton.

REDTEXT will enable anyone who registers to receive text updates on a range of local issues, and give residents the opportunity to have their say on local regeneration projects,

advertised through community newsletters. For details on what is included in the pilot and how to register contact Viv Lattimer on (01642) 527025.

BENETEXT will help speed up processing of benefit claims by texting out information and reminders to customers who need additional help with their housing and council tax benefit claims. For information, contact Julie Higgins on (01642) 526662.

Texts sent to mobile phones will be free and any texts sent to the Council will be charged at the usual mobile rate.



Fostering challenge

Looking after your own children can be a challenge, but looking after someone else's can be even more so.



TASK
Fostering scheme
Therapeutic. Assessment.
Support. For Kids.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's Child Placement Team is looking for families or even single people of any gender who are willing to take up 'The Challenge' to foster children aged eight upwards and young people with behaviour which may be particularly difficult to deal with.

The rewards come in both the satisfaction stakes, in knowing that you are helping youngsters to have a better life, and financial with an allowance that could be up to £25,000 per year.

If you are up to the challenge, call the Child Placement Team at Stockton Council on 01642 526218.

Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

If you think you could take up that challenge, then read on.

Stockton Council's Child Placement Team is looking for people with experience of working with children to become foster carers on its TASK scheme, caring for children and young people with challenging behaviour.

TASK – which stands for Therapeutic, Assessment, Support for Kids – is foster care with a difference. The youngsters who need places come from a variety of backgrounds and may have had little consistency in their home life. Because of these difficult experiences, many may be emotionally and psychologically affected.

Foster caring is rewarding in itself but the TASK scheme offers higher financial rewards than those of other foster care schemes.

The fee is around £350 per week and, with allowances, it could add up to around £25,000 a year.

Jackie Ward, Stockton Council's Child Placement Team Manager, said: "Looking after any child or young person can be a difficult task, even if

they are your own. The foster carers we're looking to recruit to the TASK fostering scheme need to be special.

"We make no bones about it, these youngsters will be challenging, but we will be giving our full support and no-one is left on their own."

Pictured is Phyllis Robinson, who has been fostering for 30 years. Phyllis not only had three children of her own and a number of fostered children, she is also an adoptive parent.

The longest time Phyllis fostered a child was four and a half years and there have been others in cases of emergency – for example where she was called on to look after a child for just one night.

She would say fostering isn't necessarily easy, as both love and sanctions go together when looking after children. In Phyllis's experience she knows that every child is an individual and has come to her with individual problems that had to be dealt with.

Phyllis said: "All children are different and have their own backgrounds.

There are never two the same, so it depends on the child as to how you deal with them. But a lot of love as well as boundaries do go very much hand in hand."

If you would like to know more, please pick up the telephone for an informal chat with a member of staff from the Child Placement Team on (01642) 526218. They would love to hear from you.



Summer happenings in Preston Park

There's plenty to enjoy at Preston Park this summer. May opens with a real splash of colour with the **Teesside Spring Garden Festival (5 – 7 May)**, an annual favourite bringing something for everyone with displays and sales by plant growers, a wood festival, a range of craft activities, children's entertainment, live music and plenty more.

With summer on the way, **Getaway 2006 (20/21 May)** is a great chance to find out about outdoor activities around the area. Cleveland Scouts will be putting on a large display with activities for children to promote the Scouting movement and there will even be a climbing wall to try.

For fans of American cars, the **Fins and Chrome Show (27/28 May)** is the place to be. Organised by the North East American Car Club, it brings together US car fans from across the country to show off their fabulous motors, along with British classic cars, bikes, hot rods and custom cars, plus a fairground, sideshows and stalls.

Over 25 years, the **Vehicle Rally (24/25 June)** has grown into a popular event for enthusiasts and families looking for a good day out. Some 400 exhibitors and around 500 items on display cover subjects including motor vehicles from the 1930s to the present day. See commercial goods and passenger vehicles, military transport and even pedal and motorcycles, together with historic fire-fighting equipment.

Arena displays include comedy team Haurel and Lardy as well as a stunt

display team called 'Over the Top' and a monster fire engine named 'Back Draft'. Supporting these will be side shows, a fun fair, trade stands, auto jumble and other stalls.

Watch out too for **Ridewell 2006 (30 July)** – a great day based on the best

in two-wheeled transport – and the annual **Summer Show (25 – 28 August)**, four event-packed days of activities and entertainment.

For admission details of these events, see What's On (page 38).



Borough's primary schools are top class

The Borough's primary schools came top of the north east class in 2005, Government figures for 11-year-olds show.

Stockton's performance rose sharply over the year, with 81 per cent achieving Level 4 or better in English (up from 77 per cent in 2004), 80 per cent in mathematics (77 per cent in 2004) and 89 per cent in science (87 per cent in 2004). Nationally, results rose by just one per cent in English and maths, with science unchanged.

Children's achievement in Stockton has improved in each of the last four

years, placing Stockton 8th out of the 150 English education authorities for sustained improvement at Key Stage 2.

At Level 5, the higher achievement level, Stockton schools also exceeded national averages in all three core subjects, again placing the Borough best in the North East.

Mill Lane Primary School in Stockton was the only Tees Valley school in the top 100 nationally for continuous improvement over four years.

Julia Morrison, the Council's Head of School Effectiveness, says the results

are well-deserved and show how the strong partnership between schools and the Council helps achieve the best for children.

"It's all about sharing good practice and bringing schools together to benefit from learning networks," she said.

"We have a strong focus on creativity and enjoyment in achieving excellence and put children at the centre of learning. We recognise that they learn in different ways and we work with teachers to explore a range of teaching styles."

Creating a Cultural Quarter

Creating a link between Stockton's High Street and Riverside has seen the creation of the town's Cultural Quarter.

An area between Finkle Street and Silver Street, including some of Stockton's oldest 'yards', is now defined as a Cultural Quarter to reflect the historic style of the buildings and Stockton Council's aspirations for the area.

National urban regeneration specialists Gillespies have been commissioned to produce a masterplan for the Cultural Quarter – the same company who produced the blueprint for the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative and urban core.

Reuben Kench, Stockton Council's Head of Arts and Culture, said: "The creation of the Cultural Quarter will provide a vibrant and connected hub of businesses and organisations and this can only help to foster positive relationships between the parties.

"Continued private investment, which has already brought vibrant new businesses like The Moby Grape and Elephant into the area, will compliment improvements planned by the Council and our public sector partners."

Calvin House in Green Dragon Yard is already home to five cultural organisations and The Georgian Theatre, built in 1766, is one of the region's most popular music venues.

Cultural businesses and organisations interested in finding out more, or to have their say on future plans, can contact Stockton Town Centre Manager Sue Burgess on (01642) 527569.

Airport revamp progress

A £1.3m face lift is under way to completely revamp the frontage of the Durham Tees Valley Airport terminal. When finished, it will complete the first phase of an ambitious investment programme by airport operator Peel Airports. 2005 passenger figures jumped to 905,000, an increase of more than 13 per cent.

Country Park's new look



Billingham Beck Valley Country Park has a new look for 2006 – and a new leaflet to guide visitors around the site.

The leaflet features a short recommended walk from the Ecology Park Visitor Centre, taking visitors past six new information panels. These offer information on Billingham Beck itself, the history of the valley and even how many of the fields came by their unusual names.

The panels, installed by Nacro trainees, feature the work of local artist Ian

Lawson, with historical and wildlife information collected by ranger staff and the park's volunteers.

There are also plans to improve the network of footpaths throughout the country park this summer, as well as improving facilities used by school groups.

The leaflet is available in all Stockton Council's country park visitor centres, libraries and other public buildings, or call (01642) 360376 and we'll post one to you.

Minister sees why Stockton is a Healthy Communities Beacon

Community health came under the spotlight when Stockton Council hosted visit from the Minister for Public Health.

Caroline Flint MP visited the Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre to see how Stockton Council and its partners are helping local people live longer, healthier lives.

Ms Flint met representatives from communities throughout the Borough, where a range of activities are making a difference. She heard how schemes such as healthy walks, a smoking cessation service and a healthy schools project are changing people's lives for the better.

She also heard about the Council's ideas to empower local people to make informed choices about healthy lifestyles.

Beacon Coordinator Jim Beall said: "Stockton has been nationally recognised for its strong and innovative approach to engaging

communities on health matters. This visit enabled us to share our ideas and practice with the Minister and her Department."

Stockton Council was awarded Healthy Communities Beacon Status for 2005-06 for its innovative approach to engaging users in health and social care. It works closely with the local community and partner agencies to support the Government's 'Tackling Health Inequalities' strategy.



Public Health Minister Caroline Flint (right) samples some tasty – but healthy – food



A new Riverside decorative fence panel marks Stockton's railway heritage. Designed and manufactured to resemble George Stephenson's world famous 'Locomotion', the bespoke fence panel joins benches and tables installed along the Riverside last summer. It was designed and manufactured by artist blacksmiths P Johnson & Co with funding from Interreg IIIB Watercities International and Stockton Council.

Planning the future – your chance to be involved

Are you interested in how our area might change and develop over the next 10 – 15 years?

You'll soon have an opportunity to let the Council know what you think about how we should plan for the Borough's development.

We will be considering issues affecting our area, including options for future development as part of a new series of documents that set out planning policy. Called the Local Development Framework, it will replace the existing Local Plan.

The first of these documents will be called the Core Strategy, setting out the key elements of our area's planning framework up to 2021. The Core Strategy will not include detailed proposals, but will set out a broad strategy for the location of development and how the Borough's needs will be met.

Other documents, such as a Regeneration development plan, will follow to look in more detail at how we will implement the Core Strategy. These documents will identify specific

sites for housing, employment and other facilities, along with areas to be enhanced or protected.

Consultation is the first step in all this. During May and June, we will be asking what local people think of the issues and options considered so far, or if there are any which have not been included and should be.

Then, after we have considered the comments received, we will publish our Preferred Options. Once again, we will invite you to let us know what you think of these.

Carol Straughan, the Council's Head of Planning said: "Community consultation is at the heart of the new planning system. I hope residents and interested groups will take this opportunity to let us know which options they think will best meet the Borough's development needs over the next few years."

Copies of the Core Strategy paper on Issues and Options will be available on the Council's web site at www.stockton.gov.uk or you can ring (01642) 526053 for copies and further information.

Signs flash a 'Slow' message

New speed warning signs on the A67 are helping cut car accidents following several fatal and serious accidents in recent years.

The Council has installed two Vehicle Activated Traffic Calming Signs on Urray Nook Road near Durham Tees Valley Airport. These feature an illuminated warning of the bend ahead and four amber lights with the words "Slow Down" when vehicles travel faster than 40mph.

The safety signs, costing £6,700 each, are not speed cameras and will not lead to fines or points on driving licences.

SEAL lists Stockton events

If you're thinking of starting up a new club or group, a new website could help.

The SEAL (Stockton Events & Activities Listing) website contains a list of local activities and events aimed at children and young people aged five and over.

Developed by Stockton Council, the site details more than 500 activities at over 200 venues. Visitors simply enter the postcode or address where they want to start up a club, group, activity or event and find out what is around already.

SEAL is funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit through Stockton Renaissance. You can find it at www.seal.stockton.gov.uk or for more details contact Lesley King on (01642) 526483 or e-mail lesley.king@stockton.gov.uk

Stockton Council's main website also lists many local events – visit www.stockton.gov.uk/events





New kitchen - Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre Manager Craig Farnaby with the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Mick Stoker, opened a newly furnished kitchen at the Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre recently. To celebrate the event, healthy eating tasters such as jacket potatoes, fruit salads and smoothies were on offer. More than 300 people came through the doors to join in activities such as cooking, face painting as well as fitness activities and sampling the IT suite. Some enrolled on induction courses to join the fully equipped fitness suite.

A SMART Award is a great reward



Good deeds, hard work, bravery and team work will all have their reward with this year's SMART Awards.

The SMART – Stockton Mayor's Achievement Recognition Trophy – awards recognise the positive hard work and effort of young people across Stockton Borough in schoolwork, sport, their communities and everyday life.

Sponsored by TFM Radio, they are run by Stockton Council's Youth Service together with a panel of young people who also choose the winners of the ten categories.

Nominations are coming in from friends, parents and teachers of

teenagers, so there's still the chance to nominate someone you know. Every person nominated receives a certificate to mark their achievements at a special ceremony next month. Winners of each category receive a trophy to keep by the organisations and businesses which sponsor the individual awards.

Most of the awards are not about being the best at something but about the effort made or achievement reached under particular circumstances.

This year's awards include community work, educational achievement, educational effort, bravery to overcome a challenge, sport and an exceptional award to a child of primary school age.

Nomination forms are in schools, libraries and youth centres. You can also nominate online at www.stockton.gov.uk/smart or contact Stockton Council's Youth Service on (01642) 526398 and they'll send a form to you.

Snapshot of parking offences

Motorists who commit parking offences in Stockton can view pictures of their offending vehicle on Stockton Council's website.

Parking Attendants now take photographs of the vehicle, complete with its fixed penalty notice on the windscreen.

Depending on the contravention and its location, there will be three or more photographs to view. These will support the Council's case should the matter ever go before the independent parking adjudicator.

You can see some staged examples for demonstration purposes on the Council's website at www.stockton.gov.uk/parking

Security is in place to ensure that only offenders can check out the website pictures, as only the driver will know and can enter both the vehicle registration and the unique number of the penalty notice.

Offenders can appeal against the fine online and payments of fines can also be made this way.

Keep Sheep Wash safe and clear

A campaign to protect a North Yorkshire beauty spot enjoyed by many Stockton residents – Sheep Wash – is being stepped up.

Hambleton Community Safety Partnership will tackle illegal parking and camping, and a campaign to prevent further water deaths strengthened. The last 12 months have seen two deaths another young person rescued from Cod Beck Reservoir.

A parking ban on the road side or grass verges between Cote Ghyll Caravan Park and Scarth Nick – will be strictly enforced with £30 fines. Visitors are urged to use the designated car parks or take the Moors Bus Service – for timetables visit www.moors.uk/net or call 01439 770657.

North Shore moves on



Tees Valley Regeneration has announced leading urban regeneration specialist AMEC Developments as the preferred developer to transform the face of Stockton.

As part of the agreement, AMEC has also announced that they will be working with the award winning property developer, Urban Splash.

The appointment is a tremendous coup for the urban regeneration company and Stockton and a first for the region.

The £300m North Shore development will transform Stockton's riverside and bring more than 2,500 jobs to the area.

The proposed plans will provide Stockton with a truly mixed use community with a variety of public and private spaces offering a range of uses which will take advantage of the site's south facing waterfront location and proximity to the town centre. With world class designs the plans will transform Stockton, creating a unique, high quality place, a destination in its own right.

AMEC is responsible for impressive developments at Newcastle Quayside and Walkergate in Durham and while it is Urban Splash's first development in North East England, they are a highly respected, award-winning innovative property developer.

Pedal power for youngsters

Youngsters in schools across the Borough have been learning how to put their best foot forward and cycle safely.

Stockton Council's Road Safety Team has launched a new training scheme to help pupils learn all about safety when out and about on the Borough's roads.

New trainers Emma Knights, Andrew McPhee, Wayne Naughton and Laura Hunter-Smith can deliver cycle training to the new National Standard Level Three, as well as offering personal individual pedestrian training.

George Callaghan, the Council's Senior Road Safety Officer, said: "We expect demand for this new service to be very high and advise schools to contact us as soon as they can so they don't miss out."

The new scheme follows successful pilots in pedestrian and adult cycle training, which identified a need for a flexible team of trainers able to deliver comprehensive training packages.

Schools wishing to find out more, or book training, can contact Mike Edwards on (01642) 526731 or email michael.edwards@stockton.gov.uk

It's high hopes for Abbey Hill

Students are blossoming in their new college accommodation at Abbey Hill Special School and Specialist Technology College.

Hopes are high that it won't just be the students that bloom as a new polytunnel is allowing the school to expand into the field of horticulture, with plans to start producing prize-winning plants from the site at Hardwick, Stockton.

The new Sheraton Building, for students aged 16 to 19, opened its doors for study in January with a health and beauty salon, accommodation for life skills such as healthy cooking and hygiene, a music and drama studio, art room and science room, all with the most up to date technology.

The building replaces the former temporary classrooms for over-16s at Norton and brings the college base onto the main Abbey Hill site in Ketton Road.

Head Teacher Mike Vening said: "This has been a really optimistic development with wonderful potential. A lot of young people at this school stay on and do their GCSEs and gain other qualifications with us but the new building will hopefully encourage even more to stay on.

"We hope the horticultural aspect of the new building will, not this season but next, allow students the chance to present their produce at horticultural shows and perhaps win prizes. We want to engage the young people in growing and looking after their own food needs as an enjoyable and flexible use of their time."

The building cost around £2.5 million, of which the school had to raise £250,000.

The Sheraton Building is now the third on the site, alongside the main school and the Abbey Hill Community Resource Centre, which is used by the community. There are now plans for over-19 students to continue their education on the site with the help of tutors from the Riverside College in the future.

Celebrating Renaissance success

Regeneration success was at the heart of an event held to celebrate Stockton Renaissance, the Local Strategic Partnership for Stockton Borough, in January.

The event, at Arc, placed communities at the heart of regeneration, highlighting what has been achieved and looking at what the future holds for the Borough.

More than 350 people enjoyed the opportunity to celebrate these successes, with a new DVD launched to showcase their achievements, along with information stalls from many partner agencies.

There was also a chance to win a host of prizes, and William Powels, Chelsea Reed and Amir Khan each winning a pair of Middlesbrough FC tickets.



Democratic information goes online

Finding out about Stockton Council's decisions, meeting agendas and reports will soon be just a few clicks of a computer mouse away.

From next month Stockton Council launches E-Genda from its home page at www.stockton.gov.uk allowing anyone to view online all public agendas, reports and minutes of the Council, as well as decisions by officers.

Before this new facility, those wishing to find out about decisions that may affect them had to telephone the Council or visit its offices or libraries to see printed copies of information.

E-Genda will be a one-stop link to democratic information in Stockton Borough. It will also include Councillors' contact details, membership of committees as for a host of outside organisations on which the Council is represented.

And if you're interested in a particular topic, you'll be able to sign up to Topic Alerting Registration. This will enable people to register their email address and a password to receive email alerts from the Council about topics they have specified.

Once these topics appear in a report, agenda, minutes, officer decision record or the Council's Forward Plan, an email will alert them to the fact. Then they can access that information and, if they wish, become more involved in the decision.

Not everyone has their own access to the web, of course. So each branch library in the Borough and offers internet access, and hard copy information will still be available from these and Council offices.

For more information on E-Genda contact Nigel Hart on (01642) 526193 or email nigel.hart@stockton.gov.uk

Act heralds better private rented homes

This month, the new Housing Act sees big changes in the way many privately rented houses, flats and bedsits are managed.

The Act is designed to protect vulnerable tenants and create a fairer housing market and includes powers to:

- deal with sub-standard homes
- licence certain Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
- licence private landlords

HMOs are buildings occupied by more than one household, where the occupiers share an amenity such as a bathroom, toilet or kitchen.

The new Housing Health and Safety Ratings System will assess housing conditions and consider the effect of defects. Supported by powers to secure repairs and improvements, these will help councils target the worst properties, which often house the most vulnerable people.

It also introduces mandatory licensing of larger, higher-risk HMOs – mostly flats and bedsits of three or more storeys occupied by five or more people. There are also discretionary powers to license smaller HMOs.

Privately rented homes are invaluable to the housing market but there is concern about the sector's reputation and condition of certain properties, with some landlords lacking professional management skills.

Licensing will ensure that landlords (or their agents) are fit and proper persons, and adhere to standards for managing tenancies and property.

It's up to the owner or agent to ensure an HMO has a licence, with a fine of up to £20,000 for those who don't. But for registered HMOs in Stockton, the Council will 'passport' these into the licensing process.

Councils can also licence other private rented homes in designated areas, helping them tackle problems of low housing demand and significant anti-social behaviour. To return long-term empty properties to occupation, Councils can step in to order landlords to make repairs or, as a last resort, take over the management of certain properties.

To find out more about the new licensing scheme, call (01642) 527797, e-mail urbanrenewal@stockton.gov.uk

Old allotment blossoms as community garden

Former allotments at Oxbridge Lane in Stockton are being transformed from wasteland to a community garden for all to enjoy.

The site now features an area set aside for conservation with a variety of wildlife habitats as well as a sensory garden with plants interesting to smell and touch.

A variety of fruit bushes and trees will not only attract wildlife but local residents can pick and eat the fruit.

A steel tree provides the focal point for the garden, which will open in

summer, and pupils from Oxbridge Primary School have branched out to play their part in designing the feature.

With more than 400 leaves, the tree has been designed and created by blacksmith James Godbold from Egton, near Whitby. Each pupil from the school drew a leaf with their name on it, before Mr Godbold fashioned every one in steel to place on the tree.

Grants from Living Spaces and ENTRUST through Landfill Tax funded the project.



Comfort Zone expands

Stockton Council is expanding its successful Comfort Zone to include an advice and support service.

The project, funded by the British Gas Trust charity, builds on the massive success of the Council's earlier Warm Zone scheme. It will now offer a comprehensive advice and support service for residents who are experiencing difficulty with debt or managing their finances.

This can include:

- Negotiating with creditors to reduce expenditure
- Sorting out problems with rent arrears, fuel arrears, credit card and loan repayments
- Identifying any grants residents may be entitled to and help in applying for them
- Checking benefit entitlement
- Giving budget advice

The new service is a partnership between Stockton Council and the Stockton District Advice and Information Service.

The Comfort Zone scheme was created two years ago to provide help and advice about insulation and heating solutions to residents suffering from fuel poverty by spending more than 10 per cent of their income on fuel bills.

For more information about the Comfort Zone scheme call (01642) 528215.

One RaW day in February

Staff at Stockton Central Library helped raise public awareness about the BBC's RaW campaign in February.

RaW is a three year project to help everyone develop their reading and writing skills and reach their full potential. A team from the Council's libraries braved the cold to run a market stall promoting RaW, which offers help to anyone wanting to rekindle the pleasure of reading or discover that enjoyment for the first time.

To find out more, visit your local library, log on to www.bbc.co.uk/raw or call the helpline on 08000 150 950.

Parks fly the flag



Volunteers from Low Grange Women's Institute construct a boardwalk at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park

Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park and Billingham Beck Valley Country Park – both first-time Green Flag Award winners last year – are gearing up to repeat their success in 2006.

The Green Flag scheme is the national standard for parks and green spaces. Recognising the country's best green spaces, it is managed by the Civic Trust for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Green Flag Advisory Board.

Green Flag Inspectors said both parks were "safe, welcoming and well maintained".

Now, with the Council's Parks and Countryside team working hard to raise standards of green open space across the Borough, they are also to submit Green Flag applications for Preston Park, Wynyard Woodland Park and Ropner Park.

Martin Jenkins, Parks and Countryside Manager, said: "To win these awards was a fantastic tribute to our staff and volunteers and I'm proud of them.

"These awards demand very high standards but we hope to retain them and ultimately gain Green Flags for all our parks."

Fiona Shipp, Countryside Ranger at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, said: "We were thrilled to win a Green Flag, which acknowledges our team's commitment and enthusiasm and the vital support from our volunteers and visitors. We can't be complacent, though, as we must maintain and improve our sites each year."

For information about the Borough's parks and green spaces, call (01642) 526877 and ask for a leaflet, or visit www.stockton.gov.uk

Kings of the road

The crews who transport the most vulnerable members of our communities to schools, day centres and care facilities found the recognition they deserved when they received certificates in NVO Level 2 in Support Services in Health Care.

Ann Baxter, Stockton Council's Corporate Director of Children, Education and Social Care, had glowing praise for the drivers and

passenger assistants of Stockton Community Transport as she presented their certificates.

180 staff, many of them part-time, transport 900 children with special needs to and from school every day, in addition to taking disabled and elderly adults to day care centres.

Stockton is believed to be the first local authority in which staff have gained the qualification. The training attracted match funding from the Learning and Skills Council.



Farmwatch returns

The relaunch of Farmwatch has once again provided a forum for the rural community to voice its concerns about crime and local problems.

The service allows farmers living and working in the rural parts of the Borough to pass and receive information on crime in their area through the 'ringmaster' system in the police crime reduction office. There are also links with Farmwatch organisations in Durham and North Yorkshire.

"Farmwatch gives farmers not only a chance to talk about and address rural crime issues but also share other concerns over matters affecting the industry and rural community," said Martin Lowcock, a farmer from Maltby Grange.

The Stockton Farmwatch team is working with Stockton Council's Animal Welfare Service to give rural advice and enforcement a high priority. Experienced personnel deal with issues regarding stolen vehicles, poachers, dead or diseased animals or any form of rural crime.

It's free to join Farmwatch - for details call Farmwatch Coordinator Dave Sanders on (01642) 302271 or email dave.sanders@cleveland.pnn.police.uk



NEWdrive's new office



Driver recruitment agency NEWdrive has opened an office at the Stockton Business Centre.

NEWdrive, part of recruitment service agency NEWgroup, evolved due to the growth of the logistical transport sector and employees Bill Taylor and Stuart Simpson were offered the chance to become directors of their own company.

Between them, Bill and Stuart have over 40 years experience in their field, so they understand what drivers and employers are looking for.

For more information on their services, contact Bill on (01642) 345148 or Stuart on (0191) 2211 818.

A J Finel 1944-2006

One of the Borough's longest serving former headteachers sadly passed away in January.

John Finel gave 23 years of outstanding service to the young people of Billingham and their families, first as headteacher of Brunner School then of Billingham Campus School from 1977 until his retirement in 2000.

He put into practice his belief that every young person should have the best opportunity to excel and to develop their talents and strengths. The success of Billingham Campus School and its pupils is a fitting tribute to someone who, over 23 years, made a significant contribution to education in the area.

Earthquake appeal

Stockton Council employees have collected more than £2,200 – plus a mountain of tents, bedding and other equipment – to help people in Kashmir rebuild their lives after last year's earthquake, which will go towards some £90,000 so far gathered by Mosques across the Tees Valley.

April should see construction of the first new homes on recently purchased land in an area called Sehunta. If these are successful, a team led by Teesside University civil engineer Dr Steve Bloomer and David Kitchen, of

David Kitchen Associates, Stockton, will travel to the site in June to get a larger construction project under way. It is eventually intended to rename the area the Stockton Valley.

The project is looking for bricklayers, plasterers, joiners, electricians and other volunteer craftsmen to help the rebuilding project during June. If you are interested, please call Mohammed Riaz on 07762 234788.

You can still donate to the Pakistan Earthquake Relief Fund at Lloyds TSB, High Street, Stockton, sort code 38-90-13, account number 01552016.



Organisers Mohammed Javid (left) and Hafiz Naeem (right) with bedding for Kashmir.

New look for St Gregory's

Children at St Gregory's Roman Catholic Primary School have moved into their newly built school.

Staff and pupils are delighted by the new building, whose eight classrooms can take 210 pupils, plus 26 children in the nursery.

The school, in Roseworth, is on the site of the former English Martyrs School,

which amalgamated with St Peter's and St Paul's School to become St Gregory's in 2002. Building commenced in July 2004.

Head teacher Peter Mackie said: "The school is truly state-of-the-art, with the centre of the building housing a round ICT suite with big plasma screens to allow the teacher to show the children what he or she is doing. There are 30 laptops so there is a computer for every child."

Fairtrade from the Windward Islands

A banana farmer from the West Indies gave a Stockton audience of more than 100 people an insight into how Fairtrade has helped smaller producers and farmers like himself.

Simeon Greene's talk was a highlight of a special event to promote Fairtrade across Stockton Borough. Organised by Stockton Council at the Newtown Community Resource Centre, the event was part of a campaign to support Stockton's bid to become a Fairtrade Borough.

Mr Greene, who grows bananas in the Windward Islands, said: "Selling Fairtrade bananas really helped lift the Windward Islands out of poverty - we were able to trade our way out of poverty. This has other benefits - for example all children are now immunised before they go to primary school and there is universal access to clean drinking water."

Bruce Lowther from the Fairtrade Organisation also told the audience

how the community can work together to see Stockton achieve Fairtrade Town status.

During March, Stockton Councillors voted unanimously to seek Fairtrade Town status.

Mike Chicken, Chair of Stockton's Fairtrade Steering Group, said: "The event was a huge success and it was wonderful to see the level of support for promoting Fairtrade."

Simeon Greene's talk about his experiences really brought it home just how effective Fairtrade can be."

Stockton Council now has cards available for local people to hand in to shops and businesses to encourage the use of Fairtrade products.

To find out more about what Stockton is doing to become a Fairtrade Town, or to become involved or receive some of the cards, please contact Lynda Guilfoyle on (01642) 528149 or email lynda.guilfoyle@stockton.gov.uk



Care at the touch of a button

Care Call is there to help vulnerable adults to live independently - literally at the touch of a button linked directly to Stockton Council's Security Centre.

Highly trained staff are on call 24 hours to assist emergency services and contact relatives.

They can provide individual care packages, such as helping people in and out of bed, washing/bathing and cooking and upholds the policy of

clients' dignity, respect, independence, privacy, fulfilment and choice.

Registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection, Care Call upholds Department of Health guidance on the 'No Secrets Policy' where agencies work together to ensure vulnerable adults are protected from any form of abuse. After a rigorous inspection, Care Call is now accredited by the national Telecare Services Association.

To find out more about Care Call tel: (01642) 527608/839 or 634768.

Enforcers with shining armour

Enforcement officers who wrapped up a successful operation to combat under age drinking, anti-social behaviour and untaxed vehicles in Billingham became knights in shining armour to one beleaguered motorist.

Operation Scarab saw Stockton Council enforcement officers challenge several large groups of youths about unacceptable behaviour, confiscating a substantial amount of alcohol from under age drinkers.

As they completed their shift around midnight, two Enforcement Officers discovered a motorist in distress after her exhaust had come loose. The pair rolled up their sleeves, made a temporary repair and escorted the grateful driver and her vehicle safely to her Stockton home.

The operation opened with a morning crackdown on car tax dodgers, the Council enforcement officers seizing and removing eight untaxed vehicles under powers from the DVLA.

The evening saw them focus on anti-social behaviour with patrols in marked camera-equipped vehicles. They challenged groups of youths engaged in under age drinking and unacceptable behaviour, seizing and destroying the alcohol.

The team issued four £50 fixed penalty notices for litter offences and six anti social behaviour warnings, which were followed up by the Council's anti-social behaviour and youth teams. Trading standards officers carried out under cover inspections of stores alleged to have supplied the alcohol.

Senior Enforcement Officer Graeme Small said: "I was proud that the team were able to assist the lady with her faulty car - it's all part of the service!

"The rest of this operation was about making life better for Billingham people, and preventing the tiny minority of young people who can't behave properly from causing misery for the rest of the community."

Changes afoot



April saw changes to two of the Council's charging policies, relating to wheelie bins and bulky waste collection.

It's quite amazing how wheelie bins disappear – last year saw the Council spend more than £40,000 of your money replacing lost or stolen bins, or supplying others to new homes.

As a result, there is now a £25 charge for replacement bins where they are reported, lost, stolen or damaged.

So please, look after your wheelie bin and store it safely between collections.

Each year, we perform a staggering 27,000 bulky waste collections. What's more, this number is on the increase. Because of the strain on our resources, we have introduced a nominal £10 charge for the collection of all bulky waste.

Alternatively, you can avoid this by recycling your rubbish at the Haverton Hill recycling facility, pictured above.

For more details, call the Council's Care For Your Area Team on (01642) 391959 or email careforyourarea@stockton.gov.uk

Calling businesses in the Borough

Stockton Council's Training and Employment Services would like to hear from organisations interested in giving young people experience in business and office administration.

They deliver courses in NVQ Level 2 and 3 in Business Administration and Level 2 in Customer Service and currently have 12 young people looking for work placements.

If you could offer a placement to a young person, or to find out more, call Jan Cobb on (01642) 528258 or e mail janette.cobb@stockton.gov.uk

Fuzzy Bridge has designs on the future

Contemporary design studio Fuzzy Bridge sources fashion based textiles for the international market. From its base in Stockton Business Centre, it sells unusual materials for designers and craftspeople.

Fuzzy Bridge is run by Joanne Riddle, who is also a lecturer at Stockton Riverside College and set up Fuzzy Bridge after four years full-time teaching.

From her base in the business centre in Stockton's Skinner Street, she said: "I know how difficult it is to source unusual findings for your textile design work. It is so important to develop an individual style and this can be aided through sourcing unique materials such as ribbons, trimmings and lace.

"That is why I decided to develop this side of the business. I got an immediate response through building an Ebay shop and have already dealt with customers in Texas, Germany, Jersey and all round the UK."

Wind of change at Woodland Park



A wind turbine and light-activated panels are helping Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park move towards energy sustainability. The turbine and photo voltaic array will be installed by local specialist renewable energy company AAG Swepco thanks to funding from Sita Environmental Trust through the Landfill Tax Credit, Clear Skies, the Energy Saving Trust and Stockton Council.

When complete, information and interpretation panels will show visitors how much power is being generated at any one time. Schools and other visitors will be encouraged to see the new installations and learn how they can adopt a more energy efficient lifestyle.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

GRAHAM REEVES

When asked, Stockton Council's Events Manager Graham Reeves says his job is 'varied' – to say the very least!

He's involved in a myriad of events over the year, some more obvious to readers than others.

The Council's list of events includes, among others, Stockton International Riverside Festival, the Summer Show at Preston Park, Stockton's fireworks – considered the best in the area, the Christmas light switch-on plus many more events across the Borough.

There's Fins and Chrome, a gathering of huge American cars, and Ridewell, held with Cleveland Police to promote safety for two-wheel road users. Then there's the popular Garden Festival and plenty more.

Planning ahead and meticulous organisation are the key to a good event and Graham, who is part of a team of four, works many months in advance to ensure everything goes to plan.

For just one night on November 5, Stockton's fireworks event involves working with many other agencies over many months. Police, Fire Service and St. John's Ambulance are all involved – with crowds of 50,000 or more, nothing can be left to chance.



What Graham particularly likes about his work is the variety. He says: "In this job, we are 'do-ers' and it's great to see the end results of our planning and preparation.

"For example, the Christmas light switch-on has to be perfectly timed and takes a lot of work behind the scenes. The more stars we have, the more organisation it takes!"

"In this job, we are 'do-ers' and it's great to see the end results of our planning and preparation."

He clearly has a busy schedule which often entails working unsociable hours to set up events and being very hands-on in setting

up and taking down rigging and equipment. But that's only part of it. Graham attends countless meetings to ensure tip-top organisation and risks kept to a minimum.

His other love is swimming and, from 1989 to 1997 he was head coach of Stockton's Swimming Development Programme, helping produce many swimmers of national and international level. Graham was also on the international coaches panel, England team staff and had one swimmer at the 1992 Olympics.

Graham does manage the odd weekend away with his wife Mandy and two children, Alex (13) and Leigh (9). He's also making an effort to improve his own golf after seeing the experts close up at last year's Seve Trophy at Wynyard Golf Club.

So when you next come along to one of Stockton Council's fabulous public events, remember Graham and his team's work and preparation that has gone into it.

Your Council

- How we performed in 2005-06



Stockton Council provides services to over 186,000 residents living in more than 78,000 households within the Borough. Our budget to deliver services to you in 2005/06 was £216.1million.

While continuing to provide value for money, below are just some of our achievements made in 2005/06, including information on what independent inspectors have said about your Council.

You can find more information on the Council's budget and expenditure in the leaflet enclosed with the Council Tax Bills in March.

Overall performance

Stockton Council has maintained its place amongst the country's top performing authorities, earning the top rating of 4 stars, despite the new tougher annual test set by independent inspectors – the Audit Commission.

The new rating system describes Stockton Council as a council 'improving well'. In arriving at our 4 star, improving well rating, the Audit Commission looked at progress made over the last year saying that services in most priority areas are improving and most targets are being met. The report concluded that value for money is good and that efficiency gains are being achieved in most areas. Our Viewpoint residents' surveys show that public satisfaction remains high and access to services and consultation with all groups is improving.

Key areas of progress

The Audit Commission's report also recognised a number of key areas of progress made by the Council. It particularly highlighted education attainment, looked after children, health outcomes for people, decent homes, economic regeneration and leisure facilities. The Commission also noted progress is being made in delivering the outcomes of the Local Area Agreement. The agreement was signed with the Government in 2005 to further strengthen our commitment to improving services for the local community.

Recognition of our achievements

- For the second year running, the Council's Care for Your Area team has been shortlisted in the Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards in the Management Team section.
- The Prime Minister wrote to congratulate our Library Service on receiving its Charter Mark award for the third time. In addition, there were Charter Mark awards for our Pupil and Student Support and Resources' Administration services.

- The Fleet Management Team received recognition for their hard work with a commendation in the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Performance Networks Awards.
- The Trading Standards Consumer Advice Centre became only the third such council-run centre in the country to earn the Specialist Quality Mark, awarded by the Government's Legal Services Commission, for its quality legal service provision as well as providing a well-managed service.
- The South Stockton Link road was one of 15 projects nominated nationally for the Prime Minister's Awards for Better Public Building at the British Construction Industry Awards.
- In the Northumbria in Bloom awards, Stockton scooped 5 awards including the main prize - Best City.

Service achievements in priority areas

Our key priorities are to improve services in education, health and social care, regeneration, housing, crime reduction, Care for Your Area, culture and leisure. Here are some of the achievements in improving our services to our community.

- **Education** - 55 per cent of the Borough's 16-year-olds achieved 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent. This success was marked with a visit by the Prime Minister to Egglecliffe School to congratulate pupils and students across the Borough on their achievement. Our strong results in 2005 also received a letter of congratulations from the Schools' Minister, particularly on the excellent performance in Key Stage 2.
- **Health and Social Care** - our award under Beacon Status for Healthier Communities reflects our work to improve health outcomes in partnership with the Primary Care Trust. Our adults' social care services have also seen improvements in key areas with significant numbers of older people, adults and their carers receiving direct payments for services. Admissions to residential and nursing care have reduced, helping more people to live independently. We also have more drug users in treatment and a successful implementation of the drug intervention programme.
- **Regeneration** - the Stockton-Middlesbrough Initiative strategy to develop the city region and generate investment of more than £12million. Other key projects include ensuring the continued regeneration of the Neighbourhood Management area in Parkfield/ Mill Lane, through commencement of a £9million housing regeneration scheme and completion of the North Shore infrastructure works to support the Riverside regeneration.

- **Housing** - we are continuing improvement in the proportion of 'decent homes' in the Borough, with more than 7,000 Council homes meeting the standard. There have also been improvements in tenant participation and a more planned approach to housing repairs.
- **Crime reduction** - crime has continued to fall in 2005 as a result of partnership working and investment by both the Council and the Police. Crime figures for 2005 show that both vehicle crime and burglaries have fallen. We have also proactively tackled anti-social behaviour, with an increased caseload and high satisfaction with anti-social behaviour team's work.
- **Care for Your Area** - our impressive track record of improvement in this area has continued with maintenance of top-level performance on key indicators such as missed bins and street cleanliness. Over ninety-nine per cent of households now have access to kerbside recycling and thanks to you, recycling rates have increased to 16 per cent (double the level recorded during 2002/03). A kerbside green waste collection scheme has been piloted for 24,000 households and plans are in place to roll out this initiative more widely across the Borough.
- **Culture and Leisure** - we are placing greater priority on culture and leisure as key contributors to improving the quality of life of our residents. Some of our achievements include the transfer of leisure centres to a trust (Tees Active Ltd), which has since acquired the management of Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre resulting in significantly increased usage for the whole year; a strong library service which is experiencing a significant increase in usage; the restoration of Ropner Park is well underway including the provision of a number of new facilities; new play areas installed in three town parks. There is an increase in satisfaction with Stockton International Riverside Festival, one of the UK's premier annual festival events.

Meeting future service priorities

This year's Council Tax rise of 4.5 per cent is below the Government's limit of 5 per cent and is also in line with the national average. It demonstrates our commitment to continue to provide good value for money to our residents and to maintain our investment in key services.

Stockton Council is your Council - we are committed to improving our services. From 2006/07, in order to help us deliver that commitment, services where additional funding has been made available include:

- £500,000 for additional care for adults with complex learning disabilities.
- £300,000 to further expand the green waste service.
- £175,000 to improve the Borough's markets.
- £60,000 to improve Preston Hall and extend the museum's community outreach programme.
- £250,000 for extra adaptations and equipment for people with a disability.

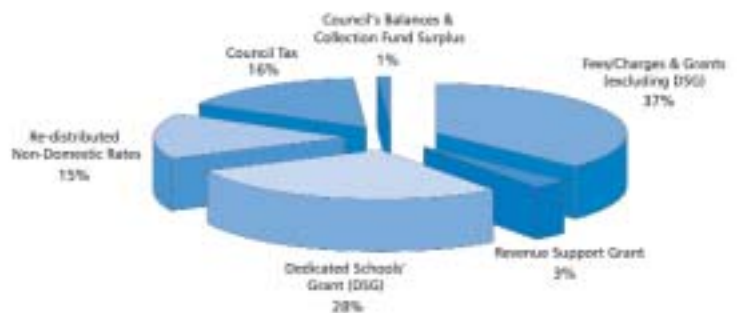
In addition, the Council is expanding its concessionary fares scheme and will continue a programme of environmental improvements across the Borough.

Other key improvement areas include housing management, children's social care and teenage conception rates, planning and building control services and continued efficiency and value for money.

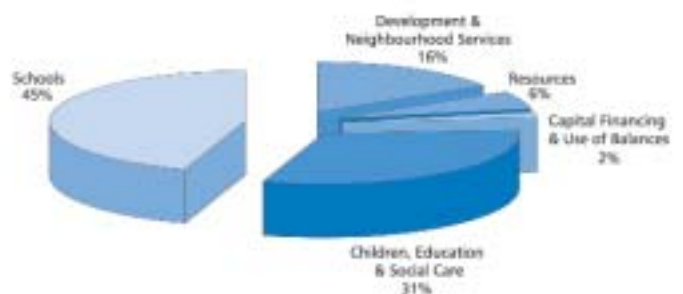
Where the money comes from

The money we spend on services comes partly from Council Tax payers and partly from the Government. For the next financial year, 2006/07, the Council's overall budget is £125.8million. For the first time this year the overall budget does not include funding passed direct to schools. The Dedicated Schools' Grant (DSG) amounts to £103million.

The summary below shows where the money is coming from in 2006/07.



The chart below shows where the Council plans to spend its money in 2006/07.



Information on how the Council has performed overall will be set out in our Annex to the Council Plan 2006 – 2009 – performance information, which will be published by 30th June 2006. You will be able to download a copy from our website at www.stockton.gov.uk. Alternatively, paper copies can be made available upon request. In the meantime, if you would like more information on any aspect of the Council's performance you are welcome to contact us by telephone on (01642) 526087, or by email at ppsu@stockton.gov.uk, or you can write to us at:

**Head of Policy and Performance,
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council,
PO Box 11,
Municipal Buildings, Church Road,
Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD.**



Be safe with scooters



Stockton Council is teaming up with Shopmobility Stockton to provide safety advice and equipment to users of powered wheelchairs and scooters.

The Council's Road Safety team is working with the registered charity to provide expert help and advice to users.

Arnie the Armadillo, the Council's road safety mascot has also visited the store to give free shopping bags with high visibility strips to shoppers.

Scooters provide a vital lifeline for many disabled people, allowing them to do the things they want. However, because of the actions of a few thoughtless users, many people who

depend on these scooters are receiving a bad reputation.

Hayley Perks, manager of Stockton Shopmobility, says: "It is worth bearing in mind that some models can achieve speeds of around 15mph and can weigh as much as 20 stones, so users should keep an appropriate distance from pedestrians in built up areas and shopping centres."

Shopmobility staff can give users a quick "driving test" and check tyre pressures as well as providing training for equipment including speed control and regulations.

For more information, contact Stockton Shopmobility on (01642) 605676, email stocktonshop@aol.com or visit their website at www.stocktonshopmobility.co.uk

Forum features

Billingham's Forum Theatre's spring season offers plenty of fantastic productions.

The Jungle Book is touring direct from the West End (4 – 8 April), the Ugly Duckling is ideal for children of all ages (22 April), and there's a full-scale summer pantomime of Peter Pan (30 May – 3 June). Freddie Starr makes a welcome return on 23 April, followed by Tony Hadley (27 April), Joe Brown (7 May) and Joe Longthorne (16/17 June).

There are two big musical presentations: "I Can't Stop Loving You" is based on the music of the great Ray Charles (8 – 13 May) and a welcome return by one of the most popular musicals of all time, "Return to the Forbidden Planet".

"Great Balls of Fire!" the smash-hit, dancing-in-the-aisles sci-fi musical, plays riotous havoc with Shakespeare's "The Tempest" while rocking to great 50s & 60s music (19-24 June).

For a brochure call the Box Office on (01642) 552663.

PM recognises Borough's libraries

The Council's libraries received well deserved recognition when Prime Minister Tony Blair wrote to congratulate the service on receiving its third Charter Mark award.

Considered the national standard for customer service excellence, the library service first gained a Charter Mark in 1999. Another followed in 2002 before a further assessment last November brought the third Charter Mark - which will be held for a further three years.

In his recommendation the Assessor said the library team has "... been active in consulting its users, especially young children, and receives very favourable feedback from its users, who think highly of the service.

"There is a culture of continuous improvement across all areas of the service. Staff are enthusiastic, creative in how they use their resources and committed to partnership working and social inclusion."

Teacher agency's future plans



KeyStage Recruitment, a teacher agency, is planning to launch a second office after its success at Stockton Business Centre.

Julie Richardson launched KeyStage Recruitment last September. She has been able to use the Business Centre's facilities to train groups of teachers

using state-of-the-art interactive technology and projectors. The central base has also proved popular with teachers who want to just call in.

She has built her business by listening to feedback from schools and teachers and now she is planning to open a second office to offer help to more schools.

Garden of Remembrance

Plans for a Remembrance Garden at Billingham Campus School could take a leap forward if bids succeed for funding from Awards for All and Young Roots.

Stockton Council and Tees Valley Wildlife Trust are working together to help the school gain the funding.

Already local companies B & Q, Polar Windows and Cleveland Car Systems have pledged support and Stockton Council's horticultural services are donating their labour, free of charge.

Although the school's Parent Teacher Association and Governors have raised more than £2,000, there's still a long way to go to the £17,200 target and they are keen to secure more funding from local businesses or sponsorship.

Pupils have created design ideas for a special area to commemorate pupils and teachers who lost their lives whilst

still part of the school community. The garden's structure will incorporate aspects of the interests and personalities of those being commemorated.

There will also be a wildlife and sensory area, an outdoor classroom and small performance area as well as pupils' artworks including murals and sculpture.

The school is also producing a Book of Remembrance, where friends and relatives can record messages.

Detailed plans drawn up from these ideas will be put forward in the funding bid for the scheme. Donations are welcomed to buy plants for the Garden.

To offer help or find out more about this project, please call Victoria Abbs at the school on (01642) 560947 or Sarah Edwards at Stockton Council on (01642) 526875.

News in brief

UNITE

Having problems with neighbours? You can take advantage of the free, confidential and independent mediation service UNITE for help with neighbour disputes such as noise, pets, litter and anti-social behaviour. A mediator will help parties work together and explore all options before deciding on an agreement acceptable to everyone. To find out more, call UNITE on (01642) 311633.

Winner takes off

Recycling a bottle won Mrs Geary of Guisborough a £3,000 dream holiday as the overall winner of Tees Valley-wide draw to promote recycling.

12 weekly winners of the Message in a Bottle competition each won 70 Euros towards their own holiday, followed by the final draw at Durham Tees Valley Airport. To enter, residents simply put a note of their name and address and dream holiday destination into a bottle they were recycling.

Quality teacher training

A Stockton Council programme providing employment based teacher training has earned national accreditation from the Training and Development Agency, recognising the quality of its course.

Opinions matter

Stockton Council has written to businesses in and around Stockton town centre asking for opinions on improvements to parking restrictions along with other transport issues. Those who responded joined in breakfast meetings to discuss these and the Council's Cabinet will consider a summary of their recommendations in April.

bright sparks

What's the score from the word on the street...

Pupils Demonstrate their creativity

Youngsters from two Stockton schools explored their creative and literary sides when they took part in the Write to Read 'Demonstrate' project.

Year 9 pupils from Grangefield School worked with those from Year 6 at The Oak Tree School and poet Bob Beagrie to write about issues which affect them, in the Neighbourhood Renewal Funded project. Topics included bullying, drugs, smoking cessation and the work of various charities.

They also held a fashion show at Grangefield School in December raising £250 for Jeans for Genes and People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA).

In another project, Year 8 Grangefield students teamed up with Year 5 and 6 pupils from Oxbridge School and adult learners from the Write to Read Artability group during a trip to Durham. The youngsters and adults visited the city's ancient Cathedral with photographer Robert Cooper, using digital cameras to record their experience.

Participants then worked with poet Bob Beagrie to create poetry describing their feelings on the trip, which has been turned into an exhibition, 'Awe and Wonder', at ARC on Dovecot Street, Stockton.



Curators of the future

Would you like to explore a museum's history and create your own exhibition for public display?

Youngsters from Junction Farm Primary School have, by joining a Museum Club that visits Preston Hall Museum one day a week after school.

And the club is so popular that other schools will have the chance to set up their own clubs.

The children have already explored the museum's history, toured the buildings and come face to face with real museum objects.

They've found out about the families who lived in Preston Hall before it became a museum and are now creating their own artwork inspired by the museum's collection. Then they'll turn curator and use their artwork to create their own exhibition to be displayed to visitors inside the museum.

"It's been fantastic and very popular," said Ruth Millett, Stockton Council's Cultural Entitlement Education Assistant.

"So much so that we already have schools lined up to join future clubs. I think it's down to the really cool and interesting objects we have and activities such as photography, collage and painting."

If your school is interested in offering pupils this exciting opportunity, or to find out more about other programmes, contact Ruth Millett on (01642) 527820 or email ruth.millet@stockton.gov.uk

Young musicians off to a festival

Young musicians from across the Tees Valley took part in the Music for Youth Festival's regional finals at various venues in February. Four groups from Tees Valley Music Service – Billingham Jazz Ensemble, Clarimania, Take Four and Tees Valley Youth Ensemble – travelled to Wakefield to battle it out against other groups of young musicians nationwide. Another eight groups – About Time, the Chamber Choir from the Village Primary School in Thornaby, three groups from Yarm Prep School and three other groups from the Tees Valley – were at Peterlee. All will find out their results in May. We hope to report on their success in the summer Stockton News.

Making movies for fun

A group of pupils from Grangefield School in Stockton have been making animated movies in their spare time.

A selection of their work was screened on in March at a special event at the University of Teesside, in Middlesbrough, organised by the Royal Television Society to celebrate the achievements of young video makers from around the North East.

The animation sessions were developed and led by the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Education Intervention, which organises a wide range of learning activities to support schools and local communities in central Stockton.

Participants used their favourite cartoons as inspiration to help create their own original characters, such as Badboy Badger, star of one of their movies. They also wrote their own story lines and designed film sets before shooting and editing their work at Teesside City Learning Centre in Stockton.

A team of student volunteers from Stockton Sixth Form College joined in to help motivate and inspire the younger participants, who are all aged between 11 and 13. Everyone involved had fun and developed their design and computing skills in the process.

For details of the Education Intervention's activities, or the Royal Television Society Showcase, call Andrew Joyce, Stockton Council's Community Education Co-ordinator, on (01642) 527734.



This competition is a big mix-up

The big play-off is almost here for the young people with the best mixing skills.

This month, young people from each of the youth services run by Councils across the Tees Valley will go head to head in a final showdown at Yarm's Tall Trees Hotel as they battle to be chosen as the best mixer.

And for the winner, a dream gig – their very own 60 minute live slot on Galaxy Radio 105/6fm.

Across the Tees Valley young people aged 13 to 19 have been taking part in workshops to improve or even discover their mixing skills.

At Stockton's workshop, Urban Kaos gave a demonstration of street dance, the Teesside Mohawks were encouraging the teenagers to try basketball and there was advice on healthy eating, drugs, sexual health and smoking.

Marc Mason, Stockton Council's Manager for Community Education, said: "This event has given us a chance to reach young people with something that is current and catches their imagination. The workshop proved very popular and some real mixing talent has emerged."

Young linguist scoops national prize

10-year-old Hayley Richardson of Holy Trinity C of E School, Stockton, scooped a national schools language award – the EuroTalk Junior Language Challenge – after learning how to speak three languages using EuroTalk software supplied by World Languages North-East. Well done to Hayley for beating more than 3,000 pupils from 300 primary schools across the UK to win a holiday in Malawi.

Billingham pupils make their Mark

Youngsters from St Michael's School in Billingham finished third in a national business competition. In the finals of Yell's Make Your Mark Challenge, pupils had to develop a new drink then pitch their marketing ideas for it to an 'X-factor' style judging panel. A West Sussex school won the £1,000 first prize.

Bands help young people remember

Young people handed over £350 to the British Legion after selling red awareness bands to their friends.

The teenagers, who were part of Stockton Youth Service's Learn to Remember project, hit upon the idea of the popular awareness bands after they found some young people no longer bought poppies because they felt it had no meaning for them.

The bands, with the word "Remember" embossed on them, were sold for a donation of up to £1 with all the proceeds going to the British Legion.

The Learn to Remember project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Their Past Your Future scheme, was designed to highlight the importance of remembering World War Two.

The young people from Stockton met many elderly people who lived through the war and listened to their stories as part of their project.

Jackson cares for his area

Waste conscious schoolboy Jackson Pickering met a special visitor when Freda the Frog, Stockton Council's recycling mascot, arrived to present him with a certificate.

Jackson, 11, had contacted the Council's Care For Your Area team to ask how his area was being kept tidy. His letter was passed on to Freda, who was impressed that Jackson cares so much for the place where he lives.

So Freda visited him at Priors Mill School, Billingham, where Jackson is a pupil, and presented him with a certificate to thank him for his interest and being so aware of his surroundings.



Awards keep coming for Parkfield



A Stockton regeneration initiative has received national recognition for its commitment to improving Parkfield.

Stockton was commended in the Partnership Award at the LGC Sustainable Communities Awards for its partnership with the Parkfield and Mill Lane Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder (NMP) and Tees Valley Living.

This comes just months after Stockton Council won the Mainstreaming Award in the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister's New Deal for Communities and Neighbourhood Management Awards, which recognise teams and individuals striving to

improve the lives of people in their communities.

This was coupled with the Parkfield and Mill Lane NMP being highly commended in the Liveability category at the same awards.

The partnership between Stockton Council, the NMP and Tees Valley Living was formed to develop a housing regeneration masterplan for the Parkfield and Mill Lane area of Stockton to address a declining housing market and create sustainable communities.

Residents in the area are being encouraged to take pride in their neighbourhood by backing a

campaign call 'Pride in Parkfield/Mill Lane'. This will run throughout 2006 and explore different projects that can be run in the area, involving as many residents as possible.

One resident has already cooked up her own way of helping the community – by putting together a book of healthy eating recipes.

Grace Isaac Obed works as a Community Health Champion and as part of the education and awareness programme, she helped collect recipe ideas from residents. She then put them all together to be compiled into a book and 500 copies have been printed for distribution throughout the community via local organisations such as residents groups.

More praise for South Stockton Link

The South Stockton Link road has added yet another award to its burgeoning collection.

The route, which includes 1825 Way and Queen Elizabeth Way, connects Stockton town centre with the A66 and Ingleby Barwick. It was named

'Civil's Project of the Year' by the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (North East region).

Promoting the work of the region's civil engineers, the award took account of quality, craftsmanship, safety and notability.

The project, widely recognised for its innovative construction using new techniques and materials to reduce the environmental impact, also won the Construction category for partners Stockton Council and contractor Birse Civils at the prestigious Robert Stephenson Awards in Newcastle last year.

I would walk 500 miles...

...and Stockton Council inspectors do so every six months as they check the Borough's roads. Not to mention the 1,000 miles of footpaths to inspect for faults and obstructions.

Residents are rightly interested in our road and footpath network and a recent MORI poll showed lower than average satisfaction with their state across the Borough. A subsequent questionnaire completed by members of the Council's residents' panel, Viewpoint, backed this up and highlighting two areas for improvement.

Residents said they felt general repairs to potholes and trips were poor and there were too many obstructions such as cars and skips parking on footpaths.

Council officers have taken these concerns seriously and, late in 2005, we held a special Environment Focus Group, along with a three Road Focus Groups to find out more.

Residents taking part were able to voice their opinions and concerns to officers and offer suggestions on how the service could be improved.

During 2005 we spent £100,000 on environmental improvements to tackle issues such as increasing parking areas on residential estates, helping to minimise damage to footpaths and grass verges.

Following the consultation, we will now replace flagstones, where possible, with tarmac to reduce the amount of repairs needed – and freeing resources for more scheduled scheme works.

We will also review our skip policy and work more closely with the Council's Enforcement Team to tackle inconsiderate parking and ensure skips are placed safely and correctly on the public highways.

Last year, we kitted out the Council's inspectors with new, branded, distinctive blue and red uniforms, so local people can easily identify them.

Mike Robinson, Stockton Council's Head of Integrated Transport and Environmental Policy, said: "We have listened to residents' concerns and views and we're always looking to continually improve our services. In

Council officers have taken these concerns seriously and, late in 2005, we held a special Environment Focus Group, along with a three Road Focus Groups to find out more.

2006, we'll be holding further consultation with residents, including face to face surveys on market days in Stockton, Thornaby and Billingham.

"Inspecting and repairing roads and footpaths is a priority and national best practice recommends an annual inspection of every adopted road and footpath. Here in Stockton we go one better and inspect each area at least every six months. If we find a defect, we'll repair it within 28 days, unless it's a risk to road users, where we will make it safe within 24 hours."

If you have a question regarding Highway Maintenance, or you would like to report a road or footpath defect, call the Council's Care For Your Area team on (01642) 391959 or email careforyourarea@stockton.gov.uk

You can also report faults online by logging onto www.stockton.gov.uk and following the links to Online Services.



PRAISE for The Norton School



PRAISE – which stands for progressive, respectful, aspirational, inclusive, successful and enjoyable – is the motto at the heart of success for the Norton School, now awarded Specialist Humanities College status for English, geography and drama.

To achieve the status, the school had to raise a whopping £50,000. Teesside Community Trust gave them a £30,000 kick-start and support from local businesses included a very generous £10,000 donation from Devereux of Cleveland.

Staff and pupils raised money with non-uniform days, raffles and a box for loose change in the office. Staff

rallied and organised a Race Night, some students bag-packed while others busked outside supermarkets.

Headteacher Paul Wray said: "We are delighted with the news that we have achieved Specialist Humanities College Status which will allow us to develop further the provision we make for our young people and allow them to continue to be successful.

"This, in turn, will support them for the future to take on the challenges that further education and employment have to offer – equipping them for the rest of their lives. We are very grateful to everyone for their hard work and donations for this very special cause."

Don't waste your energy!

Simple energy saving measures such as draught proofing and insulation could save the average home up to £250 a year on fuel bills.

A free home energy check from the Energy Saving Trust's Advice Centre in Billingham will tell you how much energy and money you are wasting.

In the North East alone, there are up to 500,000 unfilled cavity walls, yet many people are surprised that nearly half of the heat lost is through the loft space and walls. In fact, an un-insulated home loses around 33 percent more heat through the walls.

Cavity wall insulation is one of the most cost-effective energy saving measures, helping cut heat loss by

some 60 per cent, saving households up to £120 a year on fuel bills.

David Lacey, Director of the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre, urges homeowners to act. He said: "By completing a free home energy check, not only will you find out how much energy you could be saving, you'll also find out how much money you could save on fuel bills.

"Once we've analysed your information, you'll receive a personalised report based on your home and circumstances, listing all the ways you can reduce your energy consumption and save on fuel bills. "

Give your home a check-up today – you can complete a home energy questionnaire by calling the freephone number 0800 512 012 or online at www.est.org.uk/myhome

Do you have the Right?

Council tenants will now find it even easier to check if they have the Right to Buy their Council house, thanks to a new information pack.

The booklet, for all the Council's secure tenants, will include the changes made to the Right to Buy scheme under The Housing Act 2004 as well as information on:

- Do you have the Right to Buy?
- How to make a Right to Buy application
- One off costs of buying a property under Right to Buy
- Regular costs of buying under Right to Buy

If anyone has any questions about the Right to Buy scheme or the information booklet, contact the Right to Buy team at 16 Church Road, Stockton, call (01642) 528352 or email righttobuy@stockton.gov.uk

Award for safer drinking campaign

The 'Think B4U Drink' campaign to promote responsible drinking has collected a national award.

Launched on the eve of the new licensing hours last November, the campaign gives advice on how to enjoy a safe night out and get home in one piece. Key messages include safe drinking limits, statistics and how to steer clear of alcohol-related violence. It was featured in December's Stockton News.

Promoted by Stockton Council, the Safer Stockton Partnership with local licensees and other organisations, it won the title of 'Most Responsible Local Authority - Borough Council' in the Responsible Drinks Retailing 2005 awards.

The campaign was also a finalist in the Morning Advertiser Best Pub Awards in February.

Non-smokers see 'double'



A David Brent look-a-like starred in a fun event with a serious message as he delivered a 'motivational' speech to persuade local people to quit smoking.

The Office character's 'double' was in Stockton to present businesses and doctors' surgeries with Clean Air Awards for their efforts in helping create a Smoke Free Stockton.

Carpaccio's Restaurant and Poppy's Hairdressers in Stockton, South View Care Home and Quadrangle Restaurant, both in Billingham, and the Hamilton Russell pub and restaurant in Thorpe Thewles all collected awards. So too did GPs surgeries and a dentist, Park Lane Surgery, Elm Tree Surgery, Tithe Barne Medical Centre, Tennant Street Practice and M A Thurland.

The 'double' also visited the successful companies, and others considering going smoke free, to talk to employees and customers. Run by the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, the National Clean Air Awards reward employers who implement effective workplace no-smoking policies.

The event, at Stockton Town Hall, also saw the launch of Smoke Free Stockton. Encouraging more smoke-free public areas, the partnership includes Stockton Council, North Tees Primary Care Trust, Stockton Renaissance and Cleveland Fire Service. Smoke Free Stockton had a high profile in Stockton High Street on National No-Smoking Day on 8 March.

MPs have now voted to ban smoking in all enclosed spaces by summer 2007 – including pubs and clubs.

Smoking and its effects causes more than one in five deaths. Khamis Al-alawy of North Tees PCT said: "Breathing in second hand smoke kills three times more workers than any other accidents at the workplace. These are avoidable and unnecessary deaths."

All Council grounds, buildings and vehicles are now smoke-free, and there is no smoking at civic functions in Council buildings.

You're more likely to stop smoking for good with the right support. Local NHS Stop Smoking Services offer free, specialist advice.

- Call 0800 169 0 169
- Visit www.givingupsmoking.co.uk
- Or ring the Tees Start Stopping Service on (01642) 223023.

Stockton's gold standard

Stockton Council, North Tees PCT and North Tees University Hospital all came in for ministerial praise for their work to protect people from second-hand smoke in March.

During a visit to learn about Stockton's work to encourage healthier communities (see page 11), Secretary of State for Public Health Caroline Flint MP presented national Clean Air 'Gold' awards to all three organisations.

The Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation made the awards to the Council and its two health partners for their work to make their premises completely smoke-free, eliminate second-hand smoke and improve conditions for employees and visitors alike. Caroline Flint, pictured right with Ruth Hill the Council's Head of Adult Services.





Funny Bones

Make no bones about it – Puppet Lab's presentation of 'Funny Bones' will be a winner with youngsters at Preston Hall Museum's Ballroom on Thursday, 20 April (2pm). Funny Bones tells the story of three lonely skeletons – a big skeleton, a little skeleton and a dog skeleton. They are looking for people to scare but everyone is asleep so they decide to scare themselves. A sure winner with boys and girls aged three to seven years, tickets are £5 for adults and £3 for children from Stockton Tourist Information Centre on (01642) 528130.

On the crest of a wavedance



Children with special needs are joining in fun workshops in movement, music and drama, thanks to the Wavedance project.

Three professional artists from the FATHoM Art Collective lead the workshops at Preston Hall Museum. Each week, school children from Abbey Hill School and Technology

College join other families and children with special needs living in the Borough to use the buildings, exhibitions, objects and artwork at the Museum as inspiration for music, theatre and dance.

To find out how you can take part in the Wavedance project, call (01642) 528842 or email marian.jones@stockton.gov.uk

Adult learners celebrate success

24 adult learners across the Borough have been celebrating their "excellent" success after completing their NVQ Teaching Assistant level three qualification.

Stockton Council's Adult Education Service is one of only two education authorities in the country to offer this vocational training for non-teaching staff in schools and an external verifier judged the portfolios created by the candidates to be 'excellent'.

"This is a great achievement for these learners and I would like to congratulate everyone for their success on behalf of everyone in adult education," said Angela Featherstone, NVQ Coordinator for Stockton Council.

Are you interested in working towards an NVQ? Call Stockton Council's Adult Education Service on (01642) 528818.

It's worthwhile volunteering

Are you finding yourself at a loss after retirement? Many older people do, but volunteering can help you find new challenges, structure your day, be involved in your community and make new friends.

Experienced people are incredibly valuable and volunteering can not only help keep you healthy, live longer and stay fitter but also feel happier.

The Stockton Volunteer Centre offers support for volunteers and organisations and puts them in touch with each other. You can find out what voluntary work is available locally and choose from a wide range of opportunities including local heritage, become a trustee, support a young family, fundraise for a local project, or campaign and lobby for a good cause.

To become involved, call (01642) 355292 or drop into the Centre at 27 Yarm Road, Stockton. Or you can visit the www.do-it.org.uk website or e-mail for details to volunteering@stocktonvda.org

Partnership passes £163 million decent homes milestone

Tristar Homes has completed more than two thirds of the £163 million modernisation programme for Stockton's Council houses.

Tristar, which manages more than 11,000 homes for Stockton Council, has already invested £93 million since it embarked on the programme to bring its stock up to the Government's 'Decent Standard' four years ago.

A progress report to Stockton Council's Cabinet revealed the work has already been completed on more than 7,000 houses and flats. Tristar will invest a further £70 million on its remaining homes by the end of December 2010.

Improvements depend on the individual needs of properties and have included replacement of roofs, windows, kitchens, bathrooms, doors and rainwater goods.

Jon Mallen Beadle, Tristar's Acting Managing Director, said: "It is a major milestone to reach in the programme and I am delighted for the tenants and proud of our team for achieving it.

"Thousands of our tenants are now enjoying the benefits of life in a decent home, which this unprecedented investment has made possible.

"The partnership with Stockton Council, and with our Partnering Contractors Dunelm Property Services, Frank Haslam Milan and Mears Group, who are carrying out the renovation works, is working well and we look forward to completing the job we set out to do."

Julie Allport, Stockton Council's Head of Housing, said: "The Decent Standard programme is making a huge difference to homes across the Borough and is an impressive achievement. The partnership is proving a huge success."

Tristar Homes has received extremely positive feedback from customers following the improvement work to their homes, with satisfaction levels for the quality of the work exceeding 97 per cent. One Thornaby tenant whose property recently benefited from the work wrote to Tristar Homes to say the "really big improvement" had made it "feel like a home, not a house anymore".

Tristar Homes has also published a list detailing properties to be modernised over the remaining years. The full list of homes to be modernised in 2006-07 is on display in Tristar's Housing Centres, on its www.tristarhomes.co.uk website, by calling (01642) 527361/527406 or by email on investment@tristarhomes.co.uk

Top quality for Trading Standards

Stockton Council's Trading Standards Consumer Advice Centre has earned national recognition by becoming the country's third centre of its kind to earn the Government's Specialist Quality Mark.

The centre, in the Central Library on Church Road, offers free advice on

problems relating to the supply of consumer goods and services and handles more than 8,000 enquiries each year.

You can also obtain advice by calling (01642) 527939, by email on trading.standards@stockton.gov.uk or from our website at www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/stockton

Sporting achievements recognised

Middlesbrough FC manager Steve McClaren lent his support by presenting sporting awards to elite and talented young people from across the Tees Valley at an annual ceremony Billingham's Northfield School and Specialist Sports College. Some of the winners are table tennis playing Northfield pupils Danielle Horsley, Katie Burge, Lauren Parfitt and Rebecca Lavelle.

Read about Thornaby's history

A book chronicling the history of Thornaby-on-Tees uses more than 90 photographs to illustrate the area's past.

Titled 'Thornaby-on-Tees in the Past' the book was produced by Stockton-on-Tees Local History Group, with assistance from Stockton Council's Museum Service.

Thornaby Village was a small Viking settlement. In 1825, a mile and a half away, a new town called South Stockton was established, where the ironworks and shipyards were based. In 1892, the two places joined together to become Thornaby-on-Tees.

Susan McLaurin, who has worked on the book, said: "We produce Stockton-on-Tees Local History Journal twice a year and the Thornaby book started because several members of the local history group had worked at Head Wrightson engineering works at Thornaby and we started to find out more and more about the town.

"This new book has chapters on housing and transport as well as the ironworks and shipyards."

The first print of the book has sold out but a new run has been delivered. Copies cost £6.50 plus £1.50 post and package - for details call Susan McLaurin on (01642) 710838.

On your marks...new sports academy launched

Extra support is helping top Tees Valley sporting youngsters realise their full potential.

The launch of the Tees Active Sports Academy has seen an initial intake of 27 of the region's brightest sporting talents accepted into the Academy. They will have access to training facilities, funding for equipment, access to medical advice, transport and links to other organisations.

The Academy takes in Splash, Thornaby Pavilion, Thornaby Pool, Billingham Forum, Stockton Sports Centre and Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre. Youngsters taken on must either live in Stockton Borough or train at one of the Active Life Centres.

"The launch of this Sports Academy will help aspiring and talented performers across all sports and it will help them to develop in their home area," said Steve Chaytor, Managing Director of Tees Active Ltd.

Among the sporting youngsters accepted into the Academy are 200m butterfly European Junior Championship bronze medallist Jessica Dickons and Cloe Dawson, a member of the Great Britain Junior Figure Skating squad.

They are joined by 13-year-old Steve Hewitson of England's U14 ice hockey team and 12-year-old wrestling star Marcus Sudron, who has again been selected by the Great Britain U14's squad to compete in a prestigious international tournament in Latvia.

11-times Paralympic gold medallist Tanni Grey Thompson showed her support by becoming Academy Champion. She said: "I fully support this exciting initiative which I believe will make a big difference in producing our future champions."

Businesses interested in sponsorship packages for the Sports Academy can contact Allan McDermott on (01642) 528772.



Centre adopts star's name

A change of name for a Stockton carers centre reflects its links with a former Teesside soccer legend.

The Stockton Carers Resource Centre has become the George Hardwick Foundation after the centre helped his widow Jennifer to care for him during his final illness.

The foundation helps carers by offering personal support, personal development and relaxation as well as advice and information on a wide range of subject including benefits and financial advice.

For more information about the centre's services, call (01642) 739955 or visit www.georgehardwickfoundation.org

Cycling is for everyone



Pictured are Jessie Gebhard and member volunteer, Paul Davies

Gateway Wheelers is a cycling club for people of all ages with disabilities.

Members' special needs or severe disabilities doesn't stop them cycling. The club provides cycling facilities and organises events in Yarm and elsewhere in the north east. There are time trials and competitions – even occasionally in national events.

The club provides machines specific to the users, giving opportunities and responsibility for their own movement and propulsion.

Membership includes people recovering from strokes, Parkinson's disease and arthritis. The improvement in their general health is clear – regular exercise may not cure disability but can slow its progress, lift depression and anxiety and enable socially isolated people to ride with others.

Helpers are highly motivated and bikes are very specialised, requiring special attention. The club struggles to find bike parts and engineers but, with other volunteers and trainers, their rewards come in helping others find their independence.

For details, contact Jessie at officegatewaywheelers@yahoo.co.uk ring 0791 390 5422 or visit www.gatewaywheelers.or.uk

Don't Delay in seeking advice

A new advice campaign is urging Borough residents to ease their problems by seeking help and advice before they become too much to handle.

"Don't Delay" is a campaign run by The Stockton Advice and Information Service to raise awareness of the different help and advice available on issues such as debt, employment, housing and community care.

The campaign message is – if someone has a problem they should seek advice immediately, as delays not only make it harder to solve, they can also cost more money and affect your health and wellbeing through stress and anxiety.

Jenifer Goodwill, Community Legal Education Worker at the Advice Service, said: "So many of the problems we deal with could have been sorted out a lot quicker and easier if people had come to us sooner."

Debt is the first subject covered in the campaign, with a self-help pack of information to help people regain control of their budgets and a standard letter which can be sent to creditors.

Information is available from any suitably qualified or experienced advice service, such as the Community Legal Service. To find your nearest quality marked service, call at the Stockton Advice Service on Bath Lane, Stockton, or go to www.clsdirect.org.uk

Alleygate faults? Call CFYA

There's a new telephone number to report faults on the alleygates which provide extra security at various locations around the Borough.

Stockton Council's Care For Your Area team now manages all these alleygates and anyone wanting to report faults with a gate should call (01642) 391959.

Residents can collect their alleygate keys from the Environment Centre, 21 West Row, Stockton TS18 1BT.

Their ship came in



The PictureStockton website made Christmas a bit special for one seadog last year.

Karen Smith and her boyfriend Neil Philp were planning a present with a difference for Neil's father, a retired seaman now living in Glasgow, and decided to create a photograph album of all of the vessels Neil's father had served in.

After exhausting many avenues including contacting numerous maritime organisations, they managed to acquire pictures of every ship but one – the Gulf Dane, which was built at the Furness Yard on the Tees.

After searching the Internet for any possible source of images of the vessel, they found what they were looking for on the PictureStockton website.

Contacting Stockton Council they were put in touch with Barbara Baker at the library service, who was able to re-scan the images and send them off to in time.

If Karen was delighted, her boyfriend's dad was 'over the moon'. She said: "Neil's dad was absolutely thrilled with the album and said it was his best present ever!"

Visit this brilliant site at www.picture.stockton.gov.uk

Neighbourhoods net £1.6m

Life will improve for residents in Portrack, Tilery and Mount Pleasant thanks to investment of £1.6 million over the next four years.

Stockton Renaissance, the Local Strategic Partnership for the Borough, selected the area to benefit from the money, which comes from the new Neighbourhood Element of the Government's Safer Stronger Communities Fund.

The area also includes the Victoria

Estate and Queens Park and is ranked as the Borough's most deprived neighbourhood. It has considerable problems in health, low demand housing and worklessness.

Residents will be able to influence how Neighbourhood Element money is spent, working with service providers to improve services and tackle issues such as offending, poor health and educational underachievement.

For more information or to become involved, call James Hadman on (01642) 527823.

Steve is Tristar's new man at the top

Tristar Homes has named Steve Boyd as its new managing director.

For the past 12 years, Tyneside-born 46-year-old Steve has been chief executive at Newcastle-based Nomad Homes, which is currently involved in the Mandale regeneration in Thornaby.

However, he is no stranger to this area as he is returning to his workplace from 1987 to 1990, when he was Stockton Council's Chief Housing

Officer – one of the youngest people to have achieved such a position.

Now he's looking forward to the opportunities and challenges his new position will bring. He said: "I'm very pleased to be back. I know the area and the issues concerning residents. I am also passionate about the 3 R's of housing – Repairs, Rights and Rents."

Tristar will soon face a rigorous audit inspection, and one of Steve's first tasks in his new role will be to oversee this.



Online planning wins top marks

A national survey of planning websites has given Stockton Council top marks.

The survey, by Peter Pendleton and Associates for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, considered ease of access to online planning, whether applications can be submitted online and what attachments can be viewed online.

And with details of planning applications, copies of letters of objection, planning committee agendas and minutes and decisions all available, it's not surprising the survey awarded the Council's planning team the maximum 21 points.

You can find it all on the Council's website at www.stockton.gov.uk

Taking stock of open spaces

Is there an open space near your home?

Over the last 18 months the Council has been taking stock of these areas across the Borough in an Open Space Audit as part of the development of a Local Development Framework.

Council officers have visited and assessed more than a thousand sites to gain a comprehensive picture of open space provision.

The project's next stage will take the form of widespread public consultation in the early summer. This will help determine local standards for the quantity and quality of open space required to meet the needs of the Borough's residents, current and future.

Andrew McMillan, a planning officer with Stockton Council, said: "We want to ensure that we include all open spaces in the audit and establish their current use. To do that, we are keen to include everyone who has an interest in these open spaces.

"We are asking you to become involved by checking our study to ensure we have included all the open spaces you use."

At the end of the consultation, work will begin to establish new local standards for open space provision over the next 6 to 12 months.

These will not only help the Council to improve and develop open spaces, they will also inform planning policy and enable the Council to formulate more effective management programmes - grass cutting and lighting, for example.

Watch out for details of the audit of current sites in local press. They are also available in all the Borough's libraries, in the Council's Planning Reception, Gloucester House, Church Road, Stockton, and on the Council's website at www.stockton.gov.uk/openspace or by calling Andrew McMillan on (01642) 526056.

POLICE BEAT

Operation Cleansweep

On Fri 27 January, Stockton District launched operation Cleansweep from the Fire Station at Norton.

Operation Cleansweep is a multi-agency approach to tackling the problem of Criminal Damage which accounts for nearly 30 per cent of all total crime reported in the District. The Newtown ward within Stockton District had been identified through analysis as being one of four district hot-spots where criminal damage has been recognised as a major problem.

“Ridding the Borough of graffiti, which is both an eyesore, and criminal damage as well as fly tipping will affect the quality of life for everyone.”

Operation Cleansweep involved uniform police officers, Police Community Support Officers, Community Wardens, Care For Your Area, Crimestoppers the Fire service, SCARAB and the major housing providers for the area. The main objectives of the operation were to reduce the levels of Criminal Damage in the area, bring pride and respect back to the area and bring offenders to justice.

The operation was accompanied by a poster and bus campaign encouraging members of the public to report persons

responsible for damaging their areas using the freephone crimestoppers number displayed.

This is the start of a sustained campaign by the district and its partners to reduce the current levels of Criminal Damage experienced in the district. It is designed to encourage residents to have respect for their area and work with all agencies to reduce damage and anti-social behaviour

Chief Inspector Gary Gamesby of Cleveland Police organised the operation. He said: “We want to show the residents in this area that they do not have to put up with damage to their properties and

that littering and graffiti are unacceptable.”

Maralyn Davies, Stockton Council's Community Safety Manager, said: “This is the first of a number of operations of this type and it will include work in local schools and will make a real difference to the area. And we are encouraging everyone including children to use Crime Stoppers to report anti social behaviour, crime and disorder.

“Ridding the Borough of graffiti, which is both an eyesore, and criminal damage as well as fly tipping will affect the quality of life for everyone.”



What's On

April, May and June 2006
www.stockton.gov.uk/events

Exhibitions

Preston Hall Museum, tel: (01642) 781184
Until 9 April

Wife Swap – back to the 1950s

Until 22 April

Heaviesides part 2 – Rambles by the River Tees

Focus Gallery @Green Dragon Studios, tel: (01642) 527982

29 April – 3 June

Walker Evans, national tour

10 June – 5 August

Focus Photography Competition

Billingham Art Gallery, tel: (01642) 527911

27 May – 8 July

Wrexham International Print Exhibition

April

1 April – 20 May

Natural Rhythms

Exhibition by Kathryn Wakeman & Carol Alevroyianni,
Billingham Art Gallery, tel: (01642) 5527911

5 April

Books & Banter

Every Wednesday 10:30am – 12noon, Stockton Central
Library, tel: (01642) 526521

5 April

North, South, East, West

Doug Worton Slide Show, Norton Library, 3pm,
Tel: (01642) 528019

7 April

What's Up in the Night Sky?

Wynyard Woodland Park Planetarium, 7:30pm,
tel: (01740) 630544

8 - 22 April

Lambing Fortnight

Clarences Community Farm, tel: (01642) 391975

9 April

Tees Bridge/Haverton Loop

Gentle ride along the Tees, 5 or 11 miles, start Tees
Barrage 1:30pm, tel: (01642) 526735/6

History Walk

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, 2-4pm,
tel: (01642) 397609

10 April

High St Family Activity

Historic activity trail in Stockton High Street & Town Hall
tour, 10am-1pm, tel: (01642) 526185

Build a Space Shuttle

Wynyard Planetarium, 1:30-3:30pm, 7-12 year-olds,
tel: (01740) 630544

SPARK

Bishopton Road West - Easter Art Activity for 5yrs+ under
8, booking essential, tel: (01642) 612802

10-14 April

Mobile Skate Park

For skaters/BMX, 10am-3pm, Stockton High Street,
tel: (01642) 528805

10 - 21 April

Xplore Easter Holiday Activity

Sporting activities 3-16 year olds, tel: (01642) 526274

11 April

Crafty Easter Cards

Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, 10:30am-12pm,
tel: (01642) 415225

12 April

Easter Eggstravaganza

Egg painting, Wynyard Woodland Park, 2-4pm,
tel: (01740) 630011

Town Hall Open Day

Find out the history and day to day workings of Stockton
Town Hall, 1-3pm, tel: (01642) 526185

16 April

Friends of Ropner Park

Family fun, tel: (01642) 570641

17 - 21 April

Mobile Skate Park

Stockton High Street, 10am-3pm, tel: (01642) 528805

17 April

Energy and Power

Preston Park, 2-4pm, tel: (01642) 788907

19 April

Woodland Fairies and Elves

Wynyard Woodland Park, 10:30am-12:30pm,
tel: (01740) 630011

20 April

Nature Maps

Preston Park, 10am-12pm & 2pm-4pm, tel: (01642) 788907

Puppet Lab present Funnybones by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

Preston Hall Ballroom, 2pm, tickets from TIC,
Stockton Library, tel: (01642) 528131

21 April

Who is the first Martian?

Wynyard Woodland Park Planetarium, 7:30pm,
tel: (01740) 630544

Shaping Health – The Patients Forum

Shelia Sutherland talks about health by becoming a
Critical Friend, Norton Library, 2pm, tel: (01642) 528019

23 April

Water voles at Cowpen Bewley

10:30am-12:30pm, tel: (01642) 415225

25-29 April

What the Butler Saw

Black comedy by Joe Orton from the Billingham Players,
Theatre Upstairs, Belasis Avenue, tel: (01642) 551981

30 April

Spring Ramble

Preston Park, 10am-3pm, tel: (01642) 788907

Meet the Mole

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, 10am-12noon,
tel: (01642) 397609

May

1 May

Barrage and Back

Forest Mobility Events, scooters limited, 11am-2:30pm,
tel: (01642) 300716

3 May

Behind the Scenes at Preston Hall

With Julian Herbert, Norton Library, 3pm,
tel: (01642) 528019

5 May

Bat Walk

Preston Park, 8-10pm, tel: (01642) 788907

5-7 May

Teesside Garden Festival

Plants & garden accessories. Preston Park. Admission
Friday £2 adults, £1.50 conc.; Sat/Sun £3.50 adults, £2.50
conc. Children free. Tel: 01406 490420

7 May

Conservation Task

Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, 1-4pm,
tel: (01642) 415225

Early Birds

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, 7am start,
tel: (01642) 397609

Myton Meander

10-mile ride to Tees Barrage, start Myton House Pub,
Ingleby Barwick, 10am-1pm, tel: (01642) 526735/6

7 & 21 May

The Wonders of the Universe

Wynyard Woodland Park Planetarium, 3pm,
tel: (01740) 630544

14 May

Dawn Chorus

Wynyard Woodland Park, 4:30-6:30am, tel: (01740) 630011

16 May

Wetlands to Waterfall Walk

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, 10am-1:30pm,
tel: (01642) 397609

19 May

Facial Surgery

Helping people through Facial Surger, by Richard
Langford, Norton Library, 2pm, tel: (01642) 528019

20 May

Tees Regatta

Rowing for all ages and abilities, Tees Barrage to Princess
of Wales Bridge, 9am – 6:30pm, tel: (01642) 628940

20 & 21 May

Getaway 2006

Outdoor activities, Scouts display, climbing wall, other
attractions, tel: (01642) 527345

24 May

Summer Fayre

Hartburn Primary School, 6-8pm

27 & 28 May

Fins and Chrome

North East American Car Club show, Preston Park,
10am-5pm, admission £2 adults, £1 conc,
tel: (01642) 526185

29 May

High St Family Activity

Historic activity trail in Stockton High Street & Town Hall
tour 10am-1pm, tel: (01642) 526185

Spiders

Preston Park, 2-3:30pm, tel: (01642) 788907

Junior Bird Count

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, 10am-12noon, tel:
(01642) 397609

Make & Take art workshops

SPARK, Bishopton Road West, for 5yrs+ under 8, must
book and be accompanied by adult, tel: (01642) 612802

30 May

Jeepers Creepers

Wynyard Woodland Park, 1:30-3:30pm, tel: (01740) 630011

31 May

Snap Happy

Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, 10am 12noon, tel:
(01642) 415225

Wildlife Detectives

Preston Park, 2-4pm, tel: (01642) 788907

June

1 June
Build a Rocket
Wynyard Planetarium, 1:30-3:30pm, tel: (01740) 630544

Blubbery To Sea You
Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, 10:30am-2:30pm, tel: (01642) 415225

4 June
Mayor's Sunday Parade
Stockton High Street, from 10am, tel: (01642) 526193

Wild Flower Foraging
Preston Park, 10am-12noon, tel: (01642) 788907

4 & 18 June
Wonders of the Universe
Wynyard Woodland Park Planetarium, 3pm, tel: (01740) 630544

5-11 June
The BIG Recycle
Do your bit for the environment across the Borough, tel (01642) 527184

7 June
My Acting Life
Life as a thespian, by Ray Amer, Norton Library, 2pm, tel: (01642) 528019

11 June
Music in the Park
Billingham Silver Band, Ropner Park, 2-4pm, tel: (01642) 527345

Astronomical Photography
Wynyard Planetarium, 2-4:30pm, tel: (01740) 630544

14 June
Wynyard Wander
Forest Mobility Events, scooters limited, 1-4pm, tel: (01642) 300716

15 June
Trail Race
Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park, register 6:15pm, tel: (01642) 415225

16 June
My life and How I got there
Talk on visual impairment, Norton Library, 2pm, tel: (01642) 528019

18 June
Balancing Bugs
Preston Park, 10am-12:30pm, tel: (01642) 788907

Railway Run
Ride along the old Castle Eden railway, 12 or 26 miles, from Wynyard Woodland Park, tel: (01642) 526735/6

Party in Village Park
Family Fun in Thornaby Village Park, tel: (01642) 608316

Beginner's Guide to Trees
Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, 1-3pm, tel: (01642) 397609

21 June
Tees Bridges
5 miles – Easy lunch time ride on riverside paths, start Municipal Bldgs, 12:30pm, tel: (01642) 526735/6

Midsummer Ride
Discover Celts, Romans, Saxon, Vikings, start Tees Barrage, 7-9pm, tel: (01642) 526735/6

23 June
Avison Ensemble - Mozarts Piano
Preston Hall Ballroom, 7.15pm, tickets £10/£8 Conc. from TIC, Stockton Library

24 & 25 June
25th Fire Engine & Vintage Car Rally
Historic Vehicle Rally, Preston Park, 11am-5pm, free parking + park & ride, admission £2.50 (£1.50 conc.), or £6 for family ticket (2 adults + 2 children or 1 adult + 3 children) in advance call (01642) 527346/5/4 or email events@stockton.gov.uk

25 June
Friends of Ropner Park
All day family Summer fun, Ropner Park, tel: (01642) 570641

Round and About
Wynyard Woodland Park, 10am-3pm, tel: (01740) 603311

Stockton Circular
10 mile ride, start Municipal Bldgs, 10am-1pm, tel: (01642) 526735/6

27-1 July
Cider with Rosie
Theatre Upstairs, Belasis Avenue, tel: (01642) 551981

28 June
Town Hall Open Day
Stockton Town Hall, 9:30am-12noon, tel: (01642) 526185

Every effort has been made to ensure information is correct, but Stockton Borough Council cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of the information. Please ensure you check details before attending events.

Children do the choosing

As Stockton News went to print youngsters were celebrating literacy in the Borough with Stockton Children's Book of the Year.

1,000 children from 25 schools across the Borough have been busy reading to find their favourite author from a selection of four books.


The Awards Ceremony, now in its tenth year and run by Stockton Council's Library Service, took place on Tuesday, 21 March, in Stockton Central Library's Lecture Hall.

There was a strong line up of short-listed titles this year featuring *The Printer's Devil*, by Paul Bajoria, *The Tears of Isis*, by Allan Frewin Jones, *The Whispering Road* by Livi Michael and *Cloud Cat* written by Caroline Pitcher.

The ceremony is now a much-anticipated annual event enjoyed by authors, teachers, staff and pupils alike. Youngsters had the opportunity to meet the short-listed authors at organised sessions in libraries and other venues across the Borough.

Look out for results of the winning author in the next edition of Stockton News.

Thanks go to Badger for Books, Stockton North Achievement Zone, Tesco Stores Ltd and The Retired Members Association who sponsored the event.


Middlesbrough
moving forward

**Middlesbrough Council
Community Protection Service
Bereavement Services**

**TEESSIDE CREMATORIUM
MEMORIAL SERVICES 2006**

Memorial Services are held at the Crematorium on the third Sunday of every month (except April) and start at 3pm in the St. Bede's Chapel.

They are conducted by Church of England or Free Church clergy. Everyone is welcome to attend. They last approximately half an hour and there is no collection.

The next services are as follows:

Sunday 23 April	Sunday 21 May
Sunday 18 June	Sunday 16 July
Sunday 20 August	Sunday 17 September
Sunday 15 October	Sunday 19 November
Sunday 17 December	

A Requiem Mass for all Roman Catholics will be held in November 2006 in St Mary's Cathedral, Coulby Newham, Middlesbrough. Further details will be sent to all Roman Catholics nearer the time.

Annual Remembrance Services for Babies take place at Linthorpe Cemetery Baby Memorial during September and at Acklam Cemetery Baby Memorial during July.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT THE OFFICE AT THE ADDRESS BELOW.

The Cemeteries and Crematorium Office, Teesside Crematorium, Acklam Road, Middlesbrough, TS5 7HD.
Telephone 01642 817725, Fax 01642 852424
email bereavementservices@middlesbrough.gov.uk
website www.middlesbrough.gov.uk

Ward Surgeries

April 2006 - July 2006

www.stockton.gov.uk/yourcouncil/your_councillors/councillors_ward_surgeries/

BILLINGHAM CENTRAL 6:30PM – 7:30PM

12th Apr Billingham Youth & Community Centre
10th May As above
21st Jun As above
12th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS N TEASDALE TEL: 07917 587621
B WOODHOUSE TEL: 01642 371638

BILLINGHAM EAST

28th Apr New Life Resource Centre 5:00pm – 5:45pm
Synthonia Scout Group Hall,
Greenwood Road 5:45pm – 6:30pm
19th May As above
16th Jun As above
28th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS A CUNNINGHAM TEL: 01642 551251
M STOKER TEL: 01642 371641

BILLINGHAM NORTH 6:30PM – 7:30PM

3rd Apr High Grange Community Centre
8th May North Billingham Methodist Church
5th Jun High Grange Community Centre
3rd Jul North Billingham Methodist Church

COUNCILLORS MRS L APEDAILE TEL: 01740 645216
C LECKONBY TEL: 01642 872896

BILLINGHAM NORTH 6:30PM – 7:30PM

24th Apr North Billingham Methodist Church
22nd May As above
19th Jun As above
July 2006 To be arranged

COUNCILLOR K DEWISON TEL: 01642 535188

BILLINGHAM SOUTH 6:00PM – 7:00PM

13th Apr Billingham Branch Library, Bedale Avenue
11th May As above
8th Jun As above
13th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS MRS J O'DONNELL TEL: 01642 559717
M SMITH TEL: 01642 371782

BILLINGHAM WEST 6:00PM – 7:00PM

28th Apr St Mary Magdalene Church
26th May As above
30th Jun As above
28th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS MRS M B WOMPHREY TEL: 01642 360726
M E WOMPHREY TEL: 01642 555755

BISHOPSGARTH & ELM TREE (STOCKTON)

11th Apr Elm Tree Community Centre
(Youth Surgery 4:30pm – 5:30pm)
(Adult Surgery 6:00pm – 7:00pm)

9th May As above
6th Jun As above
4th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS MRS S FLETCHER MBE TEL: 01642 787652
MRS J ROBERTS TEL: 01642 606732

EAGLESCLIFFE

7th Apr Trinity Methodist Church, Witham Avenue
6:30 – 7:30pm
5th May Trinity Methodist Church, Witham Avenue
6:30 – 7:30pm

16th May Egglecliffe Community Centre,
Durham Lane 6:30 – 7:30pm
2nd Jun Trinity Methodist Church, Witham Avenue
6:30 – 7:30pm

20th Jun Egglecliffe Parish Hall, Butts Lane
6:00 – 7:00pm

7th Jul Trinity Methodist Church, Witham Avenue
6:30 – 7:30pm
18th Jul Egglecliffe Community Centre,
Durham Lane 6:30 – 7:30pm

COUNCILLORS M CHERRETT TEL: 01642 783491
J FLETCHER TEL: 01642 787652
MRS M RIGG TEL: 01642 785689

FAIRFIELD 6:30PM – 7:00PM

4th Apr Fairfield Infants School
9th May As above
13th Jun As above
11th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS M PERRY TEL: 01642 586914
W WOODHEAD TEL: 01642 582599

GRANGEFIELD 6:00PM – 7:00PM

11th Apr Fairfield Library
25th Apr As above
9th May As above
23rd May As above
13th Jun As above
27th Jun As above
11th Jul As above
25th Jul As above

COUNCILLOR E JOHNSON TEL: 01642 671582

GRANGEFIELD 6:00PM – 7:00PM

19th Apr Fairfield Library
17th May As above
21st Jun As above
No July surgery

COUNCILLOR MRS J WADE TEL: 01642 583549

HARDWICK WARD 6:00PM – 7:00PM

7th Apr Hardwick Community Centre,
Wheatley Road

21st Apr As above
28th Apr As above
5th May As above

12th May As above
19th May As above
26th May As above

2nd Jun As above
9th Jun As above
16th Jun As above

23rd Jun As above
30th Jun As above
7th Jul As above

14th Jul As above
21st Jul As above
28th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS MRS E NESBITT TEL: 01642 601731
W NOBLE TEL: 01642 671609

HARDWICK WARD 6:30PM – 7:30PM

3rd Mar Salters Lane Community Centre

7th Apr As above
5th May As above
2nd Jun As above

7th Jul As above
COUNCILLOR MRS L NESBITT TEL: 01642 601731

HARTBURN 6:45PM – 7:30PM

10th Apr Elmwood Community Centre,
Darlington Road

8th May Rosehill Infants School, Upsall Grove
5th Jun Elmwood Community Centre,
Darlington Road

3rd Jul Rosehill Infants School, Upsall Grove

COUNCILLORS T LAING TEL: 01642 587356
K LUPTON TEL: 01642 587286

INGLEBY BARWICK EAST

5th Apr All Saints C of E Secondary School, Blair Av *
6:00pm – 7:00pm

10th May All Saints C of E Secondary School, Blair Av *
6:00pm – 7:00pm

7th Jun All Saints C of E Secondary School, Blair Av *
6:00pm – 7:00pm

5th Jul All Saints C of E Secondary School, Blair Av *
6:00pm – 7:00pm

Please contact your Councillors for details of Ward Surgeries in Hilton

* = Joint surgery with Ingleby Barwick West Ward

COUNCILLORS K FAULKES TEL: 01642 764874
D HARRINGTON TEL: 01642 764652
A LARKIN TEL: 01642 764706

INGLEBY BARWICK WEST 6:00PM – 7:00PM

5th Apr All Saints C of E Secondary School, Blair Av
10th May As above
7th Jun As above

5th Jul As above
Joint surgeries with Ingleby Barwick East Ward

COUNCILLORS K DIXON TEL: 01642 764650
L NARROWAY TEL: 01642 764703
R PATTERSON TEL: 01642 764865

MANDALE & VICTORIA 6:00PM – 7:00PM

6th Apr Thornaby Library, Westbury Street
4th May Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre
1st Jun Thornaby Library, Westbury Street

6th Jul Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre

COUNCILLORS MRS A NORTON TEL: 01642 606734

MANDALE & VICTORIA

(Joint surgery with Village Ward, Cllr Dalgarno)
24th Apr Thornaby Pavilion 5:00pm – 6:00pm
27th May Rochester Court Sheltered Housing
11:00am – 12:00

24th Jun Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre
12:00 – 1:00pm

22nd Jul Thornaby Library, Westbury Street
11:00am – 12:00

COUNCILLOR MRS A TRAINER TEL: 01642 647421

COUNCILLOR S WALMSLEY TEL: 01642 604176

NEWTOWN 6:00PM – 7:00PM

7th Apr Wrensfield Community Centre
14th Apr St Paul's Church, Bishopton Road

21st Apr Primrose Hill Community Centre
28th Apr Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre

5th May Wrensfield Community Centre

12th May St Paul's Church, Bishopton Road
19th May Primrose Hill Community Centre
26th May Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre

2nd Jun Wrensfield Community Centre
9th Jun St Paul's Church, Bishopton Road
16th Jun Primrose Hill Community Centre

23rd Jun Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre
30th Jun Wrensfield Community Centre

7th Jul St Paul's Church, Bishopton Road
14th Jul Primrose Hill Community Centre
21st Jul Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre

28th Jul Wrensfield Community Centre

COUNCILLORS P BAKER TEL: 01642 608406
R GIBSON OBE TEL: 01642 614482

NORTHERN PARISHES 7:00PM – 7:30PM

Further dates to be arranged.

COUNCILLOR S PARRY TEL: 01642 879478

NORTON NORTH 6:00PM – 7:00PM

12th Apr The Forge Community Centre

26th Apr Norton Library

10th May Frederick Natrass School

24th May The Forge Community Centre

7th Jun Norton Library

21st Jun Frederick Natrass School

5th Jul The Forge Community Centre

COUNCILLORS M FRANKLAND TEL: 01642 552861
MRS K NELSON TEL: 01642 555729

NORTON SOUTH 6:00PM – 7:00PM

21st Apr St Michael's Centre, Edgar Street

5th May Albany Resource Centre

19th May St Michael's Centre, Edgar Street

2nd Jun Albany Resource Centre

16th Jun St Michael's Centre, Edgar Street

14th Jul St Michael's Centre, Edgar Street

28th Jul Albany Resource Centre

COUNCILLOS R COOK TEL: 01642 890058
robert.cook@stockton.gov.uk
S NELSON TEL: 01642 534417
steve.nelson@stockton.gov.uk

NORTON WEST 6:30PM – 7:00PM

11th Apr The Education Centre, Junction Road

2nd May As above

6th Jun As above

11th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS MRS A CAINS TEL: 01642 361318
D CAINS JP TEL: 01642 555394

PARKFIELD & OXBRIDGE 6:00PM – 7:00PM

6th Apr Oxbridge Christian Fellowship,
Side Entrance, Norfolk Street

20th Apr As above

4th May As above

18th May As above

1st Jun As above

15th Jun As above

6th Jul As above

20th Jul As above

COUNCILLORS C COOMBS TEL: 01642 645759
R RIX TEL: 01642 674861

ROSEWORTH

10th Apr Kiora Hall Youth & Community Centre,
Ragpath Lane 5:15pm – 6:15pm

2nd May 7:00pm – 8:00pm

5th Jun 5:15pm – 6:15pm

4th Jul 7:00pm – 8:00pm

COUNCILLORS MISS B INMAN TEL: 01642 586564
K LEONARD TEL: 01642 894191

STAINSBY HILL 6:00PM – 7:00PM

20th April 2006 South Thornaby Community Centre
(Joint surgery with Village Ward, Councillor Mrs Robinson)

May To be arranged

Jun tba

Jul tba

COUNCILLORS D BROWN TEL: 01642 764584
J LYNCH TEL: 01642 672346

STOCKTON TOWN CENTRE 6:00PM – 7:00PM

6th Apr Willows Centre, Northport Road

13th Apr Parkfield Community Centre

20th Apr Victoria Community Centre

27th Apr The Cornerhouse Community
Resource Centre

4th May Willows Centre, Northport Road

11th May Parkfield Community Centre

18th May Victoria Community Centre

25th May The Cornerhouse Community
Resource Centre

1st Jun Willows Centre, Northport Road

8th Jun Parkfield Community Centre

15th Jun Victoria Community Centre
 22nd Jun The Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre
 6th Jul Willows Centre, Northport Road
 13th Jul Parkfield Community Centre
 20th Jul Victoria Community Centre
 27th Jul The Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre

COUNCILLORS D COLEMAN TEL: 01642 673952
 P KIRTON TEL: 01642 559331

VILLAGE (Joint surgery with Mandale & Victoria Ward, Cllrs Mrs Trainer & S Walmsley)
 24th Apr Thornaby Pavilion 5:00pm – 6:00pm
 27th May Rochester Court Sheltered Housing 11:00am – 12:00
 24th Jun Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre 12:00 – 1:00pm
 22nd Jul Thornaby Library, Westbury Street 11:00am – 12:00

COUNCILLOR I DALGARNO TEL: 01642 882985

VILLAGE
 6th Apr Thornaby Pavilion 1:00 – 2:00pm
 20th Apr South Thornaby Community Centre 6:00 – 7:00pm
 4th May Thornaby Pavilion 1:00 – 2:00pm
 18th May South Thornaby Community Centre 6:00 – 7:00pm
 1st Jun Thornaby Pavilion 1:00 – 2:00pm
 22nd Jun South Thornaby Community Centre 6:00 – 7:00pm
 6th Jul Thornaby Pavilion 1:00 – 2:00pm
 20th Jul South Thornaby Community Centre 6:00 – 7:00pm

COUNCILLOR MRS B ROBINSON TEL: 01642 675614

WESTERN PARISHES
 3rd Apr The Chapel School Room, Carlton 7:00pm – 7:30pm
 4th Apr Stillington Village Hall, Stillington 6:30pm – 7:00pm

9th May The Wilson Institute, Long Newton 7:00pm – 7:30pm
 18th May Elton Hall Nursing Home, Elton 6:15pm – 6:45pm
 5th Jun The Chapel School Room, Carlton 7:00pm – 7:30pm
 6th Jun Stillington Village Hall, Stillington 6:30pm – 7:00pm

No July surgeries
COUNCILLOR F SALT TEL: 01740 630771

YARM 6:00PM – 6:45PM
 3rd Apr Challoner House
 8th May Layfield Community Centre
 6th Jun Yarm Library
 3rd Jul Challoner House
 1st Aug Yarm Library

COUNCILLORS MRS J BEAUMONT TEL: 01642 785304
 B JONES TEL: 01642 577343
 A SHERRIS TEL: 01642 786767

To contact MPs and MEPs

MPs - Members of Parliament Surgeries:

Stockton South: Dari Taylor MP - Tel: (01642) 604546 for information

Stockton North: Frank Cook MP - Tel: (01642) 643288 for information

Home visits can be arranged where circumstances require them and adequate notice is given.

MEPs - Members of the European Parliament:

Stephen Hughes (Labour) - Tel: 0191 384 9371 - email stephen-hughes@btconnect.com

Martin Callanan (Conservative) - Tel: 0191 284 9902 - email mcallanan@europarl.eu.int

Fiona Hall (Liberal Democrat) - Tel: 0191 383 0119 - email fiona@fionahallmep.co.uk

Care at the touch of a button

Care Call is an exceptional service - helping vulnerable adults to live independently with support when they need it - literally at the touch of a button.

A small alarm unit linked to a phone line gives speedy contact to Stockton Council's Security Centre, where highly trained staff respond quickly, by phone or in person. The service offers the highest standards and regular surveys show clients to be extremely satisfied.

Staff are undertaking NVQ2 training in Care which covers items such as first aid, client handling, food hygiene and an awareness of the Council's policy in connection with the protection of vulnerable adults.

The centre has also been accredited by the national Telecare Services Association. To qualify, it had to go through a rigorous audit inspection, providing evidence of its performance, contingency plans, training and quality assurance.

To find out more about the Care Call services contact (01642) 634768

Care Call has also successfully registered with the Commission for Social Care Inspection. This is a separate service which enables clients to receive individual care packages for an additional charge. Care packages can include such items as helping people into and out of bed, washing/bathing and food preparation. All officers uphold the service's policy in connection with client's dignity, respect, independence, privacy fulfilment, and choice.

For more information call (01642) 527608



Newtown kids creating space

A group of 8- to 12-year-olds worked tirelessly to help create a beautiful woodland garden in the grounds of the Newtown Community Resource Centre, on Stockton's Durham Road.

Part of the Write to Read's 'Growing Together' project, the group has met every Thursday evening since August to design and create the striking woodland space, complete with decking and ornate benches around an old oak tree in the centre's grounds.

With a little help from parents, they used an incredible range of skills, researching woodland plants on the internet, using art and craft in the garden design, handling tools in building decking and ornate benches and cutting, painting and varnishing the artwork on the benches.

Project Leader Lynn Miller said: "The kids have been amazing in working together to create something special, often through dark winter evenings in all weathers, digging and planting.

The result is a wonderful space in the centre of the Newtown community which residents will be able to enjoy throughout the year."

One of the young people who took part, 10-year-old Charlie Lons-Smith,

said: "It was really hard work. It was cold and wet sometimes and we got very muddy, but it was really good fun and we learned loads about gardening, craft, woodwork and how to use tools safely."



ARE YOU ON A LOW INCOME?

In or out of work you may get help to pay your rent or Council Tax

**STOCKTON
BENEFITS
SERVICE**
here to help

Call our helpline (01642) 393829 or Minicom (01642) 526653
or e mail: benefits.section@stockton.gov.uk
View our website at www.stockton.gov.uk

Write or call in: The Benefit Office, 16 Church Road, Stockton. TS18 1TX

If you wish to report a
benefit fraud call Freephone
0800 328 6340

or e mail us at
benefits.fraud@stockton.gov.uk



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**PAY
COUNCIL
TAX**



Stockton Adult Education Service

New Courses!

Aromatherapy, computers, foreign languages, local history, arts and crafts and many more. We offer a wide variety of courses in adult education centres, community centres and schools throughout the borough.

Visit our website at www.stockton.gov.uk/adulted or telephone **01642 527901** or **528121** for further information on courses starting at the end of April. Look out for our prospectus, it will be available soon in libraries, Adult Education Centres and many of the local community centres.

We also offer information, advice and guidance on education, progression routes and employment. We can provide help and support if you want to create or update your CV. For further information or to arrange an appointment contact: Vicki Lahney or Gemma Ruddock on 01642 527908.



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Enrol online -
www.stockton.gov.uk/adulted



Womens Royal Voluntary Service

MEALS WITH CARE



SERVICE
SECOND TO
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Frozen meals delivery service

Let us be the answer to your meal time problems

WRVS helps people maintain dignity and independence in their homes and communities particularly in later life.

Introducing meal deals

- 5 meals for £10 (only £2 per main course)
- 10 meals for £20 (only £2 per main course)
- 15 meals for £30 (only £2 per main course)

Normal Price per main course - £2.20

Tasty Soups from 75p

BENEFITS TO YOU

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You know you can trust WRVS -
why not give us a call today -
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SureStart

Stockton-on-Tees

Services for children 0 - 16 and their families

Our range of services include:-

Childcare Information Service, Information On Childcare Providers, Employment and Training Opportunities in Childcare, 3 & 4 year old Nursery Education Grant, Information on Becoming a Childcare Provider, Early Years Education, Parent Support and Survival Skills, Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy, Quality Assurance Scheme.

For further information please contact
Stockton Childcare Information Service
Tel: 01642 527225

E-mail CIS@stockton.gov.uk
SureStart@stockton.gov.uk



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

1st Floor, Bayheath House, Prince Regent Street, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 10F
Tel: 01642 527222



stockton
renaissance

Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board Meetings

Tuesday at 5pm, 14th March, 11th April, 9th May, 8th June & 4th July 2006.

Area Partnerships

Central Area Partnership

(Central Stockton, Norton, Hartburn, Stillington, Whitton, Carlton, Redmarshall, Thorpe Thewliss)

Thursday, 30th March at 2pm, 27th April at 5pm, 24th May at 10am, 29th June at 2pm & 27th July 2006 at 5pm.

Eastern Area Partnership

(Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Maltby, Hilton)

Tuesday, 28th March at 5.30pm, 25th April at 9.30am, 30th May at 5.30pm, 27th June at 9.30am & 25th July 2006 at 5.30pm.

Western Area Partnership

(Yarm, Eaglescliffe, Long Newton, Kirklington)

Monday at 6pm, 27th March, 22nd May, & 24th July 2006.

The Billingham Partnership

Monday at 5.45pm, 13th March, 10th April, 8th May, 12th June & 10th July 2006.

Contact Lesley Dale on 01642 526498

These partnerships work together for the social and economic regeneration of the Borough and their local areas. The meetings are open to the public so if you would like to attend, ring the number above to confirm the venue.



DELICIOUS MEALS TO YOUR DOOR

Wiltshire Farm Foods delivers tasty meals throughout Stockton, Middlesbrough, Redcar, Hartlepool, Darlington, Durham and surrounding areas.

- Choose from over 170 scrumptious dishes
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- Meals are easy to heat & delicious to eat
- And delivery is absolutely free!

Proud winners of the Queen's Award for Enterprise 2005

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AS SEEN
ON TV

Stockton Business Centre

THE CENTRE FOR BUSINESS

We're open,
we're bigger &
*we're ready for
your business*

- 24 hour access and security
- Free parking
- Easy In - Easy Out terms
- Free business advice and counselling
- Meeting and conference rooms
- Broadband internet and VOIP Telephony to all units



For further information contact:
Centre Manager - Tony Sedgewick
☎ 01642 527933
www.stocktonbusinesscentre.org



arc Stockton Arts Centre

theatre, dance, music, comedy,
children's events, educational courses,
exhibitions, cinema, room hire,
catering & much more



Check out our new website
www.arconline.co.uk
For info call 01642 525199

Arc, Dovecot Street Stockton-on-Tees





Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT



SCHOOL HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES

For young people aged
from 8-16 years

For your FREE Brochure contact:

Sports Development

Tel: (01642) 526274

email: sportsdevelopment@stockton.gov.uk

or visit our website:

www.stockton.gov.uk/sportsdevelopment



COACHWIDE

DATA

CALLING ALL COACHES

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT ARE
LOOKING TO UPDATE THEIR
COACHWIDE DATABASE OF
QUALIFIED COACHES

The Coachwide database system is a new initiative by Stockton Borough Council Sports Development unit, to assist Schools, Clubs, Community Groups and Leisure Facilities in accessing appropriately qualified sports coaches.

The Coachwide initiative works in two distinctive ways:-

- Allows registered coaches to further their own educational development by offering free generic courses and by providing information on National Governing Body qualification courses.
- By recommending sports coaches who meet identified criteria to the above groups which allows coaches to enhance and further their employment opportunities.

COACHWIDE

Sports Development are looking to recruit coaches for all sports but would especially welcome interest from coaches in the following sports:

- | | | |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| ● Aerobics | ● Hockey | ● Gymnastics |
| ● Athletics | ● Netball | ● Yoga/Pilates |
| ● Basketball | ● Swimming | ● Tennis |
| ● Dance | | |

For further information please contact:

Trevor Massey
Sports Development
Tel: (01642) 526690

or email: trevor.massey@stockton.gov.uk

Website Address:

www.stockton.gov.uk/sportsdevelopment



Glass
Paper
Cans
Plastics
Textiles
Shoes
Books

Community Recycling Banks

Recycling has never been easier!

As well as the Household Recycling Centre at Haverton we now have nearly 60 community recycling banks situated across the Borough - there's probably one right on your doorstep!

For the location of your nearest site call **01642 391959** or visit **www.stockton.gov.uk**

Replacement Wheeled Bins

We issue new and replacement wheeled bins. New properties are issued with one bin FREE of charge although from 1st April £25 (inc. VAT & delivery) will be charged for replacement bins.

Bulky Waste Collections

We will remove up to 6 items of bulky waste for a minimal fee of £10 including VAT. Items which you would normally take with you if you were to move home are removed as part of this service, eg. Fridges, mattresses, 3 piece suites, tables and wardrobes, etc.

We can also remove items which you would not normally take with you if you were to move home, eg. kitchen/bathroom units, fencing, sheds, doors, building rubble, etc. Prices start from £17.63 including VAT.

For further details on all Services call 391959



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CARE FOR YOUR AREA
NO MESSING!**

