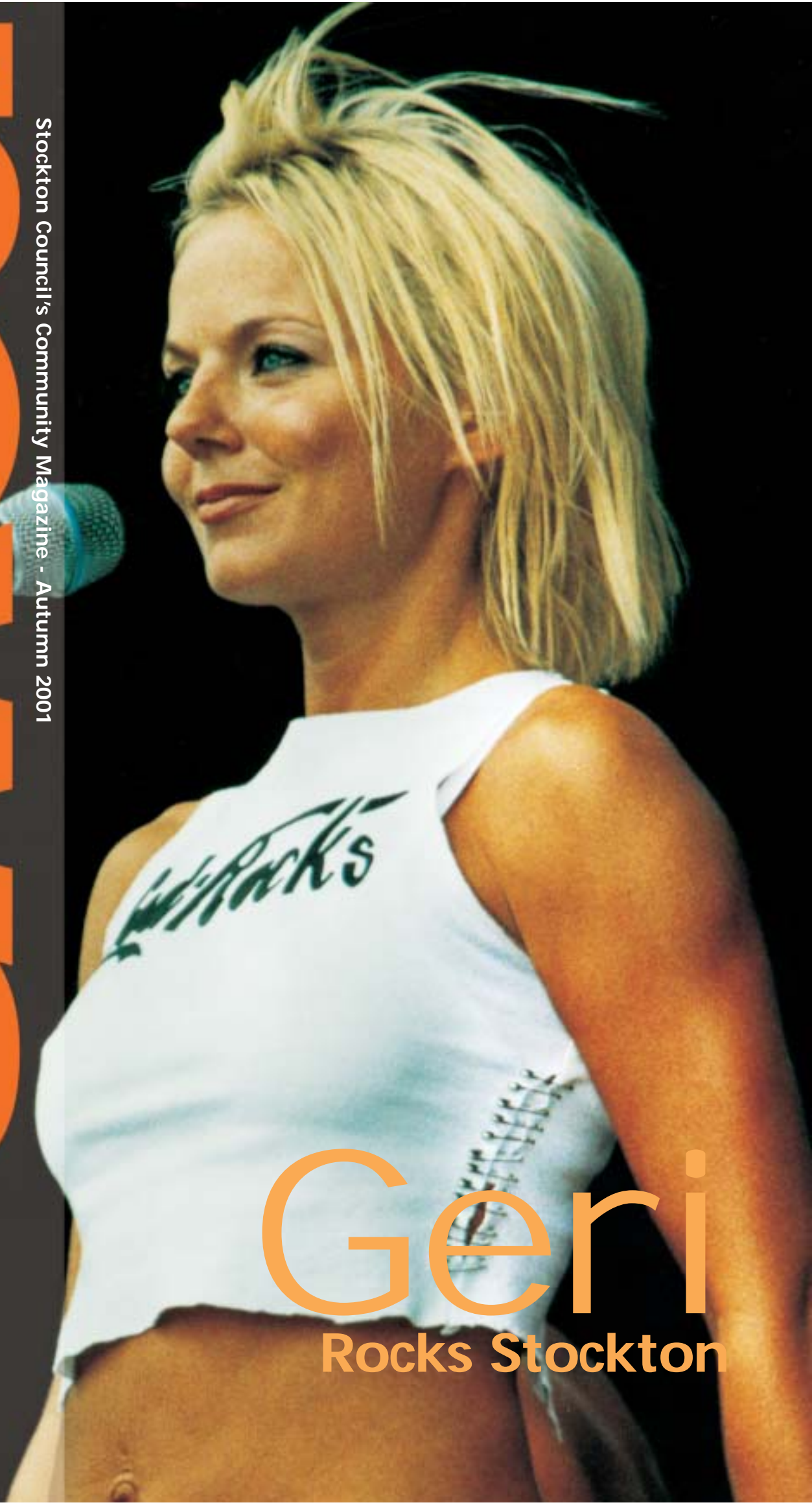


Stockton

NEWS

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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. 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.

In this issue

Page

3 Local nature spot attracts interest
Royal Mail stamps of British pond life unveiled in Billingham.



6 Council wins top award
Council receptionists win coveted Charter Mark for excellent customer service.

9 Let's Sign
New series of books for learning British Sign Language produced by local company.



14 Bridging the Digital Divide
Public Libraries lead the way with out-of-hours services and Sunday opening.

18 "Stockton - you're looking great"
Geri Halliwell's words echo through a montage of festival snaps.



22 Just Champion
The Princess Royal visits the Tees to open the 9th World Canoe Marathon Championships.

27 Stunning Landmark
The new Baptist Tabernacle opens for worship and joins Splash! and Wellington Square as a further improvement to Stockton Town Centre.



36 Ward Surgeries
Details about your Councillor and how you can obtain help and advice.

Stockton News is produced by Stockton Council's Communications Section and designed by Bridge Design Group. Pictures courtesy of the Evening Gazette.

Top Marks for Stockton

Stockton Council is celebrating after more than 45 per cent of its pupils achieved five or more A* to C grades in their GCSE exams - an increase of almost one per cent on last year.



Students from Eggescliffe school celebrating their results.

The results, published last month, also reveal that of the thirteen secondary schools in the Borough, five have more than 50 per cent of their pupils achieving six or more A* to C grades. Nine others have more than 25 per cent of their pupils achieving seven or more A* to C grades. The percentage of all grades at C or above has also risen in line with the increase in the national figure and this continues the rising trend in GCSE results since 1996.

The increase in the percentage of all grades at C and above in all subjects achieved by pupils in Stockton matches the national figures. Most impressively, however, the increase in the percentage of grades at C and above for English is substantially greater for pupils in Stockton than in the rest of the country.

We must not forget that there is a small proportion of children who find academic learning difficult. In Stockton the proportion of pupils in this group has continued to fall and this year was only 2.2% of the year group. Stanley Bradford, Stockton Council's Director of Education, Leisure and Cultural Services, was delighted with the news.

"These results confirm that the strong partnership between all concerned in the education of our young people is continuing to show improvements," he said.

"The pupils should be justly proud of their results and their teachers congratulated on the high quality of the work they do in preparing their pupils for the challenge of the GCSEs." As results improve, the proportion of children leaving secondary school without any GCSE qualifications has continued to fall, accounting for just two per cent of the total year group. At three schools in the Borough, every single pupil has achieved at least one GCSE grade.

Artistic Skills Create Brighter Bridge

More than a dozen youngsters put their artistic skills to good use when they worked on a mural for the walls of Norton Bridge, Stockton.

The youngsters aged between 11-18 years were enlisted by Stockton Council's outreach team to undertake the work. They were supplied with overalls and gloves for the task as well as more than 45 litres of colourful paint by the rangers of the Great North Park area.

The mural incorporated a country scene with trees, dragonflies and squirrels to blend in with the surrounding area.

Councillor Alex Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Education, Leisure and Cultural Services, said: "This was a



Laura Walker, 11 working on the mural.

wonderful opportunity for young people to put their skills to good use in the community.

The project was funded by One North East through the Single Regeneration Budget.

Fabulous Festival

Billingham was bouncing once again in August when around 150 dancers brought the town to life in the annual Billingham International Folklore Festival.

The Festival, now in its 37th year, welcomed dancers from across the globe with folk dancers from Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Finland, Kenya, Mexico, Moldova, the Philippines, Romania and the USA.

The Festival began in traditional style with a fabulous parade which started at the Telstar pub in Billingham where



the streets were lined with onlookers anticipating what lay ahead for their delight.

Throughout the Festival, shoppers had some treats as the dancers descended on various shopping areas across the Borough with their delightful dancing and colourful costumes.

Billingham Forum Theatre and the College Theatre also rocked to the sights and sounds of dancing feet and music and the performers showed off their talents.

The Children's Club was held at the Festival Marquee at John Whitehead Park. This daily event was as popular as ever with a different group performing for the youngsters each day.

A Farewell Concert took place at John Whitehead Park and was followed by a torchlight procession which brought the Festival to a close.

Memories of this year's Festival will surely linger in the hearts and minds of the people of the Borough until once again Billingham opens its arms to many other cultures through dancers from across the world.

Read all about it

Local youngsters have been taking part in an exciting new initiative to improve and develop their library and information skills.



The scheme was introduced after a trial by Stockton's libraries last year. This year pupils from primary and secondary schools across the Borough attended an Awards Ceremony for the Junior and Young Librarian of 2001 at Stockton's Central Library's Lecture Hall.

Robert Moody of St Mary's CE Primary School in Long Newton claimed the title of Junior Librarian 2001, with Mark Brody of Billingham Campus Comprehensive School named Young Librarian 2001.

Both were presented with a book prize by the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Terry Bean, while the schools received a crystal shield. All the children who took part received a certificate and a pen.

The scheme led to a number of the examples of good practice being introduced in school libraries. Ideas included suggestion boxes in school libraries, review competitions, promotion of school libraries in assemblies and classrooms by pupils and nominations for book or author of the month.

For further information you can contact Children and Youth Services Officer, Tony Quantrill on 01642 358544 or e-mail him at tony.quantrill@stockton.gov.uk

Pondlife Stamps in Billingham

Frogs, beetles, fish and dragonflies - all can be found in ponds across the country. But soon you'll also find them on your mail as well, thanks to a new set of stamps.

The stamps feature pondlife and celebrate both Britain's fascination with ponds and the environmental importance of these features of our landscape.



A local volunteer helping launch the new stamps.

The Billingham Beck Valley Country Park is home to a huge variety of pondlife, including all the species shown on the new stamps - a common frog, great diving beetle, stickleback and dragonfly.

So it was only natural that the Royal Mail should ask local volunteers there to help launch the new stamps.

The volunteers, who regularly help out at the 200 acre wetlands site, took a break from working on a range of ponds to unveil giant versions of the stamps in one of several regional launch events to be organised around the UK.

The launch is also being supported by Ponds For People, a community project which began in the North East last year and which aims to restore and create at least 1,000 ponds around the region.

Martin Nunn, one of Stockton Council's Countryside Wardens, said: "The ponds here are teeming with wildlife, so Billingham Beck Valley was an ideal place to launch the new stamps."

Switched on to Science

Pupils from a Billingham School are getting switched on to science in an exciting new project that brings together schools and industry.

Billingham South Primary School is taking part in the Children Challenging Industry Project and, with the support of local science company Synetix, is hoping to encourage more youngsters to take up sciences. Teachers at the school were delighted when they celebrated their highest ever Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) results for science last term, with 80 per cent of 11-year-olds achieving Level 4 and above.

"The children are more switched on to science than before," said teacher Howard Wilson. "They showed a genuine interest in the subject and that was reflected in their studies. We're delighted for the youngsters - they have discovered just how fascinating science can be and, with help from Synetix, they have seen how it relates to the real world."

Children Challenging Industry aims to nurture youngsters' interest in science and change their perceptions about the chemical industry. The scheme provides classroom-based training for

teachers who cover National Curriculum science, plus a teacher for three special science lessons. It also encourages visits to local businesses to put science into working reality.

Bob Coxon, chief executive of Synetix, said: "It is a great way for us to show the children what science is all about and what happens in the working world.

"They have now gone to secondary school with an excellent grounding in science and will perhaps go on to become our scientists of the future."



Achievement Shows Ability

Achievement by a group of disabled and disadvantaged people in gaining qualifications was marked by a special presentation by Stockton's Mayor, Councillor Terry Bean, in August.



Twenty seven people from the Grangefield Work Preparation Project received their certificates for achieving the Asdan Award, which focuses on developing the skills needed to prepare for work and find a job. The group, all of whom have learning disabilities, spent a year completing the qualification, which included work placements with local employers. The project is managed by national employment charity Shaw Trust. From its local base in Bishopton Road, Stockton, it offers work experience and practical training to over fifty local people with learning disabilities each year.

With its horticultural setting, people taking part in the project grow plants, manufacture garden furniture and accessories as well as undertaking job search and interview skills. Praising the success, Shaw Trust supervisor Judith Underwood, said:- "The Asdan Awards are a fantastic achievement. The whole process is about building confidence and focusing on people's abilities." Shaw Trust offers training and work opportunities to people disadvantaged in the labour market due to disability, long-term ill health or other social circumstances. With a network stretching across England, Scotland and Wales, the Trust has provided work opportunities for over 10,000 people in the last year.

Joe's Big Day Out

Ask four-year-old Joe Elstob what was best about his summer holidays and the odds are he'll say it was the day he went for a ride in a bin wagon.

Joe, from Dinsdale Road in Hardwick, has all the right ideas when it comes to rubbish. He gets annoyed if he sees litter dropped outside his home and often takes the trouble to pick it up and put it in a bin himself - under Mum's watchful eye, of course. He's fascinated by the daily visits of the Council's cleansing squads who sweep his local streets and he eagerly awaits the weekly arrival of the refuse collection vehicle. As well as being captivated by the style and location of litterbins wherever he goes, Joe is a firm believer in recycling his family's household waste.

After meeting Joe at a local exhibition, cleansing officers decided to reward his keen sense of civic responsibility. So they lined up a VIP trip to the Council's Cowpen Lane depot, Billingham, including a ride in a refuse

collection lorry and the chance to see at close hand other street cleansing machines.

And when Joe went along with his Mum, Chris Elstob, he was greeted by a battery of TV cameras, radio microphones and press photographers. Joe was presented with a tee-shirt with a refuse wagon logo, a mini wheeled bin and his very own litter picking stick.

Chris Elstob says Joe's 'hobby' has become part of the family's routine. "If there is rubbish to put in the bin, it has to be saved for Joe to do the job. That is, after anything that can be recycled is put to one side first!" Sue Barker, Stockton Council's Litter Education Officer said: "Joe is a remarkable young boy who sets an excellent example in how to care for his area.

"I hope others will be inspired by his responsibility towards the environment and litter. We should all learn from Joe's positive action and think about what we do with our waste. If something can't be recycled it should be put in a litter bin."



Joe on his big day out.

Crack down on Benefit Fraud

Fraudsters watch out - Stockton Council is part of the biggest-ever exercise to stop fraud by matching computer data.

All councils must take part in the annual National Fraud Initiative and Inland Revenue data matching. Stockton Council also supports the Housing Benefits Matching Service of the Department of Works and Pensions.

All help prevent and detect fraud by comparing details supplied for one purpose, say Housing Benefits, with those given for another - tax returns, for example.

If the details don't match (for instance, if someone seeking Housing Benefit claims to be unemployed but the Inland Revenue data shows otherwise), it may be a sign of fraud.

The National Fraud Initiative compares housing benefits, Council house rents and the authority's payroll and pensions data. In 1998 this detected £42m of fraud and overpayments nationally - but it can also spot cases where claimants are entitled to more money.

The Inland Revenue exercise is particularly extensive. It matches data about any services that individuals



provide to the Council or schools and a wide range of records, including renovation grants, planning approvals, benefits, Council Tax and many others. All registers held by the Council are included - whether they're for door supervisors, child minders, dentists, or amusement arcades - as are all licence details, whether they're for street trading, hairdressing, explosives or entertainment.

The Council is steadily revising application forms to explain how information may be used. So, if you have received a letter about data matching or seen a statement on a form, you've not been singled out - it's the same for everyone.

Millennium Volunteers Needed

Are you aged between 16 and 24 years old and willing to volunteer some of your time for the benefit of others? Or do you have a project that young people could volunteer to undertake that would help the community?

Launched in 1999 Millennium Volunteers is a UK-wide initiative to encourage more young people to volunteer their time for the benefit of others.

Based on the theme of "Build on what you're into", it encourages young people to undertake a community activity. What they do is their choice - so long as it benefits at least one other person.

The skills which Millennium Volunteers gain may not have been picked up at

school, college or daily life and could be useful when applying for future employment or studies.

Above all the volunteers taking part will receive national recognition for their achievements, gaining a certificate for 100 hours and an award for 200 hours of volunteering commitment.

Stockton Borough Voluntary Development Agency (SBVDA) is currently working with a number of local organisations and community groups to raise awareness of Millennium Volunteers.

If you would like to know more please call Carolynne Withers at SBVDA on (01642) 355292, by fax on (01642) 355294, or by e-mail at c.withers@sbvda.org

Find a Home Quickly with 'Homes To Go'

A brand new agency is giving house-seekers a unique chance to land themselves a home in Stockton.

People wanting a home could now be offered the choice of a range of Stockton Council properties - without the need to follow the authority's usual housing allocation procedures. Called 'Homes To Go', the agency is run by Stockton Council and based at the housing offices in Church Road. It works along the lines of a letting agency with a first-come, first-served approach to properties on its books.

The agency may have only recently been set up but it has already proved a hit with home-seekers and a number of properties, which had been standing empty, have been allocated to delighted new tenants.

Elaine Corney, Stockton Council's Assistant Director of Housing, said:

"Across the Borough, we have a number of properties which, for a variety of reasons, we have found difficult to let.

"For some people, renting has distinct advantages, so we're trying this new approach to give them the chance to become the tenant of one of a number of properties without having to follow the Council's normal procedures.

"With Homes To Go, someone gets a home quickly and easily and we find a tenant for one of our empty homes."

Under the new scheme a person without a family could occupy a three-bedroom house. Someone under the age of 60 could move into a bungalow. Neither would be possible under the existing allocation policy. People can just come along and pick a property from the list, regardless of their age or whether they have a family. There is no points system for Homes To Go, it's simply a case of first-come-first-served.



Anyone interested in finding out more can visit the 'Homes To Go' offices, which are open Monday to Friday 10am-4pm.

You can also ring (01642) 393870 or e-mail homestogo@stockton.gov.uk

Charter Mark for Council Receptionists

An excellent reception awaits visitors to Stockton Council's offices in Church Road.

Receptionists and telephonists at the Council's Municipal Buildings have been recognised by the Government's prestigious Charter Mark for the standard of their service.

The award has been made for what is officially described as 'an exceptionally high quality of service', and the team is delighted with the recognition. The nine-strong team, covering four full-time posts, is responsible for the smooth and successful running of the 475,000 telephone calls that are made

"Every one of the team does a magnificent job, yet just two of them work full-time. They all love meeting people and all do their best to give a warm welcome, whatever the circumstances."

The Charter Mark is awarded to public services which achieve exceptional standards of service and which pass a stringent inspection by an independent assessor. The award is made to Stockton Council's reception service for three years, following which they must reapply. More than 90 per cent of telephone



Members of the reception team celebrate their award.

though the Council's main switchboard every year.

And if that was not enough, they also provide a warm welcome to the 27,500 visitors who pass through the doors of Municipal Buildings and provide thousands of internal Council telephone users with a monitoring and fault reporting service and arrange for new lines to be installed.

Lianne Hope, Telephone and Reception Supervisor, said: "We're thrilled at being awarded the Charter Mark. This is a very important front-line service and the way we greet people can make a huge difference to the way they view the Council.

calls made through the Council's main 393939 number are answered within the target 15 seconds and the majority of personal callers have their enquiries completed within two minutes.

Councillor David Coleman, Stockton Council's Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs, summed up everyone's delight with the award.

"The reception team do a fine job and I am absolutely thrilled - but not in the least surprised - that they have received the Charter Mark.

"They set out not to be just helpful and efficient, but polite and friendly too. These are the qualities that can make all the difference to a caller or visitor."

Watching you watching us

The Stockton area - and Billingham in particular - is proving a hit with film makers.

In May, it was lights, camera, action, as a film crew turned the spotlight on Billingham town centre to shoot a drama called "Watchers". You may have spotted the Rotunda and other familiar sights when it was broadcast in August as part of Tyne Tees Television's six-film "First Cut" series. Produced by Jay Films & Video in Newcastle, the 30-minute drama told the story of two employees on the night shift of a mythical low-quality, "cowboy" private CCTV company watching over a town centre. The plot revolved around the main character's perception of the young people he watches on CCTV screens at night, and their behaviour. Filming also took place in Newcastle.

The series, supported by the Northern Production Fund and OneNorth East, was a showcase for local talent.

"Watchers" boasted a Stockton writer in Jeff Williams and a director, Mark



Elliott, from Saltburn. Local actor Bill Fellows played the lead role. He was supported by students from Performing Arts, Stockton and Billingham College and the Bishop Auckland Theatre Hooligans.

In September it was the turn of the BBC, in town to film scenes for a new series of the hugely popular "Auf Wiedersehen, Pet" that was such a hit in the 1980s.

Why Tricia and Judith could be searching for you

Buying a house is an exciting time for people as they look for their dream home.

It is also usually the biggest financial outlay anyone makes.

For many house-buyers, the conveyancing process is often left to their Solicitor, who will request a local land search on the property.

Many people may be unaware that Stockton Council plays a part in this process as land charges staff carry out a search on the property which is being bought.

This provides vital information which may affect the buyer's decision on whether to go ahead with the purchase.

The search informs the buyer of any plans to build a new road in the vicinity, whether the road is adopted and maintained by the Council, details of any planning permissions, enforcement action, tree preservation orders or housing grants - in fact, virtually anything that may affect or concern the property.

Each local land charge search requires information from planning, highways, housing and environmental health services in order to provide relevant details about the property.

It is important that all this is done efficiently and without delay to ensure that the conveyancing process is not held up. Indeed, Government guidelines recommend that all searches are completed with ten working days - a target Stockton Council is proud to have reached with 100 per cent success.

That's largely down to just two Land Charges Officers, Tricia Pinder and Judith Brown, who work together on a job-share basis. Together, they carry out around 4,500 land charge searches for the Council each year, processing the majority of them within six working days. Between them, Tricia and Judith have over 35 years experience in the Land Charge Service (the word "charge" is a legal term referring to an entry on the register, rather than a cost).

"Carrying out searches can be very interesting, particularly where there are older properties, such as those on the old high streets or village greens," said Tricia. "These can involve quite



"We strive to provide the best possible service for our users."

complicated searches, especially where there are listed buildings in conservation areas and there are often other restrictions to take into account.

"Industrial sites can also be time consuming but, for most modern homes, it's a relatively straightforward process.

"People often are not aware of what a search entails, so we have produced two information leaflets to make things easier. These are available from most Council offices or by contacting us direct."

The service has recently been reviewed by the Audit Commission's Best Value Inspectors and a Charter Mark application has also been made in order to achieve recognition of an excellent service.

"We strive to provide the best possible service for our users and always welcome any comments on how we can improve," added Tricia.

Stockton Council can also provide searches through the National Land Information Service, a Government initiative to streamline conveyancing

which will ultimately enabling all searches to be carried out electronically.

"We do receive requests for electronic searches and there's no doubt it makes things a lot easier," said Tricia.

More changes are in the pipeline - from April 1 2002, more information will be required from the service, making the search even more detailed than at present.

The fee for Stockton Council's Land Charge Officers to carry out a search is £78. Additional enquiries can be requested with this search, each costing £7.

The Land Charges Register is open for anyone to inspect, for which a £10 fee is charged.

If you are thinking about buying a house and would like more details or have any questions, you can contact Stockton Council's Local Land Charges Section on (01642) 393146 or by emailing landcharges@stockton.gov.uk



Learning is for Everyone

Taking the first step into learning since your schooldays can be a daunting prospect but it can also be fun and boost your self-confidence too.

Further education isn't just for those who flew through their exams at school; and now the new Learning Skills Council is working to prove learning is for everyone.

With its Bite Size campaign that was run over the summer, the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council wanted to show how to make learning fun and interesting, with courses such as the ancient art of henna painting and even a two-hour clowning course. Pam Eccles, executive director of the Learning and Skills Council in the Tees Valley, said: "I believe it is this kind of initiative that encourages people to be brave and gain confidence. And if there are good trainers available to pick up on issues where they can help, then they can be confident about learning something else."

Across the country one in five people can't read a newspaper - a figure which, if applied to the Tees Valley area, represents 20 per cent of the population.

Mrs Eccles, who worked with the Tees Valley Training and Enterprise Council and the Department for Employment in the past, said: "Learning and skills is one of the most important areas for prosperity in the Tees Valley.

"I think we have got to have a vision. In the future we shouldn't have anyone who is unable to select a plumber from the Yellow Pages. Everybody has a right to be able to read."

But the Learning and Skills Council, which was launched in April, is not

just there to encourage individuals to go back to the classroom. It is also assisting industry to train its workforce to meet its current and future needs. A consultation process is seeing the Learning and Skills Council taking representations from individual prospective students about their needs for further education and from businesses about the skills they require to be able to work.

The aim is then to encourage business to train its workforce to the skills required, with the Learning and Skills Council ensuring there is provision in the area for the necessary training. "We have to get businesses to think that employees are the source of their prosperity. Machinery was never the source of prosperity, it is the people that operate it," says Mrs Eccles. "For too long when recession hits and money is tight it has been the response of business to cut the training budget. That is a view that is slowly changing. Businesses have begun to realise that if you don't keep people's skills up then they won't be able to function effectively."

The Learning and Skills Council is working in partnership with the business community and local authorities including Stockton Borough Council to encourage a resurgence in learning and training. The Tees Valley organisation is one of 47 such councils across the country. It is spurred on by the government's goal that by 2010 Britain should have skills in the workforce that match the best in the world.

Prisons Make Environmental Progress

Holme House Prison in Stockton is one of many across the country that have made significant progress towards an environmentally friendly service, a recent report shows.

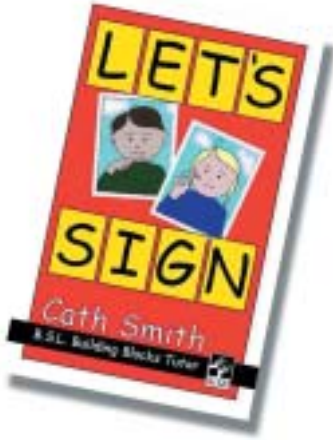
An energy audit of every prison - including Holme House - has been supported by significant improvements to waste management and recycling systems. All new fleet vehicles acquired by the service will meet European exhaust emission standards. One initiative being explored by the Holme House Prison Environmental Committee is use of an electric vehicle to replace their diesel van. A Waste



Management Unit is also planned, where inmates will recycle clothing, furniture, wood and other waste products. They make comprehensive use of Passive Infra Red detectors to minimise the electricity consumption and their purchasing policy also ensures that products come from sustainable, eco-friendly sources. Future initiatives nationwide will look at piloting solar heating, wind turbines and combined heat and power units in prisons, and introducing new targets for energy use and waste management. The improvements are detailed in the first annual Environmental Report produced by the Prison Service. Nearly half of prisons now recycle waste and buy environmentally friendly goods such as recycled paper and CFC-free refrigerators. Some prisons have set up car sharing schemes for staff, and many with large farms and garden areas actively minimise the use of pesticides and chemicals or have set up nature reserves.

Let's Sign

A series of new sign language learning aids has been published by local interpreter and writer Cath Smith, thanks in part to funding from Stockton Council.



'Let's Sign' is an exciting new package of books with a supporting CD-ROM for learning British Sign Language. They provide illustrated signs and finger-spelling in a structured format with signs grouped by handshape. In the three years since Cath set up her publishing business, Co-Sign Communications, she has already produced five sign language publications and a CD ROM. In its early days, the business received help through the Start Right In Business scheme and this latest project has been aided by a grant match-funded by Stockton Council and the Ropner Trust. This has helped Cath to produce the CD ROM featuring moving video clips

of the signs to accompany the books. As well as the books and visual aids, Cath has also set up a website - www.deafsign.com - with the help of Stockton web designer Omar Din of Interactive Net Solutions and Francis Annett of Tees Valley Training and Enterprise Council.

The site has proved a great success and has a steadily increasing visitor rate of more than 100,000 hits every month. "When I was developing the website it became clear just how much interest and potential there is for schools, families and professionals to learn more about deafness and sign language through the site," explained Cath.

"This in turn started the idea of a new book along the same lines, to complement the ongoing work of the website."

The 'Let's Sign' package was launched at the SIGN FAIR exhibition at York Racecourse earlier this year, attended by more than 800 tutors and students from across Britain.

"It was very encouraging," said Cath. "The pack was positively received, especially from the deaf people at the Fair."

"Now Co-Sign Communications is busy promoting the resource both locally and nationally to ensure that all those wanting to learn can start with 'Let's Sign' because books really do make a difference."

For more information on Let's Sign you can contact Cath Smith on (01642) 580505 or e-mail cath@deafsign.com

Volunteers wanted to beat youth crime

Volunteers from across Stockton Borough are needed to help beat youth crime.

Stockton's Youth Offending Team (YOT) is made up of representatives from social services, the police, probation, health and education services who work together to prevent and reduce offences carried out by young people aged 10 to 17 years. Now the YOT is looking for volunteers to sit on Youth Offender Panels or to help organise panel sessions. From next April, a new system will be introduced to deal with all young offenders who plead guilty and are convicted for the first time at a Youth Court.



Meet Two New Councillors

Two new Councillors have taken up their positions on the Council following by-elections which took place in Stockton and Billingham during June and July.

The by-election in the Fairfield Ward of Stockton took place at the same time as the General Election in June and followed the sad death of Councillor Bob Wood earlier in the year. The vacant seat was filled by Conservative candidate Fiona Hawkins. Councillor Hawkins, who is a full time mum with three young children, can be contacted on 01642 863789 or at fiona.hawkins@stockton.gov.uk Councillor Jennifer Apedaile, a Liberal Democrat, was elected to represent

the Marsh House Ward of Billingham after Councillor George Chambers stepped down. Councillor Apedaile, who runs an antique business in Wolviston, can be contacted on (01740) 645216.



Councillor:
Fiona Hawkins



Councillor:
Jennifer Apedaile

Referral Orders will be introduced, requiring young offenders to appear before new, community based Youth Offender Panels, as a key part of the government's strategy to prevent offending by young people. Working with the young people and their families, these panels will investigate the causes behind the offending. With the offender, they will agree a contract that includes a programme of activities aimed at preventing re-offending. Volunteers selected as panel members will receive six days of training before they can sit on Youth Offender Panels.

If you would like more information or would like to volunteer please contact Stockton YOT on (01642) 393399 or by e-mailing tony.hodgson@stockton.gov.uk

POLICE BEAT

These boots are made for walking

Local Police Constable Barry Dixon is once again trekking for charity.

Last year he completed a nine day gruelling trek in the Himalayan Mountains of Uzbekistan, walking for up to 12 hours a day and reaching heights above that of Ben Nevis every day. As a result he raised over £2,000 for The Children's Trust and RUKBA. In April 2002 he is again putting on his walking boots, this time intending to complete a 100 kilometre trek in the Patagonia area of Chile. This time he is hoping to raise at least £2,500 for the same two charities. He will be using part of his limited leave from the Police to complete the trek and has contributed towards the expenses of the trip. The Children's Trust cares for children with profound disabilities and very complex medical conditions giving them



Pictured: Constable Barry Dixon

the specialist care, therapy and rehabilitation they need. The Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association offers discreet and kind help to the elderly who, after contributing throughout their life, require a little assistance to stay independent and keep their well-earned pride. In order to reach the target of £2,500, Barry hopes to organise a number of fundraising events such as raffles, a golf match, white water rafting and a mountain bike draw, as well as selling donated items at car boot sales. Barry would be very grateful for any help or assistance that anyone would like to give him in order to raise as much money as possible. If anyone would like to

donate anything to be sold at car boot sales or donate any items that could be used as raffle prizes, then he would be more than happy to collect them from you.

Alternatively if you would like to donate an amount of money or the use of a service or venue to raise funds, then Barry can be contacted through Stockton Police on telephone 302226.

Several other Police Officers from Stockton have given up their free time to raise money for charity.

Sgt. John Coates, PCs Caron Dawson, Steve Gray and Darren Wild too part in a sponsored 96 mile walk along the West Highland Way in aid of the North of England Children's Cancer Appeal. They were accompanied by John Stenhouse, who is the Bursar at Grangefield School. The officers had set a target of £3,000 sponsorship money for the walk, which was exceeded. Full details in the next edition of Stockton News.

The walk took place between 24th-28th September, 2001. If anyone wishes to support these efforts further, please contact Sgt. Coates at Stockton Police Office on (01642) 302328.

Get Connected

www.cleveland.police.uk

As highlighted in the last edition of Stockton News, Cleveland Police has its own Internet Website and we want YOU to check it out.

Inspector Eric Robinson of Stockton Police is in the process of updating and developing the Stockton web pages and would like the public of Stockton District to help.

Inspector Robinson said, "Up to now the web site has been fairly basic. The time has come to upgrade it and I want Stockton's residents to tell me what they would like to see on it. I have plans to include crime and disorder hotspot details, crime prevention, neighbourhood watch and domestic violence advice. There will also be features on the local Community Policing Teams. I want the Stockton public to tell me what interests them and what would make them re-visit the site. That way we can be sure we're giving people what



they want".

If anyone has any ideas, then please write to Inspector Robinson at Stockton Police Station or post an email to him at eric.robinson@cleveland.police.uk

Community Safety

Help us to help you

You will have recently received a Crime and Disorder booklet, prepared on behalf of The Safer Stockton Partnership, asking for YOUR views on what should be the priorities for the next Community Safety Plan 2002-2005.

In order to get a true reflection of which areas we should be focusing on, we need you to complete the questionnaire at the rear of the booklet and send it to the Head of Community Safety and Security at Stockton Borough Council.

The last audit in 1998 indicated that DRUGS, DWELLING BURGLARY, YOUTH ISSUES and VIOLENCE were the key areas. As a result, much Police activity has been focused in reducing these types of crimes and with a good degree of success. It is vital that once again you tell us your concerns. If you think Domestic Violence is a priority, TELL US. If you think Drugs and Burglary should be targeted, TELL US. If you feel that everything is fine and you live in a crime free area with no concerns - you need not return the questionnaire.

Stockton Police want to make the area a safer place to live and work and to that end we play a major role in the Safer Stockton Partnership. To help us reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour and reduce the fear of these scourges on society, complete your questionnaire. Stockton Police can then be sure that we are focusing our resources in the areas where they are most needed.

Head Cases

Youngsters in Stockton Borough who wear their cycling helmets were in for a pleasant surprise as road safety officers from Stockton Council took to the streets handing out special novelty hats.



They were rewarding the safety conscious cyclists with 'head cases' novelty hats made of nylon - which pull over the top of cycling helmets. 'Head cases' are the latest thing to hit the streets and have already proved extremely popular in America, where the new craze swept across the country.

The young people were also given the opportunity to enter a free national prize draw to win a mountain bike. The give-away is part of Helmet Watch 2001, organised by the Bicycle Helmet Initiative Trust, a charitable organisation that encourages the use of cycle helmets.

Tenants' Award

Nominations for this year's Tenants' Awards are now invited.

Anyone who is a current Stockton Council tenant, preferably those who have held a tenancy for 20 years or more, though not necessarily in one property can be nominated.

Alternatively you may know a good neighbour or friend, or someone who works hard in their local community. This year's awards will take place on December 12th at Preston Hall, with the formal presentations by the Mayor of Stockton followed by a buffet lunch and lots of Christmas cheer for the winners.

Nomination forms are available at all Housing Centres, and completed forms for your nominated person should be returned to Customer Services, 16 Church Rd, Stockton, for the attention of Barbara Tarren or Michelle Burnett. Alternatively call (01642) 393839 or email barbara.tarren@stockton.gov.uk or michelle.burnett@stockton.gov.uk Don't delay - nominations close on November 16th.

Stockton Stands Still

The Borough's towns came to a standstill on Friday 14th September as ordinary people joined millions across the globe to pay their respects following the tragic events in New York and Washington.

Representatives of all the emergency services joined hundreds of people gathered outside Stockton Town Hall as the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Terry Bean, expressed the town's heartfelt sadness.

A prayer by the Reverend Philip Ashdown, Chaplain to the University of Durham Stockton Campus, was then followed by three minutes' silence.

Councillor Bean had this to say: "Citizens of Stockton, Friends, Colleagues

"Words cannot begin to describe the dreadful and tragic nature of the events we have witnessed in America this week. Our imaginations cannot even begin to grasp the horror experienced by the many thousands of innocent people who have suffered through this atrocity. But whilst our

and loved-ones - the knowledge that they do not stand alone will in some way ease their burden.

"We also pause because we want to express our support and admiration for all those who are working to deal with the emergency, and who are desperately - but unceasingly - searching for trapped survivors.

"Under any circumstances this is a difficult and daunting task, and one that requires a special type of courage.

"On this occasion, however, every sinew of courage must be stretched even further as the men and women of New York's emergency services tackle their task. These people are having to do their work in the dreadful knowledge that hundreds of their colleagues lay dead beneath the rubble. These people - fire fighters, police officers and ambulance crew - were not caught up in this tragedy by fate, but willingly placed themselves in danger to save the lives of others.

"I look at representatives of the emergency services who serve Stockton who are here today, and I say to you that we all wish to join you in sharing the very special feelings you



words and thoughts may be inadequate, our feelings and our humanity are not.

"That is why today - like many millions of people around the country and throughout the world - we are pausing to express our profound sense of sympathy and solidarity with the people of New York and Washington. We pause because we want the people of America - and, in particular, all those who have lost a loved one through this outrage - to know that they are not alone. We want them to know that we stand by their side.

"We hope that our expressions of sympathy will help the long healing process that must take place. We hope that in the weeks and months ahead - as people attempt to come to terms with the loss of family, friends

have for the plight of your colleagues across the Atlantic, and for the families of those who have died.

"Often in death we look for meaning - and often there is none that is apparent - yet I believe that here today we can point to this special courage and hold it up as an example of real and selfless humanity. We can point to it as the exact opposite of the evil and inhumanity shown by the perpetrators of this terrible crime. We can hold it up to show that nothing will crush the values we hold dear, and which will endure.

"As we think of this dreadful act let us remember these heroes; and in the words of a great American President, Abraham Lincoln: "Let us have faith that right makes might".

Kitted Out for Safety

Olympic medal-winning cyclist Chris Newton joined Stockton Council's Road Safety Team as they visited Fairfield Junior School in July with new cycle helmets and safety equipment.



The equipment included helmets, training tabards, road signs and yellow fluorescent jackets for the voluntary instructors.

Another nine schools in the Borough, chosen randomly from those who offer cycle safety training courses, will also receive the safety equipment. Stockton Council Road Safety Officer Peter Fleming said: "We have been able to leave enough equipment for children at ten schools after The Teesside Health Action Zone gave us a grant of £4,000 to help support our cycle training initiatives."

Green Bus Route

Traffic flow on the Stockton to Yarm route has been eased thanks to the new Bus Green Route.

And your views are soon to be sought through traffic and bus user surveys to find out what people think of the new scheme.

The Bus Green Route is a culmination of several initiatives aimed at easing bus services between Stockton and Yarm.

New high standard bus shelters are part of the scheme along with an agreement with bus operators to invest in high specification buses for the Green Routes, both of which improve customer comfort and information.

The highest profile feature of the scheme is the new bus lane from Eaglescliffe to the Cleveland Bay junction.

This was introduced after major public consultation which involved exhibitions at Eaglescliffe Village Hall and Yarm Library and a public meeting. Amendments to the bus lane were made as a result of the consultation exercise.

The bus lane has been provided by reallocating existing road space. A segregated route for cyclists has been provided alongside the eastern footway.

During the public consultation exercise a number of local residents raised concerns about the speed of traffic and the lack of pedestrian facilities. As part of the Bus Green Route, crossing facilities for pedestrians have also been improved, particularly at Sunningdale Avenue.

The surveys are due to be carried out in November.



Gordon the Grasshopper Goes on TV

The Success of the Kiara Hall Family Learning Group in winning a National Adult Learner's Award in the European Social Fund project category drummed up some local television interest recently.

Tyne Tees Television asked if they could visit family learning in Stockton as part of a series of features which look at innovative ways adults return to learning and improve their skills. The women at Kiara Hall have made three storybooks based on the story of 'Gordon the Grasshopper' - written by themselves - as well as various games and activities to help interest young

children and develop language and early reading skills. They were happy to tell Siobhan Casey of Tyne Tees TV how much they had enjoyed family learning courses and were seeking further education to improve their own confidence and skills.

To reflect the opportunities of how an informal learning environment can support work in the classroom, the families visited Preston Park. Children and mums were able to find new ideas for future adventures of 'Gordon the Grasshopper', followed by a visit to enjoy a pantomime performed by Mums at Hardwick Primary School in their very own version of 'Cinderella' to show off their new writing and

acting skills.

Both groups are now able to give very important support, not only to their own children, but also the whole home-school partnership in the local area.



The Changing Face of Stockton Town Centre

Recent visitors to Stockton's town centre will have found it hard to miss the changes taking place.

The town, recently voted the most improved in the Northumbria in Bloom competition, gained its new £5m Splash! leisure complex in June. Now the first shoppers are reaping the benefits of the new shops at Wellington Square.

The £43 million retail development, near Stockton's High Street, is a partnership between Stockton Borough Council and the Wellington Square Development Company and work started back in May of last year. A new 800 space car park opened to people heading into Stockton in April and the 187,000 square feet of retail space will eventually be taken up by 42 new shopping units, a supermarket, two major stores and a fast-food restaurant.

With existing High Street stores, Marks and Spencer and Littlewoods, both already modernised to link with the new development and a major expansion of Debenham's store in progress, visitors can look forward to a first class shopping experience.

Other retailers already committed to the scheme include Claire's Accessories Ltd, MVC Entertainments Ltd and the Famous Army Stores Ltd.

The Lidl supermarket opened in the spring, as did the new 100-seater KFC drive thru' fast food restaurant.

Although the development is not due to be officially opened until October, trading in a substantial part of the development will already have



Pictured: Rob Gildersleeve, new centre manager at Wellington Square Shopping Centre in Stockton.

excellent position in the future to encourage visitors from around the region and nationally.

"The development has been five years in preparation with a supreme effort being made by the contractors, HBG Construction Ltd, who have

market since the year 1310. Shoppers can browse through the stalls every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday and be tempted by a whole host of stalls selling items from fruit and vegetables to music and clothes to books.

The Northumbria in Bloom judges were particularly impressed by the displays of flower baskets in the High Street and by the general cleanliness of the town.

And thousands poured in for the world famous Stockton International Riverside Festival during July and August, when the Town Centre become alive to the sound of music and street theatre.

The next big event in the town is for November 5th, when the switch-on of Stockton's Christmas lights takes place the same evening as the Bonfire Night fireworks.

"It will move the town towards an excellent position in the future to encourage visitors from around the region and nationally."

commenced by the time you read this. Around 400 full-time jobs are expected to be created.

"Wellington Square is a wonderful opportunity for Stockton to develop its base in retailing activity - which is already strong - even further," said Lionel Danby, Stockton Council's senior projects manager.

"It will move the town towards an

constructed the project in just 18 months.

"There has been an exceptionally good relationship between Stockton Council and the developers and I'm looking forward to that continuing as the centre is completed."

The new development will be a perfect partner to the historic High Street that has hosted an open-air

Sunday opening helps to bridge the

digital divide



News of a £238,000 cash injection to help more people take advantage of the computer age has given a welcome boost to Stockton's libraries.

Over the coming months, new equipment will be brought in and, to help more people gain access to library services including the internet, three of the Borough's libraries are to trial Sunday opening.

Easier access to computer facilities and the internet for local people has long been a priority for Stockton's libraries, which have achieved considerable success in this aim. Now, thanks to two sizeable grants, the libraries' pioneering work is to expand further. A £28,000 grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Gift was the icing on the cake after the Council heard it had been allocated £210,000 from the People's Network - part of the Heritage Lottery's New Opportunities Fund.

The money will be used to open internet access to a greater number of people across the Borough. To achieve this, the number of computer

terminals at libraries will rise to around 70 over the coming year. This will be supported by additional software and other useful equipment such as scanners and web cams. And the Council is also to experiment with Sunday opening at three libraries in order to encourage more people to use their facilities - including computers and the internet. Roseberry (Billingham), Thornaby Central and Yarm libraries have been chosen to take part in the Sunday opening trial, which will make Stockton the first local authority in the Tees Valley to open more than one of its libraries on a Sunday. The pilot scheme is expected to begin in October or November and run until March 2002, when it will be reviewed. The three libraries will open from 11am until 4pm each Sunday. As Andrea Barker, Stockton Council's Assistant Director of Education, Leisure and Cultural Services, explains, people's expectations have changed over recent years.

"Users expect and deserve high quality library services to be available outside standard working hours. They want services to suit their lifestyles and they want them delivered in a modern, efficient, convenient way," she said. "Our library service favours innovation, modernisation and continuous improvement. I believe

“Users expect and deserve high quality library services to be available outside standard working hours.”

that one of our strengths is that we have always been very proactive in offering opportunities to learn and use new technologies.

“Over the years we have pioneered advances such as our Open Technology Centre. Here there are superb computing facilities for use by local people, including a special suite for blind and visually impaired users, in one of the few recognised UK Online Centres in the country to be situated in a library.”

The £238,000 of additional funds from the People’s Network and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Gift will, in effect, create mini technology centres in libraries across the Borough.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation aims to improve people’s lives through health and learning.

Richard Akeroyd, executive director of the Foundation’s library and technology access programmes, said:

“We look for opportunities to extend the benefits of modern science and technology to people around the world.

“We invest in partnerships with individuals and organizations that bring experience, expertise and commitment to their own efforts to help people through better health and learning.

“Bill and Melinda Gates believe that libraries, which have a long tradition

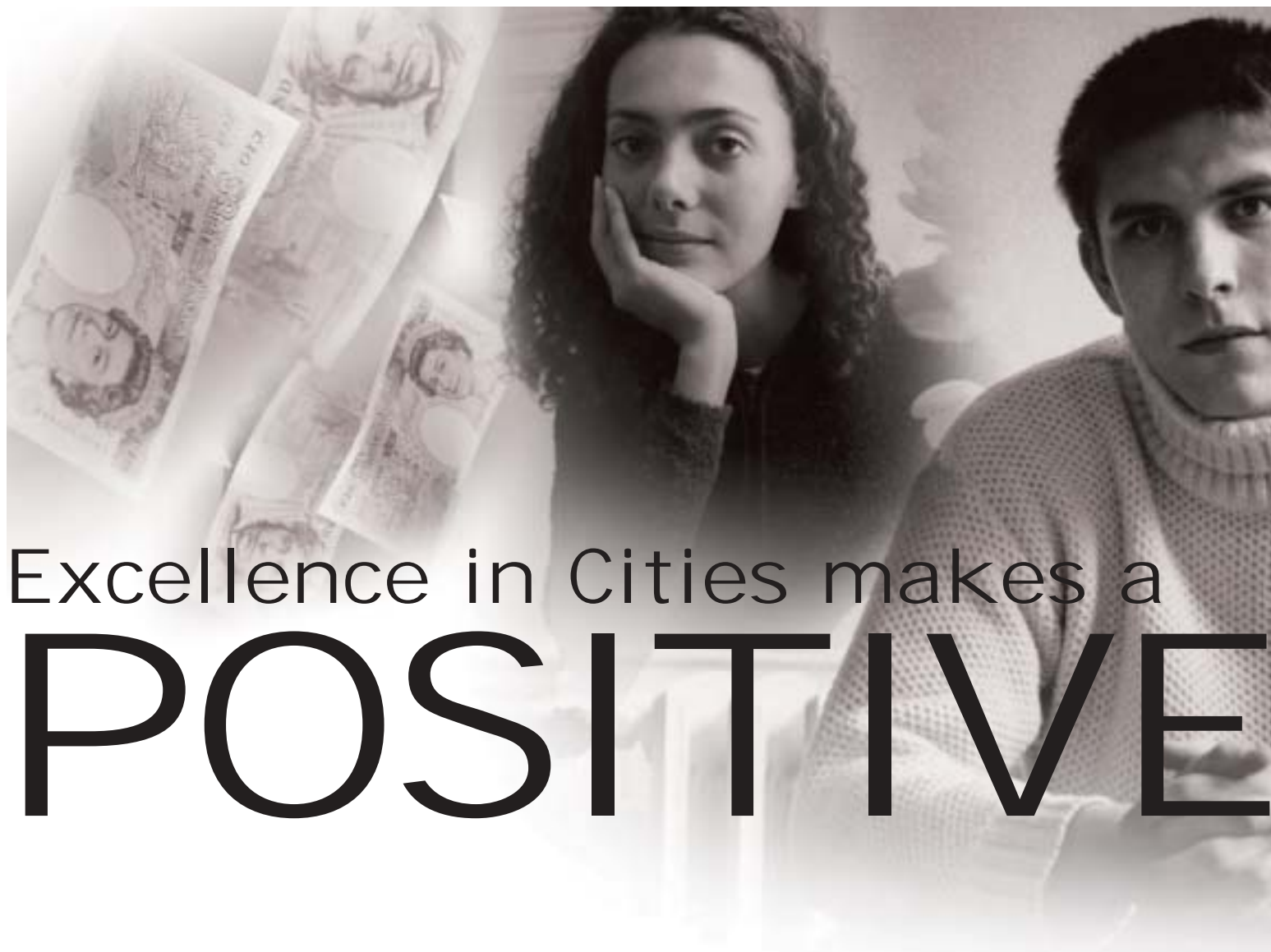
of providing free and open access to information, are a natural portal to the next wave of information - digital information.”

Richard Akeroyd believes that access to information is an age-old problem that has taken on a new urgency with the emergence of the Internet as a tool for learning.

“It is critically important that technology is available to everyone, regardless of race, gender, income or age,” he said.

“Libraries, with their heritage of providing free information, are playing an important role in bridging the digital divide.”





Excellence in Cities makes a **POSITIVE**

Delivering the best education for all children across Stockton Borough is the driving force behind Excellence in Cities.

The initiative, which aims to raise performance of schools in urban areas, works as a partnership, and that is where the strength of Excellence in Cities lies.

All secondary schools and the Local Education Authority work together and that provides head teachers and other education professionals the means to pool expertise and discuss problems and solutions.

Already, Excellence in Cities is having an impact on education in Stockton. Teachers and pupils have had the opportunity to get involved in exciting new curriculum developments, learn from best practice from around the country and begin to break down some of the barriers to learning there are in some children's lives.

The Government's Excellence in Cities project was launched in Stockton last September and funding to the tune of £1.5 million has been pledged until

2004 for all secondary schools. That cash injection provides the resources to fund a whole host of projects, schemes and initiatives. The main aims of the Excellence in Cities programme are:

- To stretch the most able and talented pupils by providing extensive activities including specialist lectures, working at the Durham University Stockton Campus, masterclasses and summer schools.
- To provide learning support on a one-to-one basis or in small groups by employing specially trained learning mentors.
- To provide support in schools for youngsters who are at risk from exclusion through a special Learning Support Unit.

Keith Robinson is the director of the Excellence in Cities team and he believes the project is already helping to improve education in the area. "It is still early days but teachers are

already talking about greater motivation for pupils, lower rates of truancy, reduced numbers of exclusions and an interest in the programmes on offer. The task now is to build on this early success," said Mr Robinson.

This summer, 16-year-old pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds have had the wonderful opportunity to attend a residential learning experience at one of the region's universities.

To benefit the region's most gifted and able pupils, experts from home and abroad have been brought in to deliver a whole host of high class seminars, masterclasses and workshops.

While some pupils shine academically, and can have that talent nurtured through the masterclasses, other pupils face challenging times and situations. It is these pupils that benefit greatly from being able to work with a Learning Mentor. These come from a wide variety of backgrounds such as business, social work, industry as well as teaching, to provide support and advice to youngsters who feel they need guidance if they are to get the



THE IMPACT ON EDUCATION

most out of their education.

"This is a very exciting and challenging time for everyone involved in education in Stockton," Keith Robinson added.

"Excellence in Cities is creating lots of opportunities to make learning fun, improve the attainment of pupils and break down barriers to learning.

"I am sure the children in our schools will benefit from all these initiatives and that we shall see 'excellence' demonstrated in many ways."

This year, summer schools have been held, all based on a Japanese theme with both primary and secondary age pupils able to attend.

Activities out of school hours have been organised and a 'Murder Mystery' evening has already proved popular.

Future plans for the Excellence in Cities project include the building of a state-of-the-art ICT facility and a City Learning Centre, which will supply all high schools with learning packages, training and specialist support as well as being a great resource for the whole of the community.

Steve Kirby is the manager of the

"Early signs for Excellence in Cities are very positive - the partnership between the schools and the LEA is very strong, and everyone is working hard to make it a success for young people."

centre, which is scheduled to be open next year. He believes it will be a great boost to the people of Stockton. "As well as being a great resource for schools in Stockton, we want the community to get the most out of it as well," he said. "To that end we are looking for people to let us know what they would want from such a centre so we can benefit people." Other plans in the pipeline include a project for students aged 13-19 years to encourage them to progress into Higher Education.

This will involve Stockton's sixth forms and colleges as well as local universities, and it will be called the Excellence Challenge.

Stockton

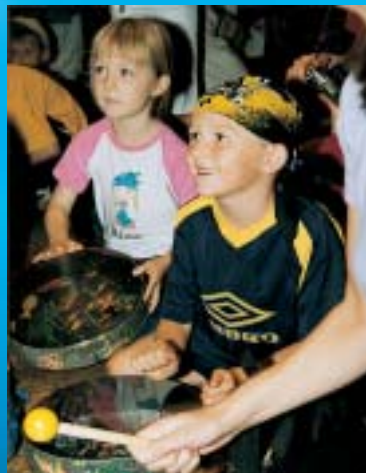
“you’re look

A look back at the 14th Stockton I



Stockton "making great"

Stockton International Riverside Festival



Chic shops, fine restaurants and bustling pubs all nestle together in Yarm, making it a busy and attractive commercial and shopping centre.

But tradition is still at the heart of the town and its charm makes it popular with residents, visitors and businesses. Yarm High Street, with its cobbled verges and fine buildings with impressive facades, is now protected by conservation status. The Town Hall, which stands proud in the centre of the main street, dates back to 1710 and the bricks bear the marks of the terrible floods back in 1771 and 1881 when the water levels



In and a



rose. Flood defences are now one of the main developments being undertaken in the Yarm area and now construction work, estimated at £1.8 million, has started to replace or raise existing defences. Stockton Council granted the Environment Agency planning permission for the work last year and now the North of England Flood Alleviation Scheme has started the construction. Work has started at Minerva Mews and is due for completion in the coming weeks, while construction of the flood embankment within the grounds of Yarm School is already finished. As well as the extensive work being carried out to boost the defences against flooding, Yarm High Street is also getting its own makeover. The cobbles that line the street are being replaced in a major highways scheme and the first phase is now

complete with the second due to get underway in the New Year. With such a large area to cover, it is expected that the complete overhaul will take a few years until it is finished. In keeping with the conservation area status, all the work is done by hand. Despite the traffic delays caused by the replacement of the cobbles, many people are delighted that they are being kept. Sally Taylor, a regular visitor to Yarm said: "The cobbles are part of the appeal to the town and make it different. They may be more difficult to walk on when you are shopping but I would be very disappointed if they went." That view was shared by local David Harper who added: "People do complain about them but the new ones that have been laid do not stick up as much and look great. I am also glad that the flood defence work has started as the issue of flooding is

something that concerns a great many people - not only the people who live in the area but also the businesses."

The High Street work is one of five highway maintenance schemes taking place in Yarm during the 2001/02 year, worth £140,000 in total. Others include resurfacing roads and footpaths in the Goosepastures area, Tindale Close, Valley Drive and Green Lane.

Street lighting and improvements in Woodlands Drive, Clockwood Gardens and Landsdowne Road are also being carried out.

The old town centre of Yarm is almost completely embraced by a loop in the River Tees and, indeed, was a sea port until 1750.

Now Stockton Council's two River Tees wardens look after the banks and



around Yarm

wildlife along the Tees and many people take advantage of the wonderful scenery right on their doorstep. They organise regular walks and, if you fancy stretching your legs, the next is scheduled for October 21, setting off for the two mile stroll to

Head teacher George Barber is proud of the school's achievements. He said: "Our philosophy is simple - we share initiatives with other partnership schools and colleagues to raise standards in pupil performance. "A new project will soon be under way

Education and Employment for state-of-the-art classrooms.

A village of ten mobile classrooms had been used but the funding has allowed their replacement with purpose built teaching accommodation that includes science labs and Special Education Needs rooms.

Yarm may be the Borough's smallest shopping town but what it lacks in size it certainly makes up for in other areas.

The old and the new stand proudly together making it one of the most attractive places across the region.

The old and the new stand proudly together making it one of the most attractive places across the region.

Aislaby from the Blue Bell pub at 2pm. First class shops and stunning scenery are not the only strings to Yarm's bow. Schools in the town offer youngsters a great education from primary upwards.

Yarm Primary School was awarded Beacon Status in 1994 - the first school in Cleveland to achieve such an accolade.

to improve curriculum continuity for children between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. This will involve Primary and Secondary colleagues in classroom observations in order to seek a closer understanding of teaching methods and procedures."

At Conyers School, work has recently been completed after they submitted a bid to the then Department for

If you fancy finding out more about Yarm then you can log on to a new independent website created by local people and dedicated to the town. Just click on www.yarm.com for local news and information.



Just Champion

Competitors and organisers alike have hailed the 9th World Canoe Marathon Championships, held on the River Tees in Stockton, a huge success.

Competitors from over 30 countries paddled into Stockton for the prestigious event, held at the end of August and first weekend in September.



HRH The Princess Royal travelled specially to Teesside for the opening ceremony of the four-day Championships at the Tees Barrage, where she was treated to a spectacular evening of colour, music and fireworks.

Thousands of spectators were treated to breathtaking pyrotechnic effects, underwater explosions and a fire-eating dragon in a spectacular portrayal of the River Tees story. Debbie Curgenven, Stockton Council's Sports Development Officer, said: "The opening ceremony of these World Championships was certainly something to remember and it was a tremendous honour that HRH Princess Anne agreed to attend. It set the whole weekend off to a successful start."

Based at the University of Durham Stockton Campus, the first-class facilities proved top notch with the world's best canoeists as they battled for medal glory.

Out on the course, there was more to the marathon course than simply paddling between the Tees Barrage and Preston Park. Competitors also had to contend with 'portages', where they carried their canoes around obstacles on the riverbank at Preston Park and Castlegate Quay. Spectators were treated to some highly competitive and closely fought races.

Anna Hemmings from Surrey went away with two gold medals for Great Britain as she took the women's single kayak and, with partner Helen Gilby, doubles kayak titles.

For the first time, the event also included a World Junior Championships, in which Ireland's Neil Fleming took single kayak gold. Other event winners came from as far afield as Spain, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Norway.

Everyone agreed on the success of the championships, for which Stockton Council was the main sponsor, with additional funding from UK Sport, British Waterways, Northumbria Tourist Board and One NorthEast.

"This has been a fantastic occasion for Stockton and the two years spent planning really paid dividends," commented Debbie Curgenven.

"The competitors were very happy and impressed with their accommodation and facilities in Stockton."

While competitors from across the world paddled it out on the river, spectators could take things easy as they enjoyed a range of

entertainment at the University campus. With a military band, Czech dancers and trade and craft stalls, there was plenty to enjoy, despite a power cut which prevented one act from performing.

"We were pleased that so many people came to watch over the whole weekend," added Debbie.

"The legacy will hopefully be that some of those spectators will be encouraged to take up the sport and develop a home-grown canoe marathon racing team here in the Tees Valley. We have wonderful facilities, which would make a fine development base for young athletes aiming for the GB squad."



Canoeists of any age are welcome at the new marathon racing club at Castlegate Quay. Meeting take place on Tuesdays from 6pm - 7.30pm and Saturdays from 9.30 - 11.30am. Anyone who is interested in trying the sport should contact Debbie during working hours, Monday-Friday, on (01642) 358542.

Alternatively you can e-mail debbie at debbie.curgenven@stockton.gov.uk

No Messing!

Care for your Area

That's the message to residents in the battle to keep the Borough's streets clean.

Figures revealed in a recent poll by MORI showed that many of the region's residents were unhappy with the levels of litter on the street.



But in Stockton, the Council has already put its money where its mouth is by investing around £500,000 in the Care for your Area scheme.

And to get the message home for people to Care for Your Area two new, state-of-the-art types of cleansing "weapons" have been deployed in the battle to clean up the Borough.

The Council's Cleansing Unit can now be seen out on the streets in a fleet of 12 new high profile vehicles. The scooter style three wheelers are being used to get workers out and about to inspect the streets and do spot "litter blitzes" where necessary.

Until recently, it could take workers with barrows up to 25 minutes to reach their destination on foot - before they even began to pick up any rubbish.

Now they can reach their designated streets within five minutes, collect any litter and move quickly on to inspect neighbouring roads and roadside verges.

"The scooter-style vehicles are proving a massive help in keeping the streets litter-free," said the Council's Service Manager for Cleansing, Jamie McCann. "We know that this is very important

to local people and that's why we are determined to keep the area clean and tidy."

The other new litter-busting equipment closely resemble backpacks, but are actually vacuum litter collectors. These are called upon when workers need to tackle the tougher rubbish-removing tasks as they can get into almost every nook and cranny. Cigarette ends and leaves are sucked up in an instant and, when the packs were put through their paces recently, even the cobbles of Yarm High Street did not prove too much.

In another approach, Litter Enforcement Officers are patrolling the streets and shopping parades on the lookout for litter offenders. Those spotted dropping litter will be asked to pick it up - or face a £25 fixed penalty notice.

But prevention is better than prosecution, so the Council has joined with seven schools across the Borough in a unique reward scheme. Litter officers will be keeping an eye out for youngsters at the schools who make the effort to use litter bins - and, thanks to support from the Hollywood Bowl at Teesside Park, they will reward any who do with 2-for-the-price-of-1 bowling tickets.

Council officers have also been cutting down unsightly posters from traffic lights or railings, in a tougher stance on fly-posting. As Simon Dale, Assistant Director for Housing and Contract Services, put it: "It's a simple but effective way to ensure that people do not litter the Borough just to gain free advertising. We have two prosecutions pending for fly-posting,

which will help to get the message through."

Readers of the last issue of Stockton News will remember that teams of officers have been out patrolling over the past few months in a bid to crackdown on the problem of dog fouling, something that many people feel strongly about, as it highlights

"The scooter-style vehicles are proving a massive help in keeping the streets litter-free."

concern both in terms of health and the environment.

Responsible dog owners should carry plastic bags and poop scoops. Yet there are still those few that flout the law, and the Council receives around 300 complaints a year about owners leaving the mess behind.

Following the launch of new dog-fouling by-laws in July, Council officers carried out a month of educational patrols. During that time, 523 people were given advice regarding the new legislation and around 13,000 poop scoop bags were given away. At the end of the introductory period, patrols took on an enforcement role and Officers have issued their first fixed penalty ticket.

Installation of signs, bins and collection services across the Borough is set to commence in early October.



Stockton in Bloom

Everything was coming up roses for Stockton in this year's Northumbria in Bloom awards.

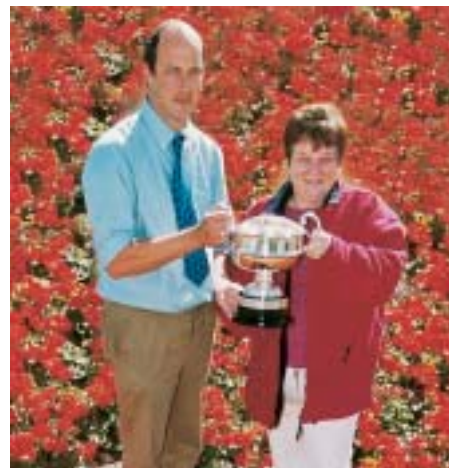
Naming the town as the most improved entry, the competition judges commented that Stockton had gained "a new image" in recent years. Describing the town as "a transformation", they remarked on Stockton's general cleanliness and particularly praised new landscaped areas, floral baskets and roundabouts. After receiving the Evening Chronicle Cup at a ceremony in the Stadium of Light, Sunderland, the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Terry Bean, said:- "It was a great honour to receive the award on behalf of Stockton. There is growing pride in the town - this will provide a tremendous boost and I am sure that we can build on this success. "A lot of people have been working hard to brighten up the area and there's no doubt that the town is being transformed. I'm particularly pleased that, after all the regeneration work we are seeing, the competition judges commented that Stockton now

has a new image." Stockton Town Centre Manager Geraint Williams added:- "I'm delighted about this news as I've always believed in Stockton's many qualities. This award comes as a further incentive on our road to make

"This award comes as a further incentive on our road to make Stockton-on-Tees a multi-dimensional experience, adding to its lively and friendly image."

Stockton-on-Tees a multi-dimensional experience, adding to its lively and friendly image."

The Council has carried out environmental improvements to the main routes into Stockton, landscaping verges and roundabouts and making other improvements. The town centre has benefited from attractive floral displays and improvements to the Riverside area have made it particularly attractive.



Stockton Council's Keith Matthews and Val Clingo receiving the Evening Gazette Cup for most improved entry.

The Council plans to build on this success with additional floral displays across the Borough in 2002. The Mayor also congratulated the Ropner Park Bowling Association in Stockton and St John's Church in Billingham, which also won Northumbria in Bloom awards, for best sports ground and best religious establishment respectively.

Help Young Offenders stay on the right track

JOIN A STOCKTON YOUTH OFFENDER PANEL

Stockton-on-Tees Youth Offending Team is seeking to recruit members of the public to assist and sit on the new Youth Offender Panels.

The Panels will pioneer an entirely new way of dealing with young offenders aged between 10 to 17 years old. The multi-agency partnership co-ordinating the scheme needs local people to take key roles on the Panels, or assist in the organisation of Panel sessions. Full training will be provided.

If you are over 18, live in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees and have plenty of common sense, you could play a key role in the project. No formal qualifications are necessary. Ideal candidates will have local knowledge and must be willing to attend up to 25 panel sessions in one year. The posts are unpaid, but all expenses will be reimbursed.

To find out more about the Stockton Youth Offending Team and the new Youth Offender Panels, contact our offices at 52-54 Hartington Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1HE, call (01642) 393399 or e.mail: tony.hodgson@stockton.gov.uk



Stockton Youth Offending Team

New fund helps communities to help themselves

Most residents want their communities to be pleasant and safe places to live, with opportunities for all.

And, while the Council and other organisations can work towards these aims, many changes for the better can come from within communities themselves.

Following successful bids to the Government's Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), there are now three new community funds to help residents work together to improve their area.

The three funds cover a host of community projects designed to reduce social exclusion, enhance opportunities and cut crime and the fear of crime. They are being managed by Stockton Residents and Community Groups Association Limited (SRCGA) on

profit organisations can apply for grants of up to £5,000. However, it should be recognised that grants must be matched with similar funding from other sources.

In Norton, for example, the Albany Residents Community Association was granted £5,213 from the Fund, having already secured funding from Stockton Council and Cleveland Community Foundation.

Stockton Council agreed to lease a shop to the group on a peppercorn rent, for them to set up as a resource centre for the local community.

The group's plans include a job shop, computer courses, further education and leisure facilities.

Bob Walls, the Albany group's chairman, says they have great plans

and Portrack and Tilery.

Applications to this Fund must relate to reducing crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour, the use of illegal drugs as well as burglary, domestic violence. It also offers the opportunity to provide public information on community safety issues.

One group to receive a Community Safety Fund grant is SWATCH, a residents' organisation from the Alliance Street area of Stockton. The Fund was able to finance a "Dusk to Dawn" lighting scheme in order to reduce the fear of crime and provide a safer environment in the neighbourhood.

The Community Chest Fund operates on a wider scale, open to anyone within the Stockton Borough area.

Applications are considered for Community Chest grants of up to £1,000 for a wide range of arts, sport, heritage and other community activities.

The Community Chest has been designed to be user-friendly and accessible to groups or individuals involved in projects that reduce social exclusion and enhance opportunities. Youth organisation the Eastern Ravens Trust received £1,000 from the Community Chest this summer. Anne McShane, Young Carers Project Worker with the Trust, said the cash had helped give young carers from across the Borough a break from their daily routines.

"The young people we work with carry a great deal of responsibility and it's wonderful for them to be able to take time out occasionally. Thanks to this grant, a group from the Borough was able to join 1,000 other young carers at a special festival in Southampton, where they could meet new friends and share experiences." The grant also helped the Ravens organise a programme of activities for young carers throughout the summer, including trips to the Forbidden Corner, Holy Island and bell-boating on the Tees.

If you would like to find out more about the different funds available please call Peter Weatherley, SRCGA Community Grants Officer, on (01642) 391361.



behalf of the Stockton Central Partnership and individual partners Stockton Borough Voluntary Development Agency, Stockton Council, The Five Lamps Organisation, Thornaby Regeneration Partnership Board and the Safer Stockton Partnership.

The Community Development Fund supports initiatives that boost opportunities for people in the Blue Hall, Mile House, Parkfield, Grangefield, Newtown, Portrack and Tilery, Norton and Roseworth wards. Here, community groups and not-for-

for the centre.

"We hope to provide whatever the local community wants, with perhaps a senior citizens club and mums and toddler group," he said.

"There is a real need for some sort of facility to bring the community together and get the estate back to how it used to be with people working together."

Another fund open to local applications is the Community Safety Fund, which helps crime reduction projects within an area covering Mandale, Stainsby Village, Parkfield

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Julie Grant
Assistant Director for
Legal Services



Stockton Council's twenty-strong team of "legal eagles" provides a range of legal services to the Council.

Between them, they handle anything from multi-million pound town centre redevelopments, to contracts for central heating boilers and poop scoop bye-laws. Six Solicitors, four Legal Executives, a Trainee Solicitor, a Local Land Charges Officer, six Legal Assistants and two Clerical Assistants make up the in-house team.

Julie Grant is the Assistant Director for Legal Services and, for her, there's no such thing as a "typical day".

She can find herself dealing with virtually anything that affects the Council's area or its residents.

"Each day is a challenge and you never know what urgent or emergency action you may be called upon to provide," explains Julie. "That's what makes it interesting - it could be a child protection issue, the sale of some land or advice on what to do about a private empty property which is causing a danger to the public."

The legal side of the Council's work is not something people always associate with the services they receive. Stockton Council, like every other local authority, is a creature of statute and, as a consequence, it can only carry out the duties it is empowered by law to do.

However, although these limits restrict what a council can and cannot do, authorities like Stockton can achieve a

great deal more by working in partnership alongside other agencies. Community groups, the police, health authorities, local businesses, Government departments and many other bodies all work closely with the Council to deliver the Community Plan for the vast range of services that fulfil local needs.

Not surprisingly, the complex nature of some of these partnerships requires a certain amount of legal work.

Events such as the Riverside Festival, the Firework Display on 5th November, and the World Canoe Championships all benefit from the Legal team's input.

One recent example was the stunning new Millennium Footbridge over the River Tees between Stockton town centre and Teesdale in Thornaby. Here, issues to be resolved included the ownership of both riverbanks, navigation arrangements on the river itself and agreement between the Council and English Partnerships, the two partners in the scheme. Julie Grant and others in the Legal team worked closely with lawyers in many other organisations to make that happen.

"We are also involved in the new primary and secondary schools in

Ingleby Barwick, which are being built through a private finance initiative," adds Julie. "And the continuation of the South Stockton Link Road involves Highway and Planning Agreements, plus a Bridge Order to construct a crossing over the River Tees as part of the development."

Other day-to-day dealings for Julie and her colleagues include dealing with a wide variety of County Court correspondence, on child protection issues, debt recovery and claims for possession proceedings. "We deal with prosecutions for offences such as animal cruelty, breaches of environmental health and trading standards legislation, in addition to property matters where the Council is selling or leasing land," says Julie.

Events like the Riverside Festival, the Firework Display on 5th November and the World Canoe Championships all benefit from the Legal team's input.

Qualifying as a Solicitor in 1989, Julie joined Stockton Council two years later, becoming Assistant Director in 1995. Her working day also includes responding to new legislation, monitoring the Legal Division's budget, attending meetings, providing advice at various meetings of the Council and helping to deliver the Government's modernising agenda.

"There is real variety in my work," she concluded. "I prefer to work in local government rather than private practice because of the opportunity to influence and improve public services. Although some issues are difficult to resolve to everyone's satisfaction, it is often satisfying to see the results of our work and know that we helped to achieve a successful outcome."



“There are so few opportunities in this day and age to work on the building of a church, and it has been built to such high quality.”

Stunning Landmark

opens for worship

A stunning new landmark has been completed in Stockton in the shape of the town's new Baptist Tabernacle.

The breathtaking structure has opened after 15 months of building work to relocate the Tabernacle from its former Wellington Street site as part of the £43m Wellington Square shopping development.

The building, which seats 600 people, features many new facilities including state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment and screens, a bookshop, a coffee shop and restaurant and a baptismal pool.

Tabernacle trustee Stuart Cornwell said: “We are delighted with the new building and are immensely grateful to Stockton Council and the local community for all their support.

“We have a great opportunity to contribute to the spiritual and social well-being of the people of Stockton.”

For Council project manager Lionel Danby, it has been a joy to work on the Tabernacle. He said: “There are so few opportunities in this day and age to work on the building of a church

and it has been built to such high quality. It will remain a prominent place for local people for years to come.”

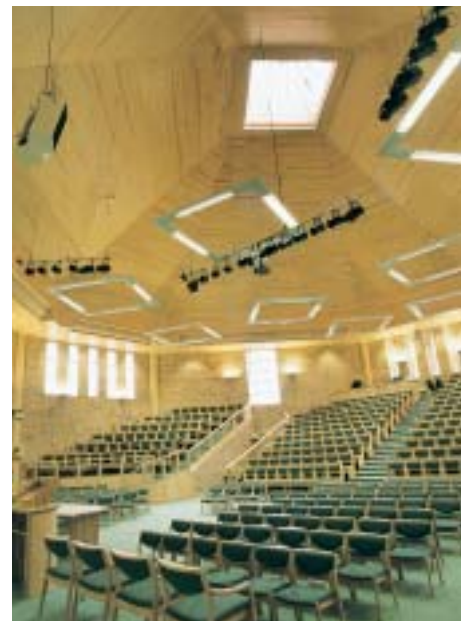
Reverend Roger Martin, Senior Minister at the Tabernacle, is delighted with the new building.

“It is fantastic and will offer a great place of Worship to the people of Stockton. The bookshop and coffee shop will no doubt prove very popular too,” he said.

Stockton's Mayor, Coun. Terry Bean attended the building's official opening on September 22, with the Reverend David Coffey, general secretary of the Baptist Union, as guest speaker.

A community weekend is arranged for October 12-14 and will feature local TV personality John Archer on stage on the Friday evening followed by a fun day on Saturday from 10am to 4pm and family worship on Sunday morning. Tickets available from the church office by ringing (01642) 602223

Guided tours will take place each Wednesday and Saturday following the community weekend until the end of October.



Council meetings to include public question time



Recent editions of Stockton News have included details of changes to the way that your Council will be making decisions in the future.

These changes are intended to modernise the way the Council works to meet the challenges of the 21st century and follow the Local Government Act 2000.

Over the past year, we have consulted widely with residents about the shape of local government that they would prefer for Stockton Borough.

As a result, Stockton Council has prepared a new Constitution, which has been based on the information we gathered during this consultation. To be introduced on 1st October 2001, the new Constitution has been designed to make sure that decision making in Stockton is:

- **Transparent** - so that you can be clear about who is responsible for particular decisions.
- **Understandable** - to ensure that the decision-making process is simple and clear.
- **Efficient** - to allow swift and responsive action.
- **Accountable** - to open decisions to scrutiny by Councillors and by members of the public.
- **Community focused** - to enable Councillors to pursue their role as community leaders.

At the heart of the Council's modernisation agenda is its commitment to be both transparent and accountable. Council, Cabinet and Committee meetings have been open to the public for some time and members of the public are always welcome. We are now taking things a step

further by introducing a public question time at meetings of the full Council (all of our 55 elected Members).

To put a question to the full Council, you will need to submit it in advance, at least five working days before the meeting so that all the information can be gathered to provide your answer.

"These changes are intended to modernise the way the Council works to meet the challenges of the 21st century."

If you would like to know more about Council meetings (when and where they are held) or how to submit a question, please contact our Democratic Services Unit on (01642) 393063. They will be pleased to help.

The Council will also be producing a Guide to the new decision-making structure. This will provide more information on how the new system works. If you would like a copy please contact the Policy and Performance Standards Unit on (01642) 393009. Alternatively, you can write to us about any of the matters above at: Policy and Performance Standards Unit, Stockton Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1YD or e-mail us at PPSU@stockton.gov.uk

Information is also published on the Council's web site at www.stockton.gov.uk

Tap into 'Taps'

TAPS - Teesside ADHD Parent Support Group - helps support parents of young people with Attention Deficiency Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD).

The TAPS group produces a monthly newsletter and organizes regular meetings. Each week, there is a Wednesday drop-in service at the Stockton Borough Carers Centre (9.30am-12 noon) and Saturday activity sessions at Hardwick Tomorrow (2pm-4pm).

The third Tuesday of each month sees a family night at Fun City, Skinner Street, Stockton and, on the first Monday of each month, a meeting at the Carers Centre, often with a guest speaker.

For further information about TAPS please call Florence on (01642) 801567 or Barbara on (01642) 644275.

Shhh... There's a Shutterbug About

Shutterbugs 2001 produced the biggest haul yet of quality images taken by visitors to Stockton's International Riverside Festival.



"Snappers" of all ages took part in Shutterbugs, organised by Stockton Museums and sponsored by Rapidcolor, Dovecot Street. Professional photographers Dave Hudspeth and Denis Dunning gave tips and hints to users of disposable cameras and over 1,000 colourful prints were displayed at the Focus@ Photographic Gallery at Stockton's Green Dragon Museum.

The pick of the crop earned their photographers prizes and certificates, which were presented by the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Terry Bean, at a special ceremony in late August. Overall winner was 7-year-old Abby Thorpe of Stockton, while runners up were Carol Bilton, Phillip Crackett, Tim Diddams, Hannah Harper, Kerry Jordan, Clare Palfreeman, Norma Rendell and Robert Wood.

What's On

Friday - Sunday 12-14 Oct

Preston Hall Museum
Family Learning Weekend, call (01642) 781184 for more information.

Friday 26th October

Preston Hall Museum
Halloween Activity Day, call (01642) 781184 for more information.

Saturday 22nd Sept to Sat 27th October

Billingham Art Gallery
Derek English - High Places, Open Spaces. Stunning paintings and prints exploring the Himalayan landscape in all its glory.

Tuesday 23rd October

Billingham Art Gallery
Children's print workshops. 10.00am and 1.30pm - booking essential. Call (01642) 397590 for details.

Saturday 27th October

Billingham Art Gallery
Halloween crafts - call (01642) 397590.

Saturday 3rd November to Saturday 24th November


Billingham Art Gallery
Access All Areas - community art show. An exhibition of work by the many people who use the gallery as a focus for their art. Plus school and group workshops.

Saturday 1st to Saturday 8th December

Billingham Art Gallery
Don't miss this opportunity to sample the finest local craft and get into the mood for Christmas.

TEESSIDE CREMATORIUM
Middlesbrough Council Public Protection and Planning Service

THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE ON COMPUTER




All inscriptions have now been stored on the computer in the Chapel of Remembrance.

Each entry can now be seen at any time by purchasing a "swipe" card and passing it through a card reader at the side of the screen. Additional pictures can be added to the computer.

The Books of Remembrance will always remain on display.

For further information and an application form please contact the Cemeteries and Crematorium Office, Teesside Crematorium, Acklam Road, Middlesbrough. TS5 7HE.

Or telephone 01642 817725 (Fax 01642 852424)



Advice on your Doorstep

Stockton firms looking for business advice now have access to the vast range of services offered by Business Link at their fingertips.



Business Link has recently launched a network of Local Access Points (LAPs) across the Tees Valley - one of which is Stockton Business Centre. LAPs operate on a drop-in basis and are fully equipped with IT links as well as access to meeting rooms.

For further information, please call (01642) 806666, fax (01642) 341425 or e mail info@tees.businesslink.co.uk

Name Change

MacLean and Nuttall, the contractor responsible for gas maintenance in Stockton's Council houses, changed its name in September.

The company is now known as NORTH WEST MACLEAN UK LTD and tenants should be aware that uniforms, identity cards and van logos will also change. All will show the new name by the end of October. Please don't forget to check identity cards carefully before letting anyone into your home.

Floods - Be Prepared

The Environment Agency has urged residents of flood-prone areas to take early precautions, such as making their own sandbags in advance and ensuring that valuables can be quickly moved. Stockton Council will soon be issuing detailed advice to areas which have previously seen flooding - copies will also be available from Council buildings or on the website at www.stockton.gov.uk

We apologise

In the last edition Stockton News reported on a ceremony at the Cenotaph in Thornaby to commemorate those residents who died in conflicts since World War Two. In the list of wars mentioned we inadvertently missed off the conflict in Bosnia. We apologise to Mrs Taylor whose son, Private Shaun Taylor of the Duke of Wellington Regiment, lost his life in the service of his country in 1994.

The Register Office

Nightingale House, Balaclava Street Stockton-on-Tees TS18 2AL



Do you know...

...**how** to obtain a copy of your birth certificate? The Register Office at Stockton-on-Tees holds records dating back to 1837, although the Register Office in Middlesbrough holds records for all births and deaths registered in Stockton and Middlesbrough between October 1971 and 31st March 1996.

...**our** offices are open between 9.30 and 4.00 pm Monday to Friday, and that we are open until 6.00 pm every Thursday.

Telephone 01642 393155 to make an appointment to register a birth or death .

...**that** you can get married on any day of the week? The Register Office is open for marriages all day Monday to Friday and Saturday morning, and in addition there are six premises licensed for civil marriage to give you more choice. To speak to someone about getting married, or to make an appointment to give a notice of marriage, telephone 01642 393153.

...**that** between 1 April 2000 and 31 March 2001 we registered 1884 births, 1649 deaths, took 915 notices of marriages, and issued approximately 11,000 certificates?

...**that** you could be included in our regular consultation meetings and be part of our User Group? If this is of interest to you, please contact us for further information.

We pride ourselves on delivering a first-class service, one that is commensurate with the obligations placed upon us by the General Register Office and the local council. However we recognise that there may be times when you have not been satisfied with the service you have received. If you do have a complaint, or perhaps a compliment or general comment about our service please let us know. You can do this by writing to us at the above address or by telephoning us on (01642) 393156 faxing us on (01642) 393159. Alternatively you can e-mail us at registrar@stockton.gov.uk or visit our website at www.stockton.gov.uk/registrars.htm

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

Your telephone call will be answered within 10 rings

All correspondence received will be dealt with within 10 working days

We also ask our customers for comments by issuing customer satisfaction surveys

On personal application, we will issue the following:

A short birth certificate within 10 minutes;

A full birth certificate within 25 minutes;

A full death certificate within 25 minutes;

A marriage certificate within 30 minutes;

You will be seen within 15 minutes of your arrival.

ACHIEVEMENT

We achieved 100% of monitored calls within our target time.

We answered 100% of monitored correspondence within 10 days, 96% of which were answered within 5 days and 77% by return of post.

85% of our customers were very satisfied and 15% were fairly satisfied with the service they had received.

95.77% of certificates were issued within 10 minutes.

We achieved 100%, with 87.62% of certificates issued within 10 minutes.

96% of certificates were issued within 25 minutes, with 48% issued under 10 minutes.

We achieved 100%, with 48% issued within 10 minutes.

97.4% of our customers were seen within 15 minutes, 93.5% of whom were seen within 10 minutes.



STOCKTON-ON-TEES
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Local services for local people



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

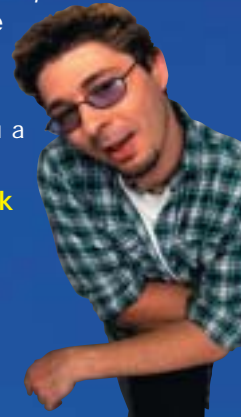
Don't Get By - Get on!



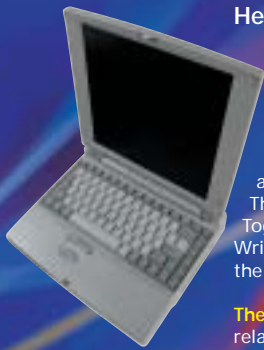
Do you sometimes struggle with spelling or punctuation? Or perhaps your mind is blank when you are faced with maths? If so, **Stockton Adult Education Service** can help. There are millions of people in the UK who face these difficulties every day.

We offer small classes in local community venues, to give you a chance to work at your own pace and brush up your skills.

So, if a fear of maths or english is holding you back at work or in your everyday life contact Julie Walker, Basic Skills Co-ordinator on (01642) 393536.



Family Learning - For Everyone



Help your child in school. Are you a parent, guardian, grandparent, aunt or uncle?

Family Learning offers you the opportunity to learn with your child and help your child do better at school. More than a hundred family learning courses are offered in primary schools, secondary schools and community centres all over Stockton on Tees.

The range of courses includes Reading Together, Numbers Together, Computers Together, the Importance of Play, Writing Together, Art and Craft Together, Story Teller, Using the Internet Together and Keeping up with the Children.

These courses are FREE. The atmosphere in Family Learning is relaxed and friendly and classes usually take place in a special

area in your child's school. If you wish, you can achieve a qualification. The courses are designed to fit with school terms - they usually run for two hours per week for ten weeks.

To find out more about Family Learning and how you can help your child to learn please contact Julie McGee on 01642 393535 or Millie Scaife on 01642 397923 or Barbara McQueeney on 01642 415170.



A service provided by Stockton Council

a Breath of Fresh Air Wellington Square



NEW SHOPS & 800
& A MUCH BIGGER

PARKING SPACES
NEW DEBENHAMS

Opening Celebrations
Thursday 25th - Sunday 28th
October

Century FM Roadshow
11-2 Thursday with Goffy
and The Breakfast Crew,
plus, meet **Toyah Battersby**
from Coronation Street

Bands and entertainers Friday,
Saturday and Sunday



WELLINGTON SQUARE

Stockton-on-Tees



HOW SINGING DANCE & DRAMA CREATE A MANY-SIDED CHILD.



Here's a creative leisure activity that helps rising 4-16 year olds to grow.

Stagecoach teaches the skills they need to act, sing and dance. Before long they begin to stand better, move more freely and clearly, grow more poised, self confident and self assured.

For details of normal classes & week long summer workshops ring (01642) 608696 for Yarm (24hrs), (01325) 720278 for Hartlepool.

www.stagecoach.co.uk



Helping your child to reach for the stars

Whether you're going back to work, or looking for more free time, discover what makes Thornaby Childrens Nursery the home from home your child will always love.

Welcoming children from 3 months to 5 years of age. Inspected by OFSTED.



462 Thornaby Road. Tel 01642 750113

We are looking for long-term foster placements for children like Jane.

Jane is eleven. She has been in foster care for three years. Jane was abused by members of her family and is now receiving counselling. Jane's moods can fluctuate and she is sometimes aggressive to other children. We expect her behaviour to get worse before it gets better. Jane sees her mother, brother and sister regularly and this is very important.

We are very keen to find permanent foster placements for children like Jane. Do you have parenting experience or experience of working with children? Could you offer a commitment to children like Jane no matter how difficult things become? Could you work with Jane, her family and the team of social workers, teachers and counsellors involved?

Depending on your experience, you may receive...

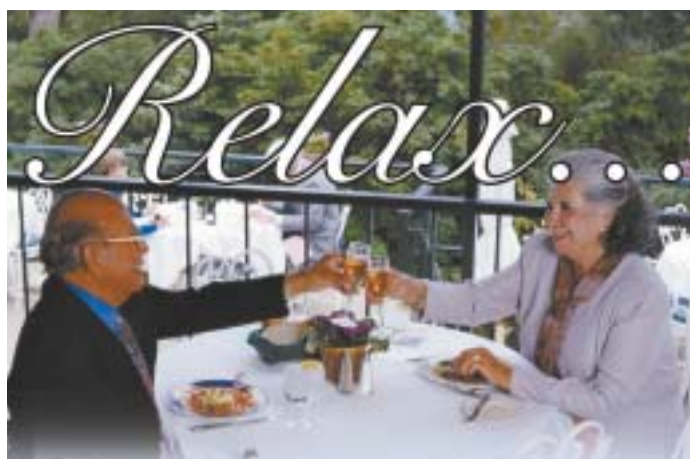
A fee of £50 to £150 per week.

A weekly allowance to cover the cost of caring for the child.

We will train and support you and you will have a supervising social worker to offer you support and guidance.

If you would like to find out more about fostering children like Jane, please call Stockton Borough Council's Child Placement Team on 01642 397212 and ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker.

Give a Child a Chance



Relax

Enjoy a delicious meal in minutes in the comfort of your home

Exclusive new menu now available from Wiltshire Farm Foods, your local home meals service, with free delivery to your door.

Wiltshire Farm Foods is a local family run company offering an even wider range of frozen ready meals than ever before, including

the exclusive apertivo Luncheon and Gourmet ranges. With a delicious range of over 150 complete dishes, you can enjoy a different meal every day! They are easy to prepare in a conventional oven or microwave and come in china white plastic trays. Prices start from around as little as £1.75 for a main course and dessert.

Why not try our Trial Pack for £5

Call us for further information and advice
01642 643999



For your free copy of the new 2001 colour brochure
FREEPHONE
0800 773 773



STOCKTON BUSINESS CENTRE



- 24 hours access and security
- Free parking
- Fully equipped resource centre
- Free business advice and counselling
- Meeting and conference rooms
- Easy in – Easy out



Call 01642 606066 for further information

Stockton Business Centre, 70 Brunswick Street, Stockton-on-Tees
 Email: Enquiries@StocktonBusinessCentre.org
www.StocktonBusinessCentre.org

Bringing up children on your own?
 Need a helping hand?

The line gets longer of people helped
 into work through
 New Deal for Lone Parents



A New Deal for Lone Parents Adviser can show you how much better off
 you'll be in work, using a range of helpful financial benefits.
 They can also give you help with jobsearch and
 the training you need to get a job.

Call into your local Jobcentre and make an appointment today
 Alternatively call freephone
 0800 868 868 or visit our website at: www.newdeal.gov.uk

*new deal
 for lone parents*



SELF-EMPLOYMENT WORKSHOPS

**Tuesday & Thursday Evenings
 6.00pm to 8.30pm
 at the
 City Centre Training Offices
 74-76 Skinner Street, Stockton**

FREE TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE
 BOROUGH OF STOCKTON-ON-TEES

- **Learn business skills** •
- **Talk to the experts** •

**If you are employed, unemployed or already have started a
 business we would like to help!**

TO RESERVE A PLACE TELEPHONE LYNSEY ON
01429 862333



Beat flu, use a jab.

Flu isn't like the common cold. It can put you in hospital or even kill.
 There's now a free Flu jab ready and waiting for anyone 65 and over,
 as well as those in at risk groups. If you're unsure contact your local
 surgery, or NHS Direct on 0845 46 47 or visit www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
 Don't let your job go to waste.

GET THE RIGHT TREATMENT.

Those at risk include people with a chest or heart
 condition, kidney failure, diabetes or any other
 serious medical condition.



Poole House, Stokesley Road, Nunthorpe, Middlesbrough TS7 0NJ

At Your Service

All about your Council Tax



Did you know we offer the following services?

'Talking Bill' Service

If you have difficulty reading or understanding the letters or bills we send you, you can register for our 'Talking Bill' service. We will then telephone you to explain your Council Tax account before we send anything through the post to you.

Home Visits

Home visits are available if you are elderly or housebound and have a problem with your Council Tax account which you would like to discuss in person with a member of staff.

Saturday Morning Opening







Our Council Tax Payment offices at 100 Queensway, Billingham, 2 Appleby House, Thornaby and 1/2 Macmillan Chambers, Prince Regent Street Stockton are open every Saturday morning from 9.00am till 12.00 noon.

Payment by Debit Card over the Telephone

Take advantage of this facility to save yourself peace of mind and considerable time and effort. Ring us on (01642) 397108 with your debit card and Council Tax details.

SERVICE STANDARDS

The details below show what we achieved between April 2000 and March 2001

Targets	Achievements
 <p>Telephone calls will be responded to in 5 rings and all members of staff will give their names.</p>	<p><i>We achieved 99.7% of monitored calls within target time.</i></p>
 <p>Letters and emails will be answered in 8 working days. 2001/2002 target is 7 working days</p>	<p><i>We answered 99.7% of monitored letters within target time.</i></p>
 <p>If you visit our office someone will see you within 5 minutes.</p>	<p><i>We saw 100% of our customers at Kingsway House within 5 minutes.</i></p>
 <p>If we need to make changes to your account, we will send you a new bill within 12 working days of the date we receive information. 2001/2002 target is to issue 85% of calls within 10 working days and the remainder within 12 working days</p>	<p><i>We achieved 100% of monitored accounts within target time.</i></p>
 <p>We will deal with all payments quickly.</p>	<p><i>Payments made at our cash offices or by standing order/direct debit appear on accounts the following day. Payments made by Debit Card over the telephone take only one day to appear on your account.</i></p>
 <p>We will endeavor to achieve 100% accuracy when producing amended and initial bills to ensure the council tax charges is correct</p>	<p><i>98.4% of bills checked were correct</i></p>

Tell us what you think!

Please tell us your views on the service we provide. Is there anything that concerns you about our service. Have you any suggestions which may help improve the service you receive?

What are your views on our targets for service delivery? Do you think they are too low? If you have any comments please contact the Council Tax Customer Services Office at the address below.

Finance Department Council Tax Office

PO Box 410, Kingsway House, West Precinct, Billingham TS23 2YD

Tel: (01642) 397108 • Fax: (01642) 397051 • Minicom: (01642) 397107 • Email: council.tax@stockton.gov.uk

We have produced a wide range of operational targets and have listed below those which we consider to be most important.

Targets	Achievements
To collect 96.2% of total Council Tax outstanding for 2000/2001 before 31 March 2001	<i>We collected 94.7% of Council Tax for 2000/2001 at 31 March 2001</i>
To promote the availability of reductions in respect of discounts, exemptions and disabled relief.	<i>Information leaflets are available in English, Urdu, braille, large print audio tape and floppy disk</i>
To issue application forms for reductions within 2 working days of request.	<i>We achieved this</i>
To inspect empty properties at least every 3 months	<i>We achieved this</i>
To issue any requests for refunds within 5 working days. We can arrange an urgent refund for you within 2 working days.	<i>We achieved this</i>
To respond to complaints within 5 working days.	<i>Being achieved.</i>
To send a follow up questionnaire after responding to a complaint to assess customer satisfaction with the way the matter was dealt with.	<i>We achieved a level of satisfaction of 70%</i>
To review every account at least 10 times per year to identify whether recovery action is appropriate.	<i>We achieved this</i>
To issue requests for financial information within 8 working days of a liability order being granted to ensure the correct course of action is taken.	<i>We achieved this</i>



We are committed to providing the highest standard of service. We do, however, appreciate that there may be times when you wish to discuss a problem or even make a complaint. To enable you to do so quickly and easily, we have introduced our own leaflet entitled **"Putting Things Right"**. The leaflet explains the various ways in which a complaint can be made, either in writing, by phone or in person. It also lets you know what

happens after your complaint has been received. **Should you wish to obtain a copy of our leaflet, please contact the Customer Services Office on (01642) 397108 or visit one of our Payment and Enquiry Offices based in Billingham, Thornaby or Stockton town centres.**

PUTTING THINGS RIGHT

Ward Surgeries

29th September - 31st December 2001

BISHOPSGARTH WARD (STOCKTON) 6.30PM - 7.30PM

9th October Fairfield Infants School
13th November Bishopsgarth School
11th December Fairfield Infants School

COUNCILLORS S. HALL TEL: 654895
W. WOODHEAD TEL: 584409

BLUE HALL WARD (STOCKTON) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

10th October Norton United Reform Church
24th October Frederick Natrass School
14th November The Forge Community Centre
28th November Norton United Reform Church
12th December Frederick Natrass School

COUNCILLORS M. FRANKLAND TEL: 552667
MRS K. NELSON TEL: 397921

CHARLTONS WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6.30PM - 7.30PM

8th October Cowpen Hall
12th November Clarences Enterprise & Training Centre
10th December Cowpen Hall

COUNCILLORS MRS A. MCCOY TEL: 533554
J. MCCOY TEL: 533554

EGGLESCLIFFE WARD 6.00PM - 7.00PM

16th October Egglescliffe Parish Hall
13th November Egglescliffe Community Centre
18th December Egglescliffe Parish Hall

COUNCILLORS J. ATKINSON TEL: 782292
J. FLETCHER TEL: 786456

ELM TREE WARD (STOCKTON) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

2nd October Elm Tree Community Centre
6th November As Above
4th December As Above

COUNCILLOR MRS S. FLETCHER TEL: 786456
Email: sfletcher@cix.co.uk

FAIRFIELD WARD (STOCKTON) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

17th October Fairfield Library
21st November As Above
12th December As Above

COUNCILLORS MRS F. HAWKINS TEL: 863789
MRS J. WADE TEL: 583549

GLEBE WARD (STOCKTON)

1st October The Education Centre 2.30pm - 3.00pm
5th November As Above, 2.30pm - 3.00pm
20th November As Above, 6.30pm - 7.00pm
3rd December As Above, 2.30pm - 3.00pm

COUNCILLORS MRS A. CAINS TEL: 555394
R. CAINS TEL: 555394

GRANGE WARD (BILLINGHAM) 5.30PM - 6.30PM

26th October Windlestone Road Housing Office
23rd November As Above
14th December As Above

COUNCILLORS A. CUNNINGHAM TEL: 551251
M. STOKER TEL: 648069

Email: alexander.cunningham@stockton.gov.uk
Email: mickstoker@aol.com or mick@grangeward.co.uk

GRANGEFIELD WARD (STOCKTON)

8th October Grays Road Institute, 10.00am - 11.30am
22nd October Oxbridge Primary School, 5.45pm - 6.45pm
12th November Grays Road Institute, 10.00am - 11.30am
26th November Oxbridge Primary School, 5.45pm - 6.45pm
10th December Grays Road Institute, 10.00am - 11.30am

COUNCILLORS T. BEAN TEL: 870110
MRS E. JOHNSON TEL: 673952

HARDWICK WARD (STOCKTON) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

5th October Hardwick Tomorrow Ltd,
Enterprise & Initiative Centre

12th October As Above
19th October As Above
26th October As Above
2nd November As Above
9th November As Above
16th November As Above
23rd November As Above
30th November As Above
7th December As Above
14th December As Above

COUNCILLORS P. ANDREW TEL: 782373
W. NOBLE TEL: 602299

HARTBURN WARD (STOCKTON) 6.45PM - 7.30PM

8th October Elmwood Community Centre
12th November Rosehill Infants School
3rd December Elmwood Community Centre

COUNCILLORS K. LUPTON TEL: 589863
S. SMAILES TEL: 581574

INGLEBY BARWICK WARD

October Safeway, Ingleby Barwick (Dates/Times T.B.A)
November As Above
December As Above

COUNCILLOR MRS J. BEAUMONT TEL: 785304

MANDALE WARD (THORNABY) 12.00 NOON - 1.00PM

13th October The Mandale PH
27th October Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre
10th November Kennedy House
24th November The Mandale PH
8th December Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre
22nd December Kennedy House

COUNCILLORS M. INGRAM TEL: 789372
S. WALMSLEY TEL: 881886

MARSH HOUSE WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6.30PM - 7.30PM

8th October Low Grange Community Centre
12th November North Billingham Methodist Church
10th December Low Grange Community Centre

COUNCILLOR MRS L. APEDAILE TEL: (01740) 645216

MARSH HOUSE WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6.30PM - 7.30PM

11th October North Billingham Methodist Church
8th November North Billingham Methodist Church
22nd November Low Grange Community Centre
13th December North Billingham Methodist Church

COUNCILLOR G. FIELD TEL: 872885

MILE HOUSE WARD (STOCKTON) 7.00PM - 8.00PM

16th October Kiora Hall Youth & Community Centre
15th November Salters Lane Community Centre
18th December Kiora Hall Youth & Community Centre

COUNCILLORS S. COLLIER TEL: 581380
K. LEONARD TEL: 894191

NEWTOWN WARD (STOCKTON) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

12th October Newtown Community Centre
26th October Appleton Road Community Centre
9th November Newtown Community Centre
23rd November Appleton Road Community Centre
7th December Newtown Community Centre
21st December Appleton Road Community Centre

COUNCILLORS P. BAKER TEL: 655607
R. GIBSON TEL: 614482

NORTHFIELD WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

26th October Wolviston Court Community Centre
30th November As Above

COUNCILLORS A. CLARK TEL: 531144
M. WOMPHREY TEL: 555755

NORTON WARD 6.00PM - 7.00PM

12th October Norton Library
26th October Norton Comprehensive School
9th November St. Michael's Club Room
23rd November Norton Library
7th December Norton Comprehensive School
21st December St. Michael's Club Room

COUNCILLORS R. COOK TEL: 890058
S. NELSON TEL: 534417

Email: robert.cook@stockton.gov.uk
Email: steve.nelson@stockton.gov.uk

PARKFIELD WARD (STOCKTON) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

4th October Parkfield Community Centre
11th October Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre
18th October Parkfield Community Centre
25th October Caretakers House, Richard Hind Centre
1st November Parkfield Community Centre
8th November Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre
15th November Parkfield Community Centre
22nd November Caretakers House, Richard Hind Centre
6th December Parkfield Community Centre
13th December Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre
20th December Parkfield Community Centre

COUNCILLORS C. COOMBS TEL: 645759
P. KIRTON TEL: 518461

PORTRACK & TILERY WARD (STOCKTON) 5.00PM - 6.00PM

2nd October Mill Lane Community Centre
9th October Portrack Community Centre
16th October The Community House, Cromwell Avenue
23rd October Frank Wiseman Hall
6th November Mill Lane Community Centre
13th November Portrack Community Centre
20th November The Community House, Cromwell Avenue
27th November Frank Wiseman Hall

4th December Mill Lane Community Centre
11th December Portrack Community Centre
18th December The Community House, Cromwell Avenue
COUNCILLORS D. COLEMAN TEL: 673952
K. SAINSBURY TEL: 605201

PRESTON WARD 6.30PM - 7.30PM

5th October Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe
19th October The Wilson Institute, Long Newton
2nd November Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe
16th November The Wilson Institute, Long Newton
7th December Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe
21st December The Wilson Institute, Long Newton

COUNCILLOR M. CHERRETT TEL: 783491

ROSEWORTH WARD (STOCKTON) 5.15PM - 6.15PM

8th October Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre
12th November Kiora Youth & Community Centre
10th December Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre

COUNCILLORS MRS W. HODGSON TEL: 614208
MISS B. INMAN TEL: 582644

STAINSBY WARD (THORNABY) 6.30PM - 7.30PM

18th October South Thornaby Community Centre
15th November As Above
20th December As Above

COUNCILLORS B. BELLERBY TEL: 763459
M. O' BRIEN TEL: 887353

ST. AIDANS WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6.30PM - 7.30PM

17th October Billingham Youth & Community Centre
14th November As Above
12th December As Above

COUNCILLORS N. TEASDALE TEL: 07803 745808
B. WOODHOUSE TEL: 561899

ST. CUTHBERT'S WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6.00PM - 7.00PM

11th October Billingham Branch Library
8th November As Above
13th December As Above

COUNCILLORS K. DOBINSON TEL: 564669
MRS J. O' DONNELL TEL: 559717

VICTORIA WARD (THORNABY) 6.15PM - 7.15PM

4th October Queens Street Community Centre
1st November As Above
6th December As Above

COUNCILLOR MRS A. NORTON TEL: 611902

VICTORIA WARD (THORNABY) 2.00PM - 3.00PM

19th October Thornaby Library, Westbury Street
16th November As Above
21st December As Above

COUNCILLOR A. HOBAN TEL: 633546

VILLAGE WARD (THORNABY) 4.30PM - 5.30PM

8th October Thornaby Pavilion
12th November As Above
10th December As Above

COUNCILLOR MRS E. CRAGGS TEL: 896378

VILLAGE WARD (THORNABY) 11.00AM - 12.00 NOON

18th October Thornaby Central Library
15th November As Above
20th December As Above

COUNCILLOR MRS J. KITCHEN TEL: 761855

WHITTON WARD

2nd October Manor House, Stillington, 6.30 - 7.00pm
13th November Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles, 7.00 - 7.30pm
30th November Wolviston Court Community Centre, 6.00 - 7.00pm

3rd December The Chapel School Room, Carlton, 7.00 - 7.30pm
4th December Manor House, Stillington, 6.30 - 7.00pm
COUNCILLOR F. SALT TEL: (01740) 630771

WOLVISTON WARD (BILLINGHAM) 7.00PM - 8.00PM

11th October The Common Room, Wolviston High St
8th November High Grange Community Centre
13th December The Common Room, Wolviston High St

COUNCILLOR MRS S. CORR TEL: (01740) 644339

YARM WARD 6.00PM - 6.30PM

9th October Levensdale Primary School
13th November Kitchen Room, Community Centre,
Layfield Primary School

11th December Challoner House
COUNCILLORS B. JONES TEL: 576855
MRS M. SIMPSON TEL: 750114

MP'S 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.

Don't lose your right to vote

IMPORTANT:

The Electoral Register relates to where you are living on **15th October 2001**.

MAKE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED:

- You can only vote at elections if you are registered.
- If you do not appear on the electoral register it may affect any credit or banking applications.

The new Register will be published on 1st December 2001 and copies will be on view in Stockton's Municipal Buildings, Central Library and all other libraries within the Borough.

The closing date for applications for the next rolling registration is 12th December, coming into effect from 2nd January 2002.

WHY NOT VOTE FROM HOME?

Did you know that anyone on the Electoral Register can vote by post?

If you would like details on how to vote by post or proxy, or for an application on how to register, please contact the Electoral Registration Office on

(01642) 393939.





Remember, Remember 5th

STOCKTON FIREWORKS PARTY
& CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON

Monday 5th November 2001

Riverside & High Street, Stockton-on-Tees