



Stockton Council's Award Winning Community Magazine - Spring 2004

# NEWS





P

SCHOOL

HOLIDAY

L

ACTIVITIES

O

For Young People  
aged 3-16 years

R

For Further

Information contact:

Sports Development

E

Tel: (01642) 526695

or visit our website:

[www.stockton.gov.uk/sportsdevelopment](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/sportsdevelopment)



Don't miss out on great savings on a wide range of sporting and leisure activities in the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees. Apply for your Stockton Leisure Card today!

The following benefits are available to all card holders:

- Discounted prices for activities listed at participating centres.
- 8 days advance booking of facilities.
- Cards may be used as a deposit against equipment hire at participating centres.
- Discounted prices and special offers from Partners in Leisure.
- Free spectator entry to all participating centres.
- Discounts on sport development coaching programmes.

#### USE THE CARD AT THE FOLLOWING CENTRES

Splash	(01642) 393900
Stockton Sports Centre	(01642) 607994
Billingham Forum Leisure Complex	(01642) 551381
Thornaby Pavilion	(01642) 760971
Thornaby Swimming Pool	(01642) 616727

#### DISCOUNTED PRICES ALSO AVAILABLE FROM PARTNERS IN LEISURE

Wolviston Football Club  
Castlegate Quay Watersports Centre  
Forum Theatre  
Stockton Museums Service  
Skinnergate Cycles Ltd.  
Billingham Synthonia Cricket Club  
Preston-on-Tees Cricket Club  
Stockton Cricket Club



For more details contact:

**Trevor Massey on (01642) 526690**

Or Email: [trevor.massey@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:trevor.massey@stockton.gov.uk)

or visit our website:

[www.stockton.gov.uk/sportsdevelopment](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/sportsdevelopment)



# Regeneration progress for Stockton town centre

Consultants studying ways of ensuring a prosperous future for Stockton town centre are to show their plans to the public.



Stockton Council and Stockton Renaissance jointly commissioned property consultants last year to look at the town centre and recommend short- and longer-term action that will ensure it can enjoy economic regeneration and future success. Now the team, led by consultants Drivers Jonas, is making significant progress after its members presented their initial thoughts on the issues that are facing the town centre to a public meeting in January.



The consultants are now developing these into a wide range of ideas which will form the basis of a strategy for the centre, due to be unveiled in a public exhibition at the Arc on 5 May.

## High Street

Stockton's High Street is identified as the focus for town centre activity. However, the consultants feel its different activities (such as public transport, the market and retailing) could co-exist more effectively together and they will be looking at ways to make the High Street work better for all users.



## The Market & Shopping

The consultants will be considering ways of improving the Market, which has historically been known as 'the Queen of the North'.



The consultants have also been considering retail provision in the town and concluded that there are areas where this can be improved. In particular, they will be looking at opportunities for food retailing and the provision of more coffee shops/pavement cafes, both of which are under represented in the town.

## Riverside

The River Tees was identified as another feature that sets Stockton apart from other towns in the region. For this reason, the consultants confirmed the view that the riverside should become more integrated with the town, becoming a focus for leisure activities. Possible solutions include improved landscaping, traffic calming measures and better linkages with the town centre.

## Culture, Leisure and Entertainment

Linked to each of these areas is the role of Stockton Town Centre as a place to enjoy. The consultants have recognised the opportunity to make Stockton a place for leisure and entertainment, through making the most of the riverside environment and encouraging town centre living.

## Come and learn more

The strategy now being developed by the consultants will form the basis of an exhibition at the Arc, Dovecot Street, on 5 May.

This will include a wide range of their ideas for making the town centre a better place to visit, shop, work and relax.

Everyone will be welcome at the exhibition, which is open from 12 noon until 7pm, and the consultants will be on hand to answer questions, along with Council representatives. If you can't make that date, the displays will remain on view at Arc until Monday 10 May.

# Sir Steve's visit launches Year of the Tees

As Stockton News went to press it was confirmed that Sir Steve Redgrave, (pictured) is coming to Stockton as part of a great weekend for rowing enthusiasts.

The five times gold medal Olympian will be here for the Steve Redgrave Tees Challenge on Sunday May 23 - a fantastic rowing event hosted by Stockton Council on the River Tees.

The event will form the launch pad for 'The Year of the Tees', a 12 month celebration of events on the river, backed by Stockton Renaissance, which will promote leisure and regeneration opportunities on this stretch of the river.

Sir Steve will visit the Castlegate Watersports Centre, where he will meet youngsters from rowing clubs in the area.

The event will complete a fantastic weekend of watersports on the River Tees over Friday, Saturday and Sunday 21 - 23 May.

This opens at the Castlegate Watersports Centre on Friday 21 May with a charity event in aid of Daisy Chain, a local charity, which helps children with autism.

The Tees Regatta - one of the region's leading watersports events - takes place on Saturday 22 May.

Organised by Tees Rowing Club with support from the Amateur Rowing Association and Stockton Council, the Regatta is expected to attract more than 300 rowers.

Tees Rowing is an open club and anyone interested in becoming involved can log onto [www.teesrowingclub.co.uk](http://www.teesrowingclub.co.uk)

Keep a look out in local press for more details.



## Freda is a 'hit' with youngsters

One little girl is so enthralled with 'Freda the Frog', Stockton Council's recycling mascot, that she was inspired to write a song in her honour, which is now firmly ingrained on a CD.

After regularly logging on to Freda's website, seven year old Marina Josephina Gears of Stillington, near Stockton, woke up one morning with a song in her heart and wrote it down quickly - lyrics and tune - all about Freda.

Marina Josephina's dad accompanied her on guitar and then sent a recording on cassette tape to Stockton Council of his daughter singing the song about Freda and the issues of recycling and rubbish.

Freda was so enthralled with the tape that it was decided to produce a CD. She will be using it wherever possible to promote her message about recycling, litter and caring for the Borough - the song can also be heard on her website.

The CD is available to download from the internet [www.fredathefrog.co.uk](http://www.fredathefrog.co.uk) or it can be bought for £1.50 by calling Stockton Council's Waste Management office on (01642) 527290.

Freda also inspired 10 year old Sandy Harrison from Roseworth Primary School to write a poem for which she won £25 worth of W H Smith vouchers.

*Recycling is a good thing to do  
It cleans up the environment for  
me and you*

*Paper, magazines and old books  
Get taken away in great big trucks  
Freda Frog and her crew*

*Teach you recycling is great to do  
Freda Frog is nice and green*

*She's bright, kind and very clean*



Marina Josephina proudly shows Freda her new CD (picture courtesy of Darlington & Stockton Times)

## Half fare for 16-19s

A new card means that all the Borough's 16-19 year olds can now travel half fare, thanks to the extension of Stockton Council's Pathfinder scheme.

The six-month trial scheme is open to anyone born between September 1984 and August 1987. Since 1 March, all they need is a £5 Pathfinder pass.

The scheme was previously open only to young people attending college but the Council hopes that half price fares will encourage more of them to use buses to access jobs and training opportunities. It will review the scheme towards the end of the trial

To obtain a Pathfinder pass, visit the new Stagecoach Travel Centre on Stockton High Street - you must have proof of age and evidence that you live in Stockton Borough (eg an official letter).

Valid until 31 August, Pathfinder passes can be used on most Stagecoach, ARRIVA, Leven Valley and Compass Royston services in the Stockton, Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland areas.

# Training success

It's always good news to hear that someone's found a job and, thanks to Stockton Council's Training and Employment Services (TES), many people have been able to look forward to a great future.

Matthew Porter is one of these. Leaving school in June 2001, he enrolled at college and, despite gaining units toward a GNVQ level 2 in IT, finding a job proved difficult.

With the help of his New Deal adviser and a personal assessment from a TES tutor, Matthew began a placement at Jewsons in Stockton, gaining valuable skills and experience in warehousing.

After following an agreed training plan and a temporary job with Argos, Matthew was delighted to take up a permanent position with NIFCO UK.

He said: "After all this time, to be offered one job was great, but two was brilliant! I had been losing hope and would like to thank all of the staff for their guidance and support in helping me find my first job."

Farzana Kossar was initially referred by a Jobcentre plus New Deal Lone Parent Advisor in Middlesbrough and attended an interview to discuss Business Administration training with TES.

Farzana's aspirations were discussed and her experience assessed before Pelcombe Training Company offered her a work placement in Middlesbrough. Her qualities and skills continued to develop and Farzana was offered a job, which she accepted.

David Douthwaite started his training in 2000 with a General Construction course and, after progressing to Level 2 NVQ Trowel Occupations, he was employed by local builder Steve Thornton.

Michael Dawson began training in 2002 and also successfully completed a similar NVQ this January. He too is now employed, by builder Allan Tott.

These are only some of the success stories – there are many more. If you would like to know more about Stockton Council's Training and Employment Services, please call (01642) 415041.



Matthew Porter going for success



David Douthwaite (right) with Steve Thornton (left)



Michael Dawson (right) with Alan Tott (left)

## John Dyson

**An Honorary Alderman of the Borough of Stockton, Mr Dyson died in hospital after a short illness on 3 February, aged 80.**

A Councillor for 40 years, John Dyson represented the Parkfield Ward of Stockton and was Mayor in 1974/75. He did not stand for election to the Council in 1999 and was made an Alderman in 2000.



Former Stockton Mayor, John Dyson.

## New Gardens for cremated remains

**A new Cremated Remains Garden is taking shape at Oxbridge Lane Cemetery, with planting completed and planning approval given to place a sculpture at the heart of the garden.**

County Durham artist Graeme Hopper designed the central feature and has also been working closely with students from Grangefield School to produce designs for four benches to be placed in the garden. Construction of the five-metre high centrepiece is progressing and the bench designs are being transformed into comfortable seating for visitors to the garden.

"I don't know of any other cemetery where commissioned artwork has been used in this way," said Bereavement Services Officer Alan Gibson. "The completed garden will be something that the local community will be proud of."

Work is also starting in Egglecliffe Cemetery to create a new garden for cremated remains. No artwork is

planned here but the design will be in tune with the rest of the cemetery.

With Cremated Remains Gardens already at Billingham, Durham Road and Thornaby cemeteries, the new gardens mean that graves for cremated remains are available in each of the Borough's five cemeteries.

Graves in these Cremated Remains Gardens are suitable for the burial of two sets of cremated remains, side by side, with an area for a small memorial vase at the head.

"These are just some of the types of grave available in our cemeteries," Alan added. "Bereaved families often have more choices than they might have imagined. Our staff are always pleased to offer advice and guidance on burial or any other concerns relating to our Cemeteries"

For further information, call: (01642) 527341/527342 or email: [bereavement.services@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:bereavement.services@stockton.gov.uk)

## Students and staff enjoy new facilities



Tom Dye and Eloise Poole have been offered conditional places to read Law, Tom at Queens' College, Cambridge and Eloise at Hertford College, Oxford.

**Stockton Sixth Form College's latest £1 million expansion with ten new classrooms and state-of-the-art information technology facilities is just part of an ongoing programme to provide students with a first class opportunity to study in an environment that meets the needs of the 21st Century, according to its Principal.**

The additional Maths and English classrooms are all part of a rolling programme of improvements, which last year involved a £650,000 scheme to refurbish kitchens, student common room facilities and the provision of a new teaching block.

In 2003/04, £350,000 was set aside for additional cutting edge information technology throughout the college and now 99 per cent of classrooms have multimedia computers and data projectors giving access to the Internet. Last year students achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in IT studies.

Principal Martin Clinton said: "We are extremely proud of our outstanding academic achievements which resulted in a 98 per cent pass rate for A level students last year and 96 per cent for those mixing A levels and vocational

programmes. And two of our students have been offered conditional places at Oxford and Cambridge Universities, which is an all round cause for celebration.

"But this is a part of the picture. All sorts of activities are undertaken in and out of college and our track record competing in sports events across the country is very impressive."

Mr Clinton describes this as one of the most exciting phases in the history of the College and is delighted to see students and staff using the new IT facilities so well.

Last year he embarked on a recruitment mission to China and is now looking forward to high flying students coming over to take A levels at Stockton Sixth Form College.

"When Chinese students come to live in Stockton there is no doubt in my mind that we will be flying the flag for the North East," he said. "The spin off will be a boost to the local economy, putting the area firmly on the map.

"What these students will see is staff and students working together in partnership to achieve success – and that commitment is ongoing."

## Workers score for charities

Council employees have netted a tidy sum for local charities in a football tournament. Warren Barnett organised the five-a-side event at the Vida Teesside Sports Centre at Preston Farm, raising £375 for CenturyFM's Light Up A Child's Life Christmas Fund. Steve McGill, from the Princes Avenue Children's Home, and Emma McGill, from Orange, covered the cost of the evening.

---

## VDA returns to its roots

**The Stockton Voluntary Development Agency (VDA) is returning to its roots following a new start.**

The service wants to forge new links with similar voluntary groups to deliver a more effective service and re-establish the VDA as a force for change in the voluntary sector.

The VDA provides a participative service for the voluntary sector, focusing on volunteer development, training, advice and information and representation.

---

## Teaming up for sports success

**Martin Smyth is proving an inspiration to the Borough's up and coming hockey players.**

Martin, Sports Co-ordinator for Stockton Deanery Excellence in Cities Zone, coaches hockey for youngsters in Zone primary schools, giving pupils who show a talent for the sport a head start when they continue hockey training at Our Lady & St Bede's.

His work addresses two Zone priorities – providing a seamless transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 and developing gifted and talented pupils.

New telephone numbers are being introduced across Stockton Council – but key numbers like the 393939 switchboard will stay

# New numbers ring the changes

**Many Stockton Council telephone numbers are changing as engineers install a new phone network designed for the electronic age.**

New numbers in the range 01642 526000 to 528999 are taking the place of most of those in the 35XXXX, 39XXXX and 41XXXX series. A small number of existing key numbers will be retained (see opposite) – including the main 393939 switchboard line.

The new system will not only allow users of Council services to benefit from fast telephone, internet and IT connections, it will also reducing the authority's estimated future costs by up to £2.5million.

Roll-out began in December and has already taken in offices at Municipal Buildings, 16 Church Road, Sun Street, Cowpen Depot and, in Billingham, at the Council Offices plus Kingsway, Queensway and Wynyard House.

Other buildings are being steadily brought into the new network, with

most main sites due to be completed by May and smaller, outlying sites linked up by December 2004.

Ian Miles, the Council's Head of ICT, said that everything is being done to make the changeover easy for callers. "The changes don't involve the main switchboard number but will mean changes for people calling direct to extensions," he/she said. "The most important and busiest numbers are being retained – the various emergency contact lines and the 391959 Care For Your Area number, for example.

"And where a number is published in BT's public Phone Book, there will be a recorded message or divert in place for several months.

"Anyone in any doubt can still call 393939 or look on our website – [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk) – to find out direct lines."

After the new numbers go live, the old numbers will remain in use for one month before becoming redundant.

## New numbers for key services >>>

Opposite are the new telephone numbers for our principal services – all of these are now operational. However, the Council has around 2,500 telephone lines so, if the service you are looking for is not shown here, please call our main switchboard, which will continue to operate on the existing 393939 number.

### Faster link connects services

The new electronic network is part of the SNIP project (Stockton Network Integration Project) being introduced as part of a seven-year partnership between Stockton Council and NextiraOne UK to help the authority modernise the way it delivers services and makes them available electronically.

In recent months it has been progressively linking together all 2,500 of the Council's existing internal telephone users and computer users. More than 180 Council sites will be included, including the smaller and remoter locations such as countryside park centres.

Callers can now also leave voicemail messages with the new system, which allows faster, more reliable access to the Council's IT network. This will bring greater capacity and reliability for the computer systems which provide services to the public, as services are increasingly offered on-line to local people.

Facilities such as the Council's website – [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk) – and the ability to pay bills or access services by computer will all benefit.

Ultimately, the new network will enable new ideas to be explored, such as the next generation of video links and additional CCTV connections.

### A – Z of services

Watch out for a new A-Z guide to all Stockton Council services, to be published in May and delivered to households across the Borough. An A-Z also appears on our website – [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)



Note: the area code for all numbers is 01642 unless shown

Service	Old Number	New Number	Service	Old Number	New Number
Main Council Reception, Municipal Buildings	393939	No change	Housing allocation enquiries	393827	527961
<b>Environment</b>			Homes To Go	393870	No change
Air Quality Bulletin	391134	No change	Urban Renewal	391117	526688
Service Stockton Reception, Sun Street, Thornaby	393639	527270	<b>Libraries</b>		
Care For Your Area Services	391959	No change	Billingham Library	397595	527895
Civic Amenity Site	393662	527290	Egglescliffe Library	391840	527958
Waste Disposal/Incineration	391150	526579	Fairfield Library	391750	527962
Energy Advice Centre	391186	528143	Ingleby Barwick	750767	No change
Cowpen Lane Depot	391929	528382	Norton Library	397591	528019
Commercial Refuse	391958	528256	Priority Services (incl. mobile/housebound service)	397597	528043
<b>Planning &amp; Business Development</b>			Roseberry Library, Billingham	397600	528084
Business Development	391251	526025	Roseworth Library	397604	528098
Stockton Business Centre	391350	527933	Stockton Central Library	393999	526522
Building Control Enquiries	391279	526046	Stockton Open Technology Centre	393997	528023
Planning Enquiries	391298	526062	Stockton Reference Library	393994	528079
Land & Property	397800	No change	Thornaby Central Library	391610	528117
<b>Education</b>			Thornaby Westbury Street Library	393987	528150
Adult Education Service	393505	526416	Yarm Library	391843	528152
Adult Education (Billingham Office)	397335	527901	<b>Leisure Centres, Museums, Galleries</b>		
Adult Education (Kiora Hall)	393575	528011	Billingham Art Gallery	397590	527911
Grants & Awards	393526	526608	Billingham Forum Leisure Centre	551381	No change
Sure Start	393590	528072	Billingham Forum		
Education Centre, Norton	397329	527665	Theatre Box Office	551389	No change
Youth Service	393482	526398	Green Dragon Museum	393938	527982
	393502	526413	Preston Hall Museum	781184	No change
General Enquiries	393480/1	526396/7	Splash, Stockton	393900	527272
<b>Health &amp; Social Care</b>			Stockton Sports Centre, Tilery	607994	No change
First Contact	415030	No change	Thornaby Pavilion	760971	No change
Emergency Duty Team (out-of-hours)	631123	No change	Thornaby Pool	616727	No change
Main reception, Alma House	393339	No change	<b>Countryside Visitor Centres</b>		
Billingham reception	397139	No change	Billingham Beck Valley Park	397609	No change
Ideal House, Thornaby, reception	391634	No change	Clarences Community Farm	391975	No change
Allensway Centre	391537	527892	Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park	415225	No change
Alma Centre	391485	527407	River Tees Rangers	788907	No change
Blenheim House	391535	527923	Wynyard Woodland Park	01740 630011	No change
Customer complaints (H&SC)	391516	527521	<b>Benefits, etc</b>		
Disabled Children's Team	393426	527791	Benefits – Housing & Council Tax	393829	No change
Hartburn Lodge	391700	527994	Welfare Rights	397170	No change
Lanark Close	391705	527841	<b>Council Tax &amp; Payments</b>		
Learning Disability Service (Adults)	393432	527794	Council Tax enquiries	397108	No change
Mental Health Day Services	393419	527882	Cash Payments Offices:		
Parkfield Hall Day Care Centre	393410	528028	Stockton (Municipal Buildings)	393250	526383
Parkside Day Centre (Elderly)	397287	527647	Billingham		
Parkside Day Centre (Mental Health)	397288	527648	(c/o Town centre housing office)	397122	526848
Parkview	393428	528029	Thornaby (Appleby House)	391500	528114
Princess Avenue	393416	528038	24/7 Payments Line	397078	No change
Rosedale House	391703	528087	<b>Security &amp; Wardens</b>		
Supporting People	354675	No change	Security Service/CCTV/		
Tithebarn Day Centre	393412	527250	Community Wardens	393755	No change
Vulcan Way	391540	528132	Anti-Social Behaviour team	415099	527615
Ware Street Resource Centre	393405	528135	Community Safety Partnership	395342	527616
Youth & Leaving Care Service	393399	527860	Care Call wardens	634768	No change
Youth Offending Team	415538	527601	<b>Other services</b>		
<b>Housing</b>			Catering Service	393666	527295
Housing Centres (Tristar):			Concessionary Travel Passes	397106	No change
Billingham Town Centre	397540	527943	Democratic Services	393079	526196
The Clarences	391970	527846	Dial-a-Ride	415551	No change
Hardwick	393859	527983	Licensing	391160	526558
Norton Grange	397566	528015	Local Land Charges	393146	526319
Ragworth	393845	528052	Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre (main reception)	393990	528046
Stockton town centre (Mun Bldgs)	393737	526445	Register Office – Births, Deaths & Marriages	393155	527720
Tilery	391470	528269	Tourist Information Centre	393936	No change
Thornaby, Brus House	391591	527926	Trading Standards Consumer Advice Centre	391180	527939
Thornaby, Redcar Road	393885	528073	Training & Employment Services	415041	528261
Homeless Service	393827	527942	Viewpoint/Youth Viewpoint	393007/11	No change
Tristar Repairs Call Centre	393684 393704 393708 393723	527291 527394-6	<b>Minicom Numbers (for use by text phones only)</b>		
<b>Emergency out-of-hours repairs (TriStar Homes)</b>	0800 174491	No change	Benefits	393806	No change
Homeless Section	393748	526681	Council Tax Enquiries	397107	526844
			Health & Social Care – First Contact	415017	No change

## Mentors provide support for pupils

Learning Mentors are giving a helping hand to secondary school pupils across Stockton Borough.

Based at schools in the Borough for the past three years, the mentors offer individual and group support to young people to help them reach their full potential. Mentors motivate and encourage young people to learn more effectively and have helped them raise attainment, improve their behaviour and school attendance.

Most Learning Mentors work with Year 11 pupils to support them in their last year at school as they take their GCSE exams.

"Over the past three years we have seen the number of Learning Mentors employed in Stockton schools double, and this reflects the positive impact they have made on young people," said Lindsay Sunley, Stockton Council's Link Learning Mentor.

"They are employed from a wide range of backgrounds and have developed new support avenues for young people in secondary schools, such as lunchtime and after-school clubs and study groups."

---

## On track



**The Teesside Small Gauge Railway, at Preston Park reopens at Easter following maintenance to the tracks and engines.**

The line will run from 1 – 4 pm every Sunday until the end of October and also open for extra days during school holidays, public holidays and park events.

A ride on the line costs just 50p. More information can be found on the railway's website [www.communicate.co.uk/ne/tsgr](http://www.communicate.co.uk/ne/tsgr)

# Dragonboat racing comes to Stockton

**Described as 'fast, colourful and noisy', the excitement of international Dragonboat racing comes to the River Tees in Stockton this summer.**

Hosted by Stockton Council and British Waterways over the weekend of July 31 to August 1, around 1,000 men and women from 10 European countries are expected in Stockton for the 2004 Dragonboat European Nations Championships.

40 foot long boats decorated with dragon heads and tails will compete on a course between the Tees Barrage and Princess of Wales Bridge. Each is powered by around 20 paddlers per team, kept in time by a large drum.

The modern sport was first established in the UK in 1987 and today there are around 30,000 participants in the UK, with 50 million worldwide.

As a taster to the main event in July, a National League event takes place in Stockton on June 20.



---

## Ringling the changes at Marriage Room

**A refurbishment of Stockton Register Office's Marriage Room has transformed the facility at Nightingale House, Balaclava Street.**

A patio garden provides an area for photographs with an attractive backdrop as well as a redesigned reception area.

And across at Preston Hall, the Museum Ballroom has also been refurbished and is becoming increasingly popular as a venue for a range of civil ceremonies.

Registration Services Manager Jayne Robins said: "There are so many changes happening in Registration over the next two years it seemed

appropriate to update our office's appearance, in keeping with its status as a Chartermark-awarded frontline service.

"Our Register Office offers much more than traditional services such as wedding ceremonies or issuing birth, death and marriage certificates.

"We already provide civil naming ceremonies for children, and the opportunity to renew your marriage vows. Shortly we will be adding Citizenship Ceremonies and, later in the year pending government legislation, Civil Partnership Ceremonies."

For details of these services please call (01642) 393156 or e-mail [registrars@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:registrars@stockton.gov.uk)

# Old school finds new life

A £2 million transformation is breathing new life into the former Newtown Infants School, Stockton, as it becomes the Newtown Community Resource Centre.

The building, in Durham Road, dates back to 1906 and will be brought well and truly into the 21st century and back into community use and is due to be completed by September.

The impressive project is being managed by a steering group made up of local residents and interested agencies, mainly from the voluntary sector. Support has come from Stockton Council with funding from SRB, ERDF, New Opportunities, Neighbourhood Renewal and Surestart.

The new centre will also accommodate some permanent agencies and will be used for training, meetings, community

activities and rooms can also be rented. A small drop in café and several meeting areas are also planned.

Training and Education will be delivered from the site as well as youth services, child care, IT facilities and information, advice and guidance services.

Jim Kane, from Newtown Community Resource Centre Management Committee said: "This is the culmination of three years of hard work and planning. When complete, the new centre will be a wonderful facility for the people of Newtown and surrounding areas.

"To ensure its success, all the services planned for the building are based on community surveys carried out in December 2001 and February 2003."



# New name for Teesside arts charity

'tees valley arts' is the new name for Cleveland Arts, which was established in 1982 to develop arts in Tees Valley.

The charity will build on its identity as a cultural education agency which focuses on integrating cultural activity in lifelong learning.

Recently tees valley arts was successful in attracting a grant of £311,000 from the European Regional Development

Fund. The funding will be used to launch In:volve, a programme of activity to promote diversity, inclusion and sustainability.

"Our vision is to lead cultural education across the region through developing partnerships for delivering innovative and creative programmes," said Lesley Featherstone, Director of tees valley arts.

For more details contact tees valley arts on (01642) 264651.

# Sporting facilities move a step closer

Better sports facilities are on the horizon across Stockton Borough after a successful £2.4 million bid for New Opportunities Fund (NOF) grants.

Thanks to the cash, work has already started on all weather football pitches in Thornaby and Egglecliffe, the modernisation of the sports halls at Billingham Campus School and the relocation and improvement of the dance and fitness studio at Blakeston Community School.

But it's not just school children who will benefit from the schemes. The new and modernised facilities will be open to the communities around the schools where they are being built.

In January, contractors Blakedown Sport and Play Ltd moved into the play area between Thornaby Community School and St Patrick's RC Comprehensive School to begin its transformation into an all-weather, floodlit pitch.

Expected to be completed in mid May, the pitch will be used for activities ranging from football, five-a-side and hockey to sports training. Both schools will use it, as will before and after school clubs and summer school programmes.

NOF awarded £737,000 toward the the new pitch cost, with the remaining £852,000 funded by the schools and the Single Regeneration Budget.

Work is also expected to begin in May at Billingham Campus School, where a £551,000 NOF award will transform the sports halls. This will create a new dance and fitness studio and an extension to the changing areas, with a new lobby to enable the facility to be used by the community.

With many Stockton Council services facing a budget increase of just 1 per cent in the coming year, we look at

# What's behind your Council Tax bill



**Over the past few weeks, Council Tax bills have been dropping through the letterboxes of households across Britain.**

Initial analysis indicates that, across the country, the level of Council Tax has increased by an average of 6 per cent. Stockton Council's increase is 5.7 per cent – lower than the national average and the lowest in the Tees Valley area. The Council portion of Band D Council Tax is £974.00, the second lowest in the Tees Valley.

So where does the money go? The simple answer is, of course, on providing local services. In Stockton Borough, that will cost around £203 million over the coming year.

The amount we pay in Council Tax represents only a fraction of this. In fact, most – almost three-quarters of it – comes not from our Council Tax but

direct from central Government, funded by general taxes and business rates.

It's also hard to imagine quite what a major operation councils carry out in delivering local services. Providing schools, social care, roads, libraries, community safety, regeneration and a host of other local facilities is a huge and complex business.

For example, the Borough has 32,000 schoolchildren to be taught, 24,000 streetlights to be maintained, 73,000 bins to be emptied, just for starters. Given the scale of things, it's not surprising that it takes more than 8,000 people to achieve these and all the other jobs we do.

For the coming year (like all local authorities, Stockton Council's financial year runs from April to March) many of our services are being limited to an increase in their budgets

of 1 per cent – well below the rate of inflation.

Managers will be expected to cover any additional costs by improving the way their services are delivered, both in quality and in value for money. Fortunately, this is something they have shown a particular skill for in recent years and was a quality that the Audit Commission recognised when it recently rated Stockton as 'Excellent' in a national assessment (see p. 15).

So why is the Council Tax going up by more than this?

The most significant factor is something known as Single Status/Equay Pay. This is a national agreement designed to harmonise employment conditions for blue collar and office workers. It is expected to result in significant wage increases for many of the lowest paid council employees.



An initial estimate shows that this will increase Stockton's Council Tax by approximately 3 per cent, or more than half of the overall 5.7 per cent increase.

The 96,000 tonnes of waste we collectively generate is also a major headache. Although more and more is being recycled, the amount of waste we produce is rising even faster and, over the coming year, this will cost an extra £500,000 to process.

There is good news too. Schools across the Borough will benefit from an extra £4.7 million from the Government. All of this will be passed on directly so that the schools, their pupils and teachers receive the full benefit.

And an additional £4.4 million will help ease the pressure on Health and Social Care services, which face a

continually increasing demand.

However, the Council also collects Tax on behalf of the Police and, from this year, the Fire Service. Both services have advised of rises, the Police increase of 13.8 per cent being the subject of much recent publicity.

Council leaders have expressed disappointment that extra costs associated with the Police and Fire services have added disproportionately to Council Tax bills, particularly in the light of efforts by Stockton Council to minimise our own increase.

With these added in, residents have seen their total bills rise by 6.98 per cent.

Summing up the Council's budget, Corporate Director of Finance Julie Danks said: "We have continued to focus on our priorities of education,

health and Care For Your Area services and we will be doing all we can to ensure we remain amongst the country's leading authorities.

"Our Council Tax increase will continue to be amongst the lowest in the region and, other than the allowance we must make for the cost of Single Status/Equal Pay, we are working broadly within the Government's inflation target."

### • Could you cut your Council Tax bill?

Did you know that a wide range of exemptions and Benefits is available to many people? Some may be eligible for discounts – full-time students and some school-leavers, some carers and care home residents, for example. For details, see the leaflet accompanying your Council Tax bill or call the Benefit Service on (01642) 393829.

# 'It's Going To Work'

Some new faces have been seen around and about on Council 'Care For Your Area' wagons in recent months.

Wayne Hamilton and Gareth Devlin are among a group of young ex-offenders who gained their first taste of paid hard work by clearing rubbish, litter and graffiti in an innovative pilot run by Stockton Youth Offending Service.

Called 'It's Going to Work', the pilot is part funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) with support from Stockton Council.

Scheme manager Shirley Dale said: "These young people got up at the crack of dawn and worked outside in all weathers, pulling their weight with the rest of the teams.

"Their success is a tribute to the efforts they have made. We provided the spark to get them moving. They took it from there."

Other employers have also played a part and David Hill works cleaning lorries, vans and cars for a local valeting company.

Many participants took a City and Guilds NVQ delivered by Redcar and Cleveland College. For most, it is their first qualification and the college praised their success.

16 of those taking part have entered employment, 14 have started an NVQ in Cleaning and Support Services, 11 have completed their NVQ, six have signed up with local training providers and two are on full-time college courses.

Tony Hodgson, Head of the Stockton Youth Offending Service, said: "Our staff wanted to do something a bit more direct to put our service users back on track. Their results in gaining qualifications and holding down work is a testimony to this strategy.

"We can't do it with every ex-offender, we have to be very careful indeed – but the partnerships we have developed with the LSC, employers and the Council in particular, are very encouraging.

"I'm optimistic that with additional resources for this small group of young people, we could get far more

into training or employment than by other means."

Planned activity such as employment, training or education, has been shown to dramatically reduce offending levels in young people.

This project has not only met its aim of moving young people from unemployment into work, education or training. It has also given them an incentive to make a difference in their life by taking control and seeing a future without crime that they can work hard at achieving.

When asked what 'It's Going to Work' has meant to him, Gareth said: "I don't want to lose my job, so I've kept out of trouble. That should answer you."



David Hill



Gareth Devlin



Wayne Hamilton



After serving on Stockton Council for 27 years, former Mayor and Councillor Win Hodgson was awarded Honorary Alderman status in February. The award is made to past councillors who have rendered eminent service to the Council.

Ward councillor for Roseworth until retiring in 2003, Mrs Hodgson chaired the Housing Committee for several years, later becoming Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Safety. She also received an MBE last year for her services to housing.

Another long-serving former councillor, Keith Dobinson, was due to become an Alderman in March.

## Forum ice rink benefits

More people have taken to the ice at Billingham Forum's ice rink since trying out skating on the outdoor ice rink in Stockton's town centre last Christmas.

Despite the demise of the privately-run rink in Stockton, which was beyond the Council's control, the experiences of those who tried ice skating encouraged more people to take part in the activity.

The result was record attendances at Billingham Forum's ice rink over the festive period. Attendances over the Christmas period were up by almost 1,000 and one session alone attracted almost 1,000 skaters. It all shows that people are skating down to the Forum in increasing numbers.

## Modernisation gathers pace

Work is completed on more than 100 homes each week as Tristar Homes' modernisation programme continues.

Tristar Homes, which manages most council-owned housing in the Borough, has an ambitious £100 million, seven-year rolling programme to improve most of its properties in Billingham, Thornaby and Stockton.

Tristar recently opened three showhomes to show tenants the choices they have for new fitments being installed in most council owned properties.



Tony Barrat, left, Tristar Homes Contracts Manager, and some of his team at a new show home.

## Pay up or lose your home

The Board of Tristar Homes has decided to get tough on tenants who fail to pay their rent with the message – pay up or lose it.

Michael Cook, the Head of Housing Management, recognises that from time to time people do get into arrears with their rent and in such cases they will try and help them sort it out.

He said: "As a result, we now have fewer people owing rent than ever before – but there are a number of people who do not pay and, despite our best efforts, treat their rent as a low priority.

"The simple fact is that the more people owe, the less everyone receives in terms of service."

Mr Cook said that popular misguided myths – such as that action will not be taken if a small amount is owed and no-one is evicted – are false.

If anyone is having problems they should talk with their Tenants Services Officer. If they have made an agreement they must stick to it and, if Tristar Homes say they are going to do something, they will.

## Cold comfort for Stockton



Dr Tokes Sangowawa with Mike Chicken

February saw the launch of Stockton Comfort Zone, which continues the pioneering Warm Zone scheme to help people who can barely afford to pay their heating bills.

Around 14,000 households received free insulation or gas central heating in three years through Warm Zone, helping ease the burden of crippling heating bills.

The new project runs for another three years and is jointly funded by Stockton Council and the PCT (Primary Care Trust) with financial backing from Transco and British Gas. Local health professionals will play a major part in identifying those in need.

"Warm Zone unearthed the vast majority of fuel poor households in Stockton but we estimate that about 2,500 people have either slipped through the net, or only recently become fuel poor due to changing circumstances," said Stockton Council Environmental Projects Manager, Mike Chicken.

Dr Tokes Sangowawa, Director of Public Health at North Tees PCT, said: "Now, if one of our patients may benefit from Comfort Zone help, we can refer them direct to the new Environmental Health Community Worker who will provide essential advice on benefits and energy-efficiency as well as accessing any grants that are available for free insulation or central heating. In this way we hope to reduce the number of times these households need to access health services."

## Mars brings art inspiration to pupils

The closest approach of Mars to Earth in 60,000 years inspired Stockton schoolchildren to enter an art competition.

Wynyard Woodland Park Planetarium ran the competition for schools during National Astronomy Week inviting children to send in paintings or drawings for a £25 book token prize. The subject was the surface of Mars after humans have landed.

Oxbridge Primary School Year 5 pupil Jake Walker won the under 11 section while Amy Dix, of Ian Ramsey School's Year 12, won the over 11 age group.

Jake's picture, shown here, the rising sun overshadowing the Beagle 2

spacecraft on the surface of Mars. The spacecraft is charging its batteries through the solar cells folded out like a flower to collect the light of the sun.

Amy's picture is dominated by the huge volcano, Olympus Mons, as the humans watch the arrival of a Mars space vehicle.



## A new beginning for leisure



**Stockton Council's five major leisure facilities will receive a new lease of life when a newly formed management Trust, Tees Active Limited, takes over their management.**

Billingham Forum, Thornaby Pavilion, Thornaby Pool, Stockton Sports Centre and Splash will all become Active Life Centres under proposals from the new company, designed to increase participation in physical activity.

Working closely with Stockton Council, Tees Active will develop the leisure facilities and services in the Borough. Its management board will comprise of representatives of education, health and sports services, together with councillors and local residents.

This exciting new development is planned to go live this spring so look out for more details in the press, Stockton News and your local Leisure Centre.

For further information contact Leisure Services Manager, Steve Chaytor on (01642) 527322 or e-mail [steven.chaytor@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:steven.chaytor@stockton.gov.uk)

## Service wins certification

**The Council's Administration Division achieved the ISO9001:2000 certificate for its quality management system.**

The certificate covers telephone, reception and administration services at Municipal Buildings and Kingsway House; the land ownership, gazetteer and records service; and the in-house design and print and courier services.

# Stockton is an "excellent" council, say government inspectors

**The Audit Commission has named Stockton as one of the country's top performing local authorities.**

Praising the authority's workforce for their part in earning an "Excellent" classification in the annual nationwide Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the Council's Chief Executive George pledged that the authority would not rest on its laurels and would continue to improve.

The rating follows what the Audit Commission describes as "a significant improvement" in local services over the last year.

The Commission says the Council is "forward thinking", with a "confident grasp of its own agenda to meet the needs of the community". Elected members and staff share a common purpose and are "committed to secure improvements for Stockton".

The CPA allows the performance of councils across England to be compared and takes into account the results of other inspections carried out over the year. Details of the Audit Commission findings are shown opposite on page 15.

Stockton is one of just 26 council councils nationwide to rank as "Excellent".

Inspectors rated Education and Care For Your Area cleansing and waste services as "excellent", with housing, libraries, benefits services and some areas of social services also improving.

They say the Council works "very well" with partners to improve the area and has made good progress in making its services available electronically.

Commending Council employees for their part in achieving the success, Mr Garlick said: "This is the result of marked improvements in the quality of our services."

"That in turn is due to the tireless efforts of our workforce, who have modernised and improved the delivery of their services, which is tremendous news for the people who use them.

"Of course, there will always be more for the Council to do and our challenge now is to continue this progress. It is particularly encouraging that the inspectors say we have excellent prospects for further improving the way we work and the services we provide."

## Young people sign up for Award

**Taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award is as popular as ever but it's not just the young people seeking challenges that are needed.**

A number of young people aged 14 - 25 are working their way through the programme at the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Open Award Centre, at Kiora Hall, Ragpath Lane, Stockton. The centre, run by Stockton Council's Youth Service, also needs volunteers to help the young people reach their Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards.

Duke of Edinburgh's Award Officer, June Welch, said: "Volunteers are always welcome. It's not even a regular commitment that we need. Someone might simply offer some support or cast an occasional eye over some needlework, model construction or any of the numerous things being done by

one of our young people to ensure that it meets the Award requirements.

"We need people with a wide range of expertise because the activities the young people choose to do can be so different. Being involved with the programme can be an interesting and enlightening experience."

Each Award includes sections on Service, Skills, Expedition and Physical Recreation.

Duke of Edinburgh Award groups are run in schools, youth clubs and voluntary organisations but the Stockton Youth Service's Open Award Centre offers the chance for young people to embark upon the programme independently of their school or other clubs.

To volunteer or to find out more about the programme contact June Welch on (01642) 397366.

# How your Council has performed

## About your Council

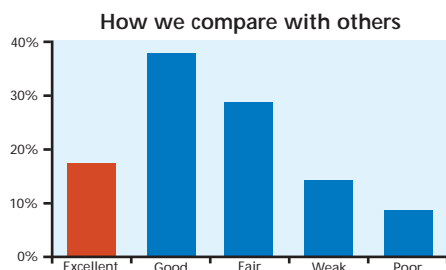
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is the unitary council for your area, providing all your local government services. We employ over 8,000 people to provide services to almost 180,000 residents living in over 78,600 households. For the 2003/04 financial year the Council's budget to deliver local services was £202 million.

Here we show some information on how your Council performed in 2003/04. This includes information on what inspectors have said about the Council and details of how our performance compares with that of other similar councils. Summary information on the Council's budget and expenditure was included in a leaflet which accompanied the council tax bills sent out during March.

## Overall performance

To enable local people to see how well their council is delivering main services in comparison with other local authorities, the Audit Commission gives each council an overall performance rating, or "Comprehensive Performance Assessment". Under this system each council is categorised as either: "Excellent", "Good", "Fair", "Weak" or "Poor", for the way that it serves local people. On this scale Stockton's rating in 2002 was "Good".

**After reassessing your Council's performance in December 2003, the Audit Commission has now rated Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council as "Excellent" - the highest rating that councils can achieve.**



A total of 150 councils were assessed and the graph above shows you the percentage of those placed within each category. 26 councils (17 per cent) were judged "Excellent".

## How well is Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council run?

Our overall "Excellent" classification was made from two separate judgements about how well the Council is run and the quality of main services.

The Audit Commission gave Stockton a score of 4 out of 4 for the way the Council is run, an improvement on the 2002 result when the Council received a score of 3 out of 4.

The Audit Commission also commented that:

- The Council has made significant improvements to local services over the last year
- Overall the Council continues to be very clear about its priorities
- Staff and elected members from all parties are committed to secure improvements
- Strengths continue to outweigh weaknesses
- Stockton has areas where it needs to improve, but it has both the capacity and desire to do so

## How do main services perform?

The Council now provides high-quality education and street cleaning and waste services. Housing, libraries and benefits services have also improved. Social Services have improved in some areas – more older people are now helped to live at home and the educational achievements of children looked after by the Council are rising – but there is room for improvement in other parts of the service.

The Audit Commission measured performance on seven service areas. The table below shows you how services were scored in December 2003 and how this compares with our scores for the previous year. The services which have shown the most improvement are highlighted:

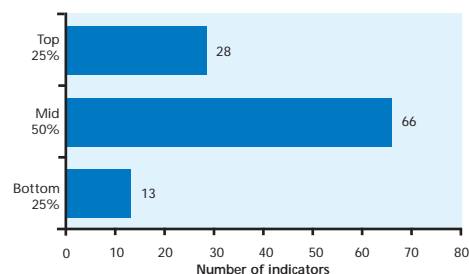
Service Area	2003 result (1 = lowest)	2002 result (1=lowest)
Education	4 out of 4	3 out of 4
Social Care - children	2 out of 4	2 out of 4
Social Care - adults	3 out of 4	3 out of 4
Environment	3 out of 4	3 out of 4
Housing	3 out of 4	2 out of 4
Libraries and Leisure	3 out of 4	2 out of 4
Benefits	4 out of 4	3 out of 4
Use of Resources	4 out of 4	3 out of 4

## National Performance Indicators

Each year all councils collect performance information on a range of "Best Value" performance indicators which are set by the Government. We have examined our performance in 2002/03 against these indicators (excluding financial indicators), and compared our results with those of other councils who provide similar services.

The graph shows the number of Stockton's indicators falling within the top, middle and bottom ranges of performance, compared with all other Unitary and Metropolitan authorities (excluding London Boroughs).

Stockton's performance on Best Value Performance Indicators 2002/03



## Future improvement priorities

Priorities for improvement during 2004-2007 are based on local views. We will continue to take action to improve local services, focusing on:

- Education
- Social Services
- Regeneration of the Borough
- Housing
- Leisure
- Environmental and waste collection services
- Community Safety
- Planning and Building Control

Further information on the Council's improvement priorities is set out in the 2004-2007 Council Plan. (If you would like to obtain a summary version of the Council Plan please contact us at the address below.)

## Your views

To help us find out local views we have a panel of 1,700 residents called "Viewpoint" who are regularly consulted on a wide range of issues. A "Viewpoint" survey conducted in December 2002 showed that overall 64% of residents are very or fairly satisfied with the way the Authority runs things. There was also a marked increase in satisfaction with environmental and "Care for Your Area" services:

- 70 per cent of people are very or fairly satisfied with environmental services
- 87 per cent of people are very or fairly satisfied with the waste collection service

A detailed report on how the Council performs will be published by June and copies will be available in Council offices and libraries. You will also be able to download a copy from our website: [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk). In the meantime if you would like more information on any aspect of the Council's performance, you are welcome to contact us by telephone on (01642) 526087, or by email: [pssu@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:pssu@stockton.gov.uk) or you can write to us at:

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

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## Kate Barber

Talking to people across the Borough is important part of Kate Barber's job at Stockton Council.

As Policy and Performance Standards Officer – Consultation, Kate seeks the opinions of young and old alike to help shape the Council's services and find out what people want from their Borough.

Kate is responsible for running Viewpoint and Youth Viewpoint, the residents' panels for Stockton-on-Tees, which give residents an opportunity to have their say and influence decisions. Surveys are carried out with adults every three months, and every two months for the Youth Panel, which is aimed at youngsters aged from eight to 18 years.

In addition to these regular surveys, she arranges small informal sessions to talk about issues in more depth.

Kate joined Stockton Council three years ago from Gateshead Council and the re-launch of Viewpoint was one of her first jobs. Since then, the panels have gone from strength to strength with 1,600 members of the adult panel and almost 600 on the youth panel.

"We carry out recruitment drives each year and are finding more people wanting to be part of the panel so they can have a voice in what happens," said 28 year-old Kate.



"Getting youngsters involved is vital so we know what young people want to see happening across the Borough. We go into schools and talk in assemblies and classes to explain what Youth Viewpoint is and how they can become involved."

**"We carry out recruitment drives each year and are finding more people wanting to be part of the panel so they can have a voice in what happens"**

Postal surveys sent out to panel members ask about everything from environmental issues and sports and leisure to what events they would like to see organised.

"We do get positive feedback from those involved in the panels and I also work on community engagement to ensure people are consulted on a

very local level," explained Kate.

"We also support all Council departments if they are carrying out consultation and we work with our Local Strategic Partnership and associated voluntary sectors."

Kate also co-ordinates a MORI survey which the Council commissions every two years. Here, face to face surveys are carried out with 1,000 people to determine their views on a whole range of issues that affect people across the Borough.

When Kate is not consulting with local people, she can be found down at the Riverside Stadium, cheering on the Boro. Since moving to the North East, she has adopted them as her team and is now a season ticket holder.

But the League Cup Final is only the second most important date in Kate's calendar this year – she marries fiancé Paul in June.

# Help package for Samsung workers

An extensive aid package is helping Samsung workers find new work after the Korean-based company announced it is ceasing microwave and PC monitor production at its Wynyard plant in April.

Public sector agencies have formed the Samsung Project Group, chaired by Stockton Council Chief Executive George Garlick, to pool their resources and expertise and bring maximum assistance to Samsung employees. Rapid Response Funding has been secured from Government, allowing workers to access a comprehensive package that includes access to training, education and the latest local and regional job opportunities.

A Job Shop at the site is offering a range of opportunities directly to every one of the 425-strong workforce. Job Centre Plus experts are arranging individual counselling sessions with every employee to tailor help to suit their needs.

The workers' skills are expected to stand them in good stead in the employment market. Since the closure announcement, more than 50 regional companies have enquired about taking on Samsung staff and over 80 local employers have posted vacancies at the Job Shop.

Many of the Tees Valley's current 11,000-plus job vacancies require skills similar to those of Samsung employees.

When Fujitsu closed its Newton Aycliffe factory some years ago, similar support saw more than 90 per cent of the workforce gain new work within a year.

Meanwhile, One NorthEast and English Partnerships have held exploratory talks with a company that has signed a deal to buy the buildings and surrounding land. Wynyard Limited – headed by local businessman Chris Musgrave - has an agreement with Samsung to purchase its factory premises and surrounding site.

The Project Group is committed to working with developers to ensure any scheme for the Samsung buildings and land brings the maximum benefits in terms of job creation and quality development. To ensure this, negotiations with developers would include a masterplan approach to develop the site as a whole.

A study of the site's potential is also being carried out, looking at what activities could be developed there and the demand for them. From this, a planning brief will be developed.

The Samsung Project group is led by Stockton Council with assistance from One NorthEast, Job Centre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, Government Office for the North East, Tees Valley Regeneration, Tees Valley Partnership and English Partnerships.

# Stay safe and healthy, learn to swim



World Student Games 100m breast stroke silver medalist, Chris Cook, with Bubble.

**Parents are being urged to make sure their children can swim before heading off on holiday this year.**

The timely advice, from Stockton Council's Tony McGuigan, comes after startling figures show that more than 100,000 children nationwide leave primary schools each year without mastering the basic swimming skills that could save their lives.

And if they are not proficient in the water, there are swimming classes across the Borough at Billingham Forum, Thornaby Pool and Splash that will help.

A new mascot is helping the Council persuade youngsters that swimming is fun. Bubble the Dolphin will soon be launching an incentive scheme to encourage more young people to take up swimming.

Tony said: "Learning to swim could save a child's life. More than that, it's a fun way of staying active. With childhood obesity increasing, swimming is a wonderful way of keeping children fit while the family has a great time. A weekly visit to the pool can have real benefits in many ways."

To find out more about swimming lessons contact Billingham Forum on (01642) 551381, Thornaby Pool on (01642) 616727 or Splash on (01642) 393900.

# Yarm town guide

A new Yarm Town Guide is now available from the Tourist Information Centre, located in Stockton Central Library. The guide will be available nationally in Tourist Information Centres, libraries and hotels. For a copy call in or telephone (01642) 393936.

# Watch you

## Why fraud costs you millions each year

A look at how much fraud is costing you and some of the steps being taken to stop it.

**Wouldn't it be great if taxes and Council Tax bills could be cut at a stroke? They could, too, if it wasn't for dishonest people intent on fraud.**

Your contributions pay for everything the Council or the Government owns or does. Yet every year, fraud costs councils – and you – billions of pounds in Britain, so it's up to all of us to protect these assets from misuse.

Today's technology is really helping councils like Stockton get to grips with targeting fraud. We can now do much more, better and faster, thanks to sharing and matching data with other organisations.

For example, all councils must now, by law, give the Inland Revenue details of anyone issued with licences, receiving grants or benefits, and to whom we have made payments. And, every two years, we match our payroll, pension, housing benefits and rent details with all other councils nationwide.

Many of the country's biggest organisations, including the NHS and private businesses, have joined in to

match their payroll and pension details.

As a result, many people who did not declare changes in circumstances have been found out – including more than 1,000 who were receiving a pension long after their death! Relatives are currently 'helping with enquiries'.

Savings have risen from £19m in 1996 to £75m estimated for 2002.

Stockton, like other councils, also works closely with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) to compare housing benefit and social security records. Our direct computer access to DWP information helps guard against fraudulent claims for Housing and Council Tax Benefit.

Data matching cross-checks of Benefit and Inland Revenue records to find cheats has revealed cases such as the same people claiming Housing Benefits in different areas of the country, involving a surprising variety of individuals – even doctors.

The DWP's 'Targeting Benefit Fraud' campaign uses mock shop window

adverts to ask "Do you want to earn £££s and still sign on?" People checking the ads for some cash-in-hand work find the stark warning that benefit fraud is a criminal act.

Anti-fraud Minister Chris Pond MP said: "Benefit fraud is stealing from the public purse. It's taking money away from where it is needed most – our schools, hospitals and other vital public services."

Cheats face heavy fines and prison sentences if they work and claim fraudulently. The Government aims to half Benefit fraud by 2006 and there were over 32,000 prosecutions and sanctions in 2002/03.

---

**The estimated £2 billion stolen in benefits every year represents £80 from every UK family.**

---

Technology helps, but there will always be those who are one step ahead. This is where our second line of attack



# in your pocket!

comes in. Confidential reporting or 'whistle-blowing' is the most successful means of combating fraud. Over the years, many 'tip-offs' from staff or the public have brought quality information resulting in jail or hefty fines.

Every year in Stockton, millions of pounds are paid out in housing and council tax benefit to those most in need of help towards their housing costs. Most claimants are honest but it's our responsibility to tackle those who are not.

Positive action is making benefit fraud harder. There are stricter controls when new claims are first made – customers must now produce more evidence about their identity or savings, for example. The Royal Mail will not redirect Benefit post and we check all claims, not just when they are new but repeatedly during the time we are paying them.

Some people think insurance fraud is a 'victimless crime'. Not true – the cost of premiums affects everyone and diverts funds from vital services such as health, social services and

education. Yet fraudulent claims are increasing nationally.

A third of all claims against councils may be fraudulent or exaggerated, a new survey shows.

- 55 per cent of fraudulent claims are opportunist but an alarming 35 per cent are premeditated, with councils increasingly the victims of organised crime.
- Around £1 billion each year is paid out to fraudsters; the cost of investigation doubles the figure.
- Some people think councils are easy targets; their fraud means higher council Tax bills and vital public services suffering.

This is where whistle-blowing can really help. If you know someone is deliberately submitting a fraudulent insurance claim, it is your money they are after.

Any information you have may help us. But remember that hearsay alone is not enough; we need hard facts that may have to stand up in court.

If you, as a member of the public, have concerns about the integrity of

council employees or believe neighbours may be making any kind of false claim, you can seek advice from a guide to Responding to Fraud & Corruption. You'll find a copy in every Council main reception area or library, giving some useful tips and details of who to contact.

Councils across the country are wise to the threat of fraud and these are just some of the ways we are working to protect your money. To anyone tempted to make a false claim – if caught you could be arrested, fined or face a prison sentence.

## Let us know

**Stockton Council Internal Audit:**  
tel: (01642) 526362  
email: [internalaudit@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:internalaudit@stockton.gov.uk)

**Housing Benefits:**

tel: (01642) 526303  
email: [benefits.section@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:benefits.section@stockton.gov.uk)

**National Benefit Fraud Hotline**

Tel: 0800 328 6340  
(lines open 7am-11pm daily)  
or report a cheat online on [www.targetingbenefitfraud.gov.uk](http://www.targetingbenefitfraud.gov.uk)

# Campaign for cervical smears

**A cervical smear test every three years is an important part of enjoying a healthy life for women aged 24-64.**

The test detects changes on the cervix (neck of the womb) which, if untreated, may develop into cancer. Treatment for such changes is normally quick, simple and straightforward.

But each year, the uptake in cervical screening is falling by about one per cent. This worrying trend indicates around 1,300 Stockton women may be putting their health and life at risk by not taking a smear test for ten years.

---

# Drama gives road safety message



Drama has helped youngsters from Year 7 to 6th Form across the Borough to learn vital messages about road safety by theatre groups Stopwatch and Ape Theatre Company. Performances are followed by workshops. Pictured here is Stopwatch Theatre Company's production of 'Why did the chicken cross the road?'. If you, or your teachers, would like to know more please call Peter Fleming on (01642) 526737.

# Congratulations to Natasha

Teenager Natasha Pogson has proved a star pupil – and the inspiration behind a specialist resource base.

The decision to establish the base for visually impaired pupils at Northfield School and Sports College came after Natasha's parents requested local education for their daughter, who has been blind since birth.

In November 2001, Natasha transferred to Northfield and 18 months of hard work and determination saw her achieve an A, six Cs and two D grades at GCSE level.

Last year, her hard work was recognised in the Mayor's SMART Awards when she received an award for 'Educational Effort'.

Delighted with her achievements, Natasha's parents have been pleased to see her gain confidence. Her father, Karl, said: "Moving Natasha to Northfield was the best thing we ever did."

After receiving her exam results, Natasha was offered a place at Queen Alexandra College, a specialist FE College in Birmingham where she is now studying for a GNVQ in Business Intermediate Level.



Natasha celebrates receiving her GCSE results

---

# Top gigs for the Tees Valley?

**Tees Valley residents can face quite a distance to travel to see a top rock or pop band, classical concert or other large event.**

With more than 600,000 living here, the area is unusual in not having the large concert halls or Arena type venues seen in cities like Newcastle or Manchester.

It's something that Stockton and Middlesbrough Councils would like to see changed and together they are currently looking at the possibility of having a large-scale venue in the Tees Valley, with a feasibility study to explore the idea.

Consultants are looking at the most appropriate location at the heart of the area, preferably close to the main A66/A19 intersection.

Reuben Kench, Strategic Arts Adviser for Stockton Council, said: "It's a very exciting prospect. We have to be realistic about commercial competition and the impact on other smaller venues but it would be great to think that, one day, we could stage West End musicals and top music concerts here in the Tees Valley."

The report was expected to be completed during March.

## Your chance to catch Festival fever

This year's Stockton International Riverside Festival promises to rival the best ever – and you can be at the very heart of it.

The Music Weekend takes place from 23 – 25 July and the main Street Festival runs from 29 July – 1 August.

Tasty morsels at this year's Festival include a specially commissioned show called the Maharajah's Birthday Party from the British company Nutkhut ('Mischief'), in which the Maharajah promises delicious Indian treats for all his guests.

If your taste buds are adventurous, French band Taraf Goulamas will be offering a serving of freshly cooked snails with every one of their performances.

The Carnival is always one of the real highlights of the Festival – and this year you can take a starring role.

Join a Carnival group and enjoy a couple of months preparing in a fun, creative and exciting atmosphere.

Groups or individuals across Stockton can take part in the final processional piece. No experience is necessary and there will be opportunities to be involved in all artforms from dance to design or performing to costume making.

For more details call Stockton Arts Team on (01642) 526466 or email [arts@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:arts@stockton.gov.uk)

The world is invited to the Festival – so why don't you come too?



## Work begins on Cycleway

The face of Stockton's Riverside is changing with the first phase of the £450,000 Eight Bridges Cycleway linking the North Bank site to Castlegate Quay.

This Stockton Council led project will be completed this spring with joint funding from One NorthEast as part of its Tees Valley Single Programme and the European Regional Development Fund.

The initial stage along Stockton's Riverside will provide a segregated route for pedestrians and cyclists with improved lighting, seating, signage, artwork and landscaping.

The Cycleway is a partnership with Middlesbrough Council and will eventually provide a circular route of the River Tees, linking seven (soon to be eight) bridges from Victoria Bridge in the west to the Transporter Bridge in the east.

## Technology aids blind travellers

A UK first is taking place in Stockton as a major project develops information systems for blind people, thanks to £153,000 of Department of Transport funding.

Run in partnership between Stockton Council, the RNIB and Vodafone, the scheme will equip blind residents with the latest technology to enable them to access information on public transport and travel with confidence.

Blind residents will be provided with mobile 'speakerphones', which convert text to speech, and portable readers using the latest DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) technology to enable them to use fully searchable CDs.

The RNIB will provide assistance and training and work jointly with users and the Council to pioneer conversion of local timetables to DAISY format.

John Kavanagh, Senior Transport Planning Engineer for Stockton Council, said: "It's long been our ambition to provide timetables for blind travellers. Braille is too impractical and not everyone uses it. Tapes simply cannot be searched and updated easily.

"Using DAISY we can provide fully searchable, up-to-date, easy-to-use, low cost timetables on CD."

Stockton and neighbouring Tees Valley authorities have also won funding to provide a Real Time Bus Passenger Information System, which will provide blind travelers with 'live' information on when buses are due through their mobile phones. This system will also be open to other mobile phone users, allowing travellers find out exactly when their bus is due.



George Glass, one of the founders of Stockton's Blind People's Voice, samples the equipment.

# Closing the gates on violence

A new Order to help reduce late-night anti-social behaviour in Stockton town centre is now into well into its 18-month experimental stage.

Since November, traffic has been prohibited from the stretch of Yarm Lane from Prince Regent Street to the

High Street between 10.00pm and 3.00am every Friday and Saturday night, and also on Sunday if it is followed by a Bank Holiday.

To make sure traffic keeps out, gates are closed to provide a physical barrier and the area is supervised by police and monitored by CCTV.



Community Safety Manager, Marilyn Davies with Stockton Police Operations Manager, Superintendent Dave Pickard at the gates on Yarm Lane.

# Stockton wins two national awards

**Stockton's International Family Centre and Stockton Council have scooped national awards for Neighbourhood Management.**

The awards recognise their work with residents to improve public services and regenerate Stockton's Parkfield and Mill Lane area.

Stockton Council was nominated by local residents as Best Supporting Organisation, with the International Family Centre receiving the Cohesion Award for promoting understanding between local community groups.

Sacha Bedding, Manager of Stockton International Family Centre said: "It's great that the Government has recognised all the work we have put in to making Stockton as a whole, and Parkfield and Mill Lane specifically, a place where diversity is not only respected, but welcomed and celebrated.

"This award would not have been possible without the genuine support from our local residents and partner agencies and for that I thank them."

Neighbourhood Manager Janet Tonge said: "I'm really pleased that the hard work put in by both of these local organisations has been recognised. We are looking forward to building on these strong foundations as we move into the next stage of our regeneration programme."

In Neighbourhood Management, local residents and service providers work in partnership to tackle health, jobs and training, crime, raising educational standards and housing and the physical environment.

In 18 months of operation, its successes include reductions in dwelling burglary by 27% and vehicle crime by 34%. Reporting of drug related crime is up 220 per cent and residents feel a renewed trust of the Police.

# Beacon burns bright

**Stockton's position as a 'Beacon Council' has brought prestigious national recognition.**

The Beacon Council scheme is promoted by the Government, which selects a small number of authorities each year as examples of good practice in a particular theme.

Stockton was one of just six nationwide to be chosen for the theme of Rethinking Construction, and was recently singled out in the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) publication "Business Voice".

The magazine described how a policy of resident feedback was an essential part of public service planning, allowing local people more say in how the Borough develops. It also highlights how techniques and ideas that helped the Council gain Beacon Status have been carried over to other services.

Stockton's Library Service held Beacon Status during 2002/03, while Health and Social Care was a Beacon the previous year.

Each award lasts for 12 months and the outcome of Stockton's Beacon current shortlisting for its Crime and Disorder Partnerships in the coming year is expected soon.

Russell Aylott, Beacon Status Co-ordinator for Stockton Council, said: "This highlights how we are forging new and better working relationships with residents and businesses within the Borough."

# Our stamp of approval

**Youngsters in schools across the Borough have been raising lots of money for a very worthy cause.**

Care For Your Area mascot Freda the Frog met Fairfield Primary School youngsters who collected thousands of stamps to raise money for the Butterwick Hospice in Stockton.

Mums, Dads, relatives and friends are welcome to join in with the stamp collecting and may send used stamps to the Waste Management Office, Service Stockton, Stockton Council, Sun Street, Thornaby, Stockton TS17 6HB.

# Simon builds a new start

Simon Raw is a young man with good cause to celebrate, thanks to training with Stockton Council's Youth Service which has put him back on track for a construction NVQ.

Simon began a personal development programme to help him effectively manage his anger issues and develop skills to help him find and hold down a job.

The training was part of the E2E – Entry to Employment – programme run by the Youth Service, designed to develop inclusion amongst young people in the Borough.

His aim was to return to training on a construction NVQ and, following an intensive programme, he succeeded in gaining new TROCN and City & Guilds qualifications in vocational opportunities and basic skills.

Now he has landed a place with Shape Training, in Middlesbrough, and is on target to complete his NVQ.

"I really enjoyed my time with Stockton Youth Service," said Simon, 17, of Roseworth. "The workers were really understanding and supportive and it's given me confidence and challenged my behaviour. Now I have something to show for it."

Determined to fulfill his ambition, Simon was not put off by the thought of travelling from Stockton to Middlesbrough. Indeed, getting there should be easier since he recently passed his scooter test.

E2E is one of a number of inclusion programmes by Stockton Youth Service – for details please call (01642) 750198.



# Billingham Gateway plan takes a step further



Artists impression of Billingham Gateway

**The regeneration of Billingham Town Centre has taken another step forward after Stockton Council submitted planning applications for the proposals.**

A full planning application for the Billingham Gateway, along with an outline planning application for the development of a supermarket on the Forum site, was submitted in December. The plans would see John Whitehead Park remodelled and upgraded with the gateway scheme constructed on a part of it.

Over the past few years, Stockton Council has commissioned consultants to provide a range of options for the regeneration of Billingham Town Centre.

The Billingham Partnership has considered these various options, endorsing the current strategy for regenerating the Town Centre. The proposed Gateway building itself will bring together leisure, health and education facilities for the people of Billingham and Tees Valley.

The Gateway Project and proposal of a supermarket on the Forum site are phases one and two of the regeneration of Billingham and phase three will see the redevelopment of the Town Centre. The proposed Gateway development currently consists of:

- 25m swimming pool
- Ice Rink/Events Arena
- Café
- Library – including access to Internet
- Community training and advice
- Doctors Surgery/Health Centre
- Fitness suite
- Revitalisation of the park with children's play area and bowling greens
- Creche/Nursery

Nigel Laws, Stockton Council's Project Manager, said: "Submitting the planning applications is the next stage in regenerating Billingham and giving the people of the town the facilities they deserve."

"The Gateway Project will provide state-of-the-art leisure, health and education facilities for residents in Billingham, both present and future generations."

Kevin Pitt, Chair of The Billingham Partnership, said: "The Billingham Partnership strongly supports Stockton Council's planning applications for the Gateway Project and supermarket."

"Having studied the issues in some detail and having received the backing of residents in successive public consultations, we believe this scheme offers the best way forward for regenerating Billingham Town Centre and improving community facilities."

"The proposed supermarket will give our declining Town Centre the anchor attention it needs and the plans for John Whitehead Park will revitalise a much-loved public space."

Regular information sessions have been held at the Billingham Forward Office in Billingham Town Centre since December. Officers from Stockton Council have been on hand to answer any queries and the planning applications and display boards have been available for public review.

More than 100 people took the opportunity to come along and look at the vision for their Town Centre.

As Stockton News went to press, the planning applications were still to be considered by the local planning authority.

# It's time to renew your Bus Pass!

## Do you have a Stockton Bus Pass?

If so, your 'Gold' or 'Silver' Card will expire at the end of June 2004. You will need to renew your pass to make sure that you don't miss out on reduced price bus travel over the coming year.

The **Gold Card** scheme covers men and women aged 60 and above and the registered blind. Passes, which cost £5 per year, entitle holders to travel anywhere within the Boroughs of Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland,

and on certain services in Hartlepool, for a flat fare of 30 pence per journey (registered blind people qualify for a free pass and free travel).

The **Silver Card** scheme covers men and women aged 60 and above and people with disabilities. Passes are free, and entitle holders to travel at half fare on bus services throughout Stockton-on-Tees, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland, and on certain services in Hartlepool. Both schemes operate throughout the day,

seven days a week, including bank holidays.

New passes, valid from the 1st of July 2004 to the 30th of June 2005, will be issued during June 2004 at venues across the Borough. To renew your pass, you will need to attend the centre identified by your postcode, and on the date and time indicated by the initial letter of your surname, as shown below.

**Please note that the Stockton Baptist Tabernacle will be closed on Thursdays**

### Billingham Forum TS2, TS22 & TS23

#### Tuesday 1 June

9am to 12 noon      A - B  
1pm to 4pm          C - D

#### Wednesday 2 June

9am to 12 noon      E - G  
1pm to 4pm          H - K

#### Thursday 3 June

9am to 12 noon      L - M  
1pm to 4pm          N - R

#### Friday 4 June

9am to 12 noon      S - T  
1pm to 4pm          U - Z

### Yarm Community Centre (High Church Wynd) TS15 & TS16

#### Monday 7 June

9am to 12 noon      A - D  
1pm to 4pm          E - J

#### Tuesday 8 June

9am to 12 noon      K - R  
1pm to 4pm          S - Z

### Thornaby Pavilion TS8 & TS17

#### Wednesday 9 June

9am to 12 noon      A - C  
1pm to 4pm          D - G

#### Thursday 10 June

9am to 12 noon      H - K  
1pm to 4pm          L - O

#### Friday 11 June

9am to 12 noon      P - S  
1pm to 4pm          T - Z

### Stockton Baptist Tabernacle TS18, 19, 20 & 21

#### Monday 14 June

9am to 12 noon      A - B  
1pm to 4pm          A - B

#### Tuesday 15 June

9am to 12 noon      A - B  
1pm to 4pm          A - B

#### Wednesday 16 June

9am to 12 noon      C - D  
1pm to 4pm          C - D

#### Friday 18 June

9am to 12 noon      C - D  
1pm to 4pm          E - F

### Stockton Baptist Tabernacle TS18, 19, 20 & 21

#### Monday 21 June

9am to 12 noon      G  
1pm to 4pm          H - I

#### Tuesday 22 June

9am to 12 noon      H - I  
1pm to 4pm          J - K

#### Wednesday 23 June

9am to 12 noon      L  
1pm to 4pm          M - N

#### Friday 25 June

9am to 12 noon      M - N  
1pm to 4pm          O - P

#### Monday 28 June

9am to 12 noon      Q - R  
1pm to 4pm          S - T

#### Tuesday 29 June

9am to 12 noon      S - T  
1pm to 4pm          S - T

#### Wednesday 30 June

9am to 12 noon      U - Z  
1pm to 4pm          U - Z

## If you are renewing your pass, you will need to bring:-

- Proof of your residency within the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees, such as a recent bill with your name and address on it;
- Your current bus pass; and
- Payment of £5 for Gold Cards (free for registered blind people). Silver Cards are free of charge.

**Any Queries? Please phone the Helpline on (01642) 397106**

## The train now arriving

A rail carriage has pulled into a former station for the first time in decades to form an innovative new feature at Wynyard Woodland Park.

Now in place in the car park, the carriage will form an education centre for visiting schools and groups. Whilst it won't be open to the general public, it will add to the park's railway theme, which will be developed further with the refurbishment of the Station House Visitor Centre.

Two dedicated volunteers at the Park, Ed Restall and Bob Mullen, have worked virtually non-stop to transform the empty shell into a beautifully refurbished facility.

The interior now has a light, welcoming look. Once finished, it should give the Park staff lots of room and the flexibility to run a wide variety of activities for children.

Ed and Bob's work to transform the carriage is just one example of the many opportunities for everyone, no matter what age or ability, to lend a hand at Wynyard Woodland Park.

If you would like to offer help at any of Stockton Council's Countryside sites, please call (01642) 526877.



Bob Mullen (left) and Ed Restall - dedicated workers on the carriage

## Tristar Homes Easter hours

Good Friday April 9                      closed  
Easter Monday April 12                  closed  
Monday May 3  
(May Day Bank Holiday) Closed all day

Out of hours call 0800 174491 for emergencies and make safe repairs.

# New school and library celebrate

**Celebrations marked the official opening of Ingleby Barwick's new community library and primary school in February.**

Myton Park Primary School and Ingleby Barwick Community Library both opened their doors to the public in September.

The school admitted 80 pupils in September and has since grown to 109, increasing to 210 when it reaches full capacity. Myton Park offers excellent facilities with a high specification of equipment, including an ICT suite, library and large hall. A 39-place nursery offers quality educational opportunities for pre-school children.

Headteacher Dorothy Begley said: "We want the children to feel secure and confident, be stimulated to learn and achieve the highest standards possible. Staff and pupils enjoy being here and working together and parents, too, have been so supportive. Already we feel very much established within the community."

The library attracted more than 300 visitors on its opening day. Around 450 borrowers registered during the first week, a figure that has now risen to almost 1,500. Some 64,000 library visits are predicted in its first full year, with

an estimated 100,000 books and other items borrowed.

The library is open from  
1pm - 8pm              weekdays  
9am - 5pm              Saturdays  
11am - 4pm             Sundays.

There are approximately 11,000 books as well as children's videos, CDs and spoken word collections. There are five public access PCs, a scanner, colour and black and white printing facilities and specialist software for disabled users. Internet access is free.

Stockton Council's Head of Cultural Services, Andrea Barker, said: "Our staff at the library have received many favourable comments from local residents, expressing their pleasure at having a library in their community. We are delighted it has proved so popular."



## School meals are tops

**School dinners were the tops as National School Meals Week celebrated its 10th anniversary late last year with the theme 'Food 4 Sport'.**

All the Borough's schools took part, answering questions on food for health. Three progressed to the North East and Scotland Regional competition and then to the national finals organised by the Local Authority Catering Association.

Key Stage 1 winner Jake Cuthbert, of Hardwick Primary School, earned a £100 sports equipment voucher for himself and a coaching session for his whole class by a qualified British Gymnastics coach.

William Cressey, of St. Francis of Assisi C of E Primary School, topped the Key Stage 2 entries, winning a £100 sports equipment voucher and a tag rugby coaching session for his whole class by a qualified England RFU coach.

In the regional event, St. Gregory's RC Primary School earned a £125 cheque towards either an evening out or, in keeping with the week's theme, a trip to a gym or ten pin bowling.

Anita Brown, Stockton Council's Catering & Cleaning Services Manager, said: "I would like to congratulate the winners for their excellent entries. The standard was extremely high and yet again we have come up trumps in National School Meals Week."

# The shape of things to come

50,000 visitors have visited Arc since the Dovecot Street venue reopened in September.

The three floors include: two theatres, a studio theatre, cosy cinema, exhibition spaces, meeting rooms, café area and two bars.

April highlights include a good range of drama, music, film and comedy. **Dracula Spectacular** (Tues 6-Thurs 8 April) is a spectacular spooky musical with lyrics by John Gardiner and music by Andrew Parr. **A Night with the Stars** (Thurs 8 April) is a vigorous performance of music, dance and drama.

Independent Ballet Wales present Tchaikovsky's timeless **Sleeping Beauty** (Sat 17 April). North East based Three Over Eden present a double bill of drama from writer Bob Beagrie on 21st April – **Endeavour**, set on board Captain Cook's ship, and **Hunting For Harold Lloyd**, inspired by the silent comedy actor known as 'the Third Genius' beside Chaplin and Keaton.

Musically, there's something for most tastes, ranging from **Terry Lightfoot & His Jazzmen's** salute to the special magic of Louis Armstrong (Fri 23 April) to Arc's jamming sessions. Bring an instrument and you can join in

The Session free (Thurs 29 April). **Ola Onabule** demonstrates his much lauded vocal ability on Friday 30 April.

Comedy comes from the inventive comic mind of grizzled American genius **Rich Hall** with **Mike Wilmot** (24 April).

Arc also presents some great films in conjunction with Kino and Ten Feet Tall at **Cinema @ Arc**.

For more information or to join the Arc's free mailing list, please contact the Box Office on (01642) 525199.



# Gifted pupils experience excellence

Gifted and talented secondary school pupils across Stockton Borough have been taking part in masterclasses, summer schools and competitions as a part of the Excellence in Cities initiative.

One of last year's highlights saw two Russian Cosmonauts talk to Stockton school and sixth form college pupils in the Planetarium at Wynyard Woodland Park. National and international opportunities for able pupils have included World Class Tests in maths and problem solving and Year 11 pupils have taken part in specialist summer schools.

Parents can find out more about opportunities this year for gifted and talented pupils by calling Stella Cutland on (01642) 527682. You can also log into the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth at [www.warwick.ac.uk/gifted](http://www.warwick.ac.uk/gifted)

# Royal occasion for retired school workers

Two dedicated school workers have a Royal date to look forward to when they collect their MBEs from the Queen.

Gerard Armstrong has retired as a full-time teacher at St Michael's RC School in Billingham, although he still returns to work part-time. He taught at the same school for 38 years initially as a science teacher and more latterly as a maths teacher.

As Head of Careers he helped guide hundreds of pupils into successful careers. Mr Armstrong was also one of the first heads of the school's successful house system.

Head teacher of the school, Joe White, said: "Mr Armstrong has given so much of his time, energy and expertise to the school, well beyond anything that could have been expected of him. Victor Brown (pictured), known as Vic,

started work as caretaker at Wrensfield School 20 years ago until it was amalgamated with Primrose Hill School in 1987 and the new Abbey Hill School was built in Hardwick in 1991.

Since then he has been responsible for the upkeep and care of this and the 16-19 site at Norton.



Gerard Armstrong

Abbey Hill School Business Manager Edwin Thorman said: "He was always here, holidays, evenings, weekends. We often had to force him to take a holiday.

"I think we have hardly ever employed a painter or decorator in 12 years while Vic was here. He did it all."



Victor Brown

# Blue boxes do the round

32,000 homes in Billingham, the Clarences, Thornaby and Ingleby Barwick have joined the Blue Box recycling scheme, which now takes in the whole Borough.

Now run directly by Stockton Council, the scheme will see blue boxes collected fortnightly on the same day as the weekly wheeled bin collection, making the service more straightforward, efficient and cost effective.

You can recycle glass bottles, jars, newspapers, magazines, junk mail and food and drinks cans. Economic and operational reasons mean that cardboard and textiles are no longer collected but these can be taken to the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centre at Haverton Hill.

Middlesbrough Football Club Manager Steve McClaren, a Stockton Borough resident, endorsed the scheme at its launch in February 2003. He said: "I congratulate Stockton Council in its efforts to encourage residents of the Borough to recycle household waste.

"My family has taken part since the scheme started a year ago and we intend to give it our continued support. Everyone can play their part, however small, in caring for the planet and future generations."

If you would like to know more about the Blue Box scheme, please call Care For Your Area Customer Services on (01642) 391959.



# Looking after livestock

Steven Gale (pictured) is the new face at Stockton Council providing advice and guidance on animal health and welfare.

Animal Health Officer Steven is responsible for the inspection of agricultural holdings, livestock premises, abattoirs and other premises where animals are present. He will also advise on movement licensing requirements.

Following the 2001 Foot & Mouth outbreak, the Government has developed a framework for managing and improving animal health and welfare. This takes account of a wider range of activities required of the Council such as licensing, data capture and traceability of livestock.

A risk assessment of all livestock keepers has begun, with survey forms

sent to all known premises and holders of livestock including cattle, sheep, pigs, goats and fowl. If you think you should have been sent a form but did not receive one, please call (01642) 526554.

For information on any animal health matters, please email [steven.gale@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:steven.gale@stockton.gov.uk)



# Stockton's Security Service success

Stockton's Security Service is attracting interest from around the world.

Organisations from as far afield as Nigeria and America, plus others from the UK, have visited the Security Centre as they consider setting up something similar.

The £2.5m purpose-built control room is home to Stockton Council's Security Service and other services ranging from Care Call for the elderly and vulnerable to community wardens, business and domestic alarm monitoring and key holding service.

CCTV is monitored not just across the Borough but from much further afield and the concierge security officers at all the Borough's high rise blocks are also based here, as are an out-of-hours Emergency Duty Team and the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety teams.

Security Service head Doug Carhart said: "Our high tech systems allow us to monitor homes as far away as Dundee. We can pick up alarms anywhere within 30 seconds and quickly alert local security.

"Where monitored alarms are within camera coverage, we can focus a camera on the area if an alarm activates, then call the police and relay pictures direct to their HQ, so they can view the situation as they despatch officers.

"Many places monitor cameras but few control rooms are like ours – we also run a security company, Care Call, train and operate community wardens and volunteer wardens too."

The volunteer wardens recently took to the streets in the Parkfield and Mill Lane areas. As residents, they are trained by Security Centre staff to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour in their communities.

The latest service is domestic alarm monitoring. If you've ever been called by a neighbour to say your alarm has been sounding or, worse still, come home to find a thief has been and your property gone, this could be for you. For just £48+vat a year, the centre will monitor your alarm and, within 30 seconds of activation, inform up to three designated parties and attend if requested.

For more details call (01642) 393755.

# POLICE BEAT

## New appointment

Ron Baker (pictured) has recently been appointed Neighbourhood Watch Liaison officer for the Stockton District. Working closely with Police and Neighbourhood Watch, Ron said: "I am especially keen to improve Neighbourhood Watch by encouraging more members and providing an essential link with the Police to improve communication and raise awareness to tackle local issues of crime and disorder." Ron can be contacted through Community Safety on (01642) 302341.



## Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

A new Act came into force on 20th January 2004, which encompasses many new laws to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour.



PC Andy Thorpe

One of the key areas is a change in law on air weapons, which prohibits the carrying of such items in public

without reasonable excuse and raises the age of possessing air weapons from 14 years to 17 years. Inspector Colin White Community Safety Inspector, said: "This new Act should deter young people from owning such dangerous items and should encourage parents not to buy them as presents".

## When was the last time you looked in your shed?

With the arrival of lighter nights, burglars start to target sheds and garages looking for easy pickings. There are some simple measures you can take to make it more difficult for them to walk away with your expensive tools and garden furniture.

Use permanent security marking to postcode your valuables in order to identify them easily. Make your shed more secure by fitting good quality locks and fasten items inside the shed together and secure them to the fabric of the structure.

Stand-alone shed alarms are available from crime prevention at £15 each. For further advice or information contact the Stockton Police Crime Reduction Department on (01642) 302271.



Crime Prevention Officer Dave Sanders with a typical garden shed

## Crucial Crew success



PC Jeff Vowles receives his award from the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Ann Cains.

In January PC Jeff Vowles received a plaque from the Mayor of Stockton, Councillor Ann Cains, for best workshop at the Crucial Crew event held in September last year at the Education Centre, Norton.

Crucial Crew is organised and financed by Stockton Council and provides nine workshops for Year 6 children. Each workshop contains important personal safety messages and are delivered by various organisations including Cleveland Police, Cleveland Fire Service, H.M. Coastguard and Stockton Road Safety Department.

During the two-week event, more than 2,000 children visited the workshops and were then asked to vote for their favourite.

"It is an honour to receive this award and I am sure the votes must have been very close", said PC Vowles.

"All the workshops are of a very high standard and contain important safety information for these young people.

"Crucial Crew is an excellent event and this is reflected by the number of schools who visit us."

...a regular feature from North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust

## Pioneering hip op puts patient back on his feet

Pioneering health staff helped to put a patient back on his feet within just 24 hours of major hip surgery. Billingham resident Brian Fenton was ready to go home only a day after having a unique style of hip replacement at the University Hospital of North Tees. The new technique involves two small incisions as opposed to a conventional hip replacement which involves one large cut through muscle. As no muscle is cut during surgery, patients make a much quicker recovery and experience far less pain. Patients are therefore ready to leave hospital within 24 hours rather than the seven to 10 day stay required for the conventional operation.

Mr Fenton's operation, performed by consultant orthopaedic surgeon Tony Nargol, was the first of its kind to be carried out north of Birmingham. Mr Nargol said: "This new type of operation is all about giving patients the best and we are delighted to be among the first NHS Trusts in the UK to be offering this. Its introduction will go a long way to speeding up patients' recovery after major surgery which in turn is likely to ensure more beds are free for emergency patients."

Former ICI worker Mr Fenton, 68, said: "I am proud to see such pioneering surgery being offered at my local hospital and feel privileged to have been one of the first to benefit from it." Only patients with arthritic hips are suitable for the new hip replacements and it is not suitable for very overweight people.



Brian Fenton with health care assistants Chris Bradley (left) and Lynda Bell (right) walking about just 24 hours after pioneering hip replacement.

## Hospital mealtimes made easier

Patients at the University Hospital of North Tees are the first in the country to be able to electronically order meals direct from their hospital bed. On screen menus are being incorporated into the personal television and telephone systems which have been installed at every bedside.

Patients can view the menu available along with information on the ingredients used before making their choices using a remote control. Food can be ordered two hours ahead of mealtimes instead of patients having to select all meals much further in advance.

The new service is being piloted by Patientline, the company which installed and now manages the bedside televisions and telephones, following a successful trial last

month. It will eventually replace the traditional menu service which involved patients making hand written orders.

Patients who miss meals will also be able to electronically order snack boxes or meals from the hospital's Lite Bite Menu using the new system.

Colin Chapman, catering services manager at the University Hospital of North Tees, said: "This exciting new service means patients have the opportunity to make far more informed choices about their meals as well as making those decisions much closer to mealtimes. The Trust already prides itself on addressing the full spectrum of patient needs and this introduction will further enhance services for patients once it is fully introduced."

## A&E services

Emergency care at the University Hospital of North Tees has been hailed among the best in the country for helping to speed up treatment for patients. National Emergency Care Tsar Sir George Alberti praised the hospital for reducing waiting times in Accident and Emergency. Since December 2002, more than 92 per cent of patients coming into Accident and Emergency (A&E) at the University Hospital of North Tees have been treated within four hours.

New initiatives such as the introduction of a discharge lounge at the hospital in February 2003 have helped to keep waits to a minimum. The new facility accommodates patients who are ready to leave hospital but are awaiting medication, transport and therapy advice before they can be discharged. This helps to free up beds for more seriously ill patients coming into A&E.

# Glass showcases the region

Prestigious corporate headquarters have developed as the latest showcase for Stockton-based Creative Glass to exhibit their innovative design ideas.

Pictured below is Reg Vardy's HQ in Sunderland, a very futuristic building containing stunning glass features including balustrades, curved staircase, reception desk panels, signage and coloured mosaic screens in the restaurant area.

Creative Glass have just completed IBM's London headquarters, where a stunning curved white glass desk forms the centrepiece of the reception area. The real "wow factor" is created by the innovative use of fibre-optics, which allows the white desk to change colour at the flick of a switch, crossing the spectrum from violet to red to blue, or whatever colour creates the desired mood.

Tony Campbell, the company's Managing Director, is currently working to encourage this innovative mood in others as chair of the Stockton Renaissance Economic Regeneration Partnership. This group

is currently working on ideas to open up the barriers to apprenticeships and the new Government Fit for Employment pilot proposal for 15-16 year olds.

As Tony explains: "Businesses do not operate in isolation. The local economy and image of an area can affect the success of your business – so it pays to get involved at a local and strategic level. This can mean anything from representing the business interest on local Area Boards, to serving on Stockton Renaissance Partnership Board or the Economic Regeneration Partnership.

"These partnerships offer the opportunity to work with service providers and the community to bring investment, funding and a skilled labour market to the area."

Businesses interested in becoming involved in or learning more about these partnerships can contact Dawn Welsh, Stockton Renaissance Co-ordinator, on (01642) 526498.

Other Creative Glass projects include concepts for the home, restaurants, pubs, hotels and nightclubs.



# Step on a bus – and back in time



**A Stockton-based club is inviting members of the public to enjoy free rides on buses they travelled on in the 60's and 70's.**

The 500 Group is holding its annual Vintage Bus Teesside Running day on Sunday 25 April and will feature up to ten vintage buses, most of which are native to the area.

People boarding on one of the old buses at Stockton High Street or at the Transporter Bridge, Middlesbrough will be given a "Teesside Rover" ticket, entitling them to ride free on all the participating buses all day.

For more information, call (01642) 782796 or email [info-500group@ntlworld.com](mailto:info-500group@ntlworld.com)

# Garden festival planting in the park

**A new feature is planned for the popular Teesside Garden and Wood Festival, which takes place at Preston Park over the weekend of 7-9 May.**

A wild flower planting weekend will run in conjunction with the the Park's Countryside Wardens and two-for-one tickets will be available from Stockton Central Library and Preston Hall Museum from 1 May on a first-come first-served basis.

On the Friday, some local schools will be invited to come along and plant wild cowslips and primroses and on Saturday and Sunday.

Everyone is welcome to come along and plant.

Countryside Warden Terry Douthwaite said: "The nicest thing is that everyone can revisit the park each spring to re-discover their very own cowslip or primrose."

The festival is sure to be a hive of activity, with thousands of plants from local specialist growers as well as floral art by Teesside Flower Club, kite flying, music, dance and lots more.

For more information visit our website [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk) or call Terry on (01642) 788907 or organiser Doug Moore on 07977 134364.



# What's On

April, May and June 2004

Looking for something to do for all the family? Visit the Borough's many events as June sees the ever-popular Historic Vehicle Rally at Preston Park plus there's lots more to see and do.

## APRIL

Until 14 April  
**Easter Display and Competition**  
At Castlegate Shopping Centre. For details call (01642) 672783.

5-16 April  
**Play Park and Soft Play Sessions**  
If you are between 8 and 12 years old and between 3 and 7 years old Thornaby Pavilion have just the thing for this holiday. Come and enjoy! For details contact (01642) 760971.

5-16 April  
**Inflatable sessions**  
Come have a splash at Thornaby Pool. For more details contact (01642) 616727.

7 April  
**Easter Extravaganza**  
Traditional Easter fun and frolics, 1pm at Stillington Community Centre. Details from Wynyard Woodland Park on (01740) 630011 or email [wynyard.woodland@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:wynyard.woodland@stockton.gov.uk)

18 April  
**The Two Towers**  
Explore the history of Billingham Beck Valley, meet 11am at St Cuthbert's Church, Billingham. Details from Billingham Beck Country Park or call (01642) 397609 or email [billingham.beck@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:billingham.beck@stockton.gov.uk)

18 April  
**Guided Cycle Ride - Castle Eden Crawl**  
A guided cycle ride for everyone, with Stockton's Road Safety Team. Meet Wynyard Woodland Park visitor centre, 10am. Details from (01642) 526736 or email [neil.ellison@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:neil.ellison@stockton.gov.uk)

21 April  
**Urban Regeneration lecture**  
Part of Urban Futures Lectures series at University of Durham, Queen's Campus, Stockton, guest speaker Ann Markusen. Contact 0191 3340454.

23 April  
**British Unicycle Convention**  
At St Michael's RC School, Billingham. Whether you are a beginner or expert, this is not to be missed. For more details please contact Roger Davis on (01642) 361203.

23 April  
**The Big Bang**  
Find out how the Universe began, at Wynyard Planetarium, 7.30pm. Details from Dr John McCue, tel (01740) 630544 or email [director@wynyard-planetarium.net](mailto:director@wynyard-planetarium.net)

25 April  
**Vintage Bus Day**  
Free services 11am-5pm on up to 10 vintage buses between Stockton and Middlesbrough, organised by the 500 Group. For more details call (01642) 782796 or email [info-500group@ntlworld.com](mailto:info-500group@ntlworld.com)

25 April  
**Get to know your Voles**  
Learn about water voles and their habitat, 11am at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park activity centre. For details call (01642) 415225 or email [cowpenbewley.woodlandpark@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:cowpenbewley.woodlandpark@stockton.gov.uk)

## MAY

2 May  
**Leven Loop Walk**  
Crown Hotel Kirkevington - 10.00am - call (01642) 788907 for details.

5 May  
**Lecture**  
The Balance of Housing in Social Exclusion and Regeneration, at the Centre for Enterprise, University of Teesside, Middlesbrough. For details please contact C A Stephenson on 0191 334 0454.

6 May  
**Girls Football Tournament**  
6-a-side Football for school teams in years 7&8 at the Norton Sports Complex. Contact Sally Mulcaster (01642) 526691.

7 May  
**Stars and Planets**  
Wynyard Planetarium - 7.30pm call (01740) 630544 for details.

7-9 May  
**Teesside Garden Festival**  
Come to Preston Park and enjoy the variety of plants, garden accessories and exhibitions on display. For further details please contact Jean Welch on (01423) 867114.

15 - 21 May  
**Adult Learners Week**  
Venues around Stockton call (01642) 353564.

16 May  
**Early morning birdwatch**  
Billingham Beck Valley - 6.30am (01642) 397609 for details.

16 May  
**Guided cycle rides**  
From Myton Farm Pub, Ingleby Barwick 10am. Call (01642) 397712 for details.

16 May  
**Amphibian Explorer**  
Cowpen Bewley Woodland park - 10am-12noon (01642) 415225 for details.

21 May  
**The Big Bang**  
Wynyard Planetarium call (01740) 630544.

22 May  
**Tees Regatta**  
Races and other events on the river, based at Dugdale Street Watersports Centre, Stockton. For more information contact Kate O'Sullivan on (01325) 332870.

23 May  
**Stockton Loop Walk**  
14 mile guided walk call (01642) 788907 for details.

23 May  
**Steve Redgrave's Tees Challenge**  
Call (01642) 527344 for details. (also see page 3)

29 May  
**Dragonboat Festival**  
Call (01642) 788907 for details. (also see page 8)

29 May  
**"Fins & Chrome" American Car Show**  
Come and see some of the finest American cars at Preston Park. For more details contact Sandra Clarkson on (01642) 526690.

31 May-4 June  
**Xplore Holiday Activity**  
Come and enjoy various activities this holiday! Contact Sports Development (01642) 526695.

31 May  
**Whit Walk**  
Billingham Beck 10.00am (01642) 397609 for details.

## JUNE

1-4 June  
**Play Park and Soft Play Sessions**  
Sessions for 3-7 year-olds and 8-12 year-olds at Thornaby Pavilion - just the thing for this holiday. Come and enjoy! Contact (01642) 760971 for details.

1-4 June  
**Inflatable sessions**  
Come have a splash at Thornaby Pool. For more details contact (01642) 616727.

3-4 June  
**Travel through time**  
Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park. Build a sculpture. (01642) 415225.

9-12 June  
**Fun Fair**  
Come to the Riverside Park and enjoy a family day out. Organised by the Events team (01642) 527344.

11 June  
**Teesside Sports Ability Festival**  
Sports events for young people with a disability or special need, at Southlands Leisure Centre. For more details contact Emma Warnes on (01642) 526692.

12 June  
**Nocturnal nature**  
Gates of Preston Park. (01642) 788907 for details.

13 June  
**Wildflower wander**  
Stillington Forest Park 10.00am (01740) 630011

13 June  
**Diabetes UK Fun Day**  
Family entertainment at Preston Park. For details please contact Duncan Roberts on [duncan.roberts@diabetes.org.uk](mailto:duncan.roberts@diabetes.org.uk)

15 June  
**Lecture**  
Meeting Energy needs for the 21st Century, speaker Alan Murie. At University of Durham, Queen's Campus, Stockton. For more details contact Jan Cawood on (0191) 334 0018.

16 June  
**Mini Hockey Festival**  
Schools competition for years 5&6 at Norton Sport Complex. For details contact Sally Mulcaster (01642) 526691.

19 June  
**Tees Valley Youth Games**  
Various sports for children of all ages, at Acklam & Eston Sports Centre. For details please contact Claire Tennyson on (01642) 526694.

20 June  
**Music in the park**  
Preston Park walled garden 2-4pm (01642) 527345.

20 June  
**Dragonboat Racing**  
Call (01642) 526690 for details.

20 June  
**Introduction to British Birds**  
Billingham Beck 10.00am (01642) 397609.

20 June  
**Guided cycle rides.**  
Wynyard Woodland Park Visitor Centre - 10am (01642) 397712.

26-27 June  
**Fire Engine & Vintage Car Rally**  
Fun for the whole family at Preston Hall Museum, 10am-5pm both days. Admission: £2.50 adult, £1.50 child. Contact Derek Batchelor on (01642) 527346 for more details.

29 June  
**Special Educational Needs Conference**  
Free to parents with children with special educational needs. Held at Ushaw College, Durham (transport provided from Stockton). For more details contact Gill Burnett (01642) 527158.

30 June  
**Guided cycle rides.**  
7pm Tees Barrage (01642) 397712.

## Diary Date

This year's **Stockton International Riverside Festival** promises to be bigger and better than ever - and you can be at the very heart of it. The Music Weekend will take place from 23 - 25 July and the main street festival will be from 29 July - 1 August.

The Carnival is always one of the real highlights of the Festival - and this year you can take a starring role. Join a Carnival group and enjoy a couple of months preparing in a fun, creative and exciting atmosphere. For more details call Stockton Arts Team on (01642) 415379 or email [arts@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:arts@stockton.gov.uk)

We have made every effort to ensure that the information on this page is accurate. However, unforeseen circumstances may result in changes and you are strongly advised to check details with the organisers.

For up-to-date listings of  
what's on, see  
[www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)



# Cleveland Fire Brigade



**Hello everyone, in this issue we look at some of the work we in the fire service have been dealing with over the last few months. Much of this work involves informing you our community of safety issues not just relating to fires because we are committed to providing a total safety service. There are also some success stories from our work in doing Home Fire Safety Checks. The checks are available, free for all, just call your local fire station. We have seen an increase recently in fires in the homes of older folks so we are particularly interested in hearing from them. The vulnerability of older folk has been emphasised with the recent tragic events in Scotland and we want to help.**

Some late breaking good news. The Arson Task Force, which is a group supported through the Safer Stockton Partnership, put in a bid for some money from the government to reduce deliberate fires in the Stockton area. The bid was successful and the partnership now has £144,000 over the next two years to support arson reduction projects. Well done to everyone involved.

## The importance of smoke alarms

The importance of smoke alarms and the need to have a fire plan were emphasised recently when these factors and the speedy response from the Fire Service helped to prevent a tragedy.

Billingham Fire Station attended a house fire in the Low Grange area of Billingham, in the early hours of New Years Day. The area has been targeted for Home Fire Safety checks and other initiatives by their local station.

The fire occurred in the living room when a candle was left unattended too close to curtains. The occupants were alerted by smoke alarms that had been previously fitted by the Fire Brigade following a Home Fire Safety Check. The occupants were able to escape because, as part of their home fire plan, they remembered to leave their keys near to the front door.

Cleveland Fire brigade are always willing to visit to give free Home Fire Safety advice and, where necessary, fit free smoke alarms. Call your nearest Fire station for more information.



## Safety message to the youngsters

Cleveland Fire Brigade took part in a multi agency presentation to approximately 200 14-15 year olds at Thornaby Community school in January.

Police, Fire Service and the prison service were just a few of the agencies who took this opportunity to get across a safety message to the youngsters. The format was 'prison for a day' which included groups being marched to each class under strict discipline resembling that which they would face in prison. Once in the class they were then given the various safety messages.

We emphasised the dangers and consequences of arson and hoax calls

but also gave fire safety advice and an insight into a career in the Fire service. We are always willing to give such talks to any school, group etc. Just contact your local Fire Station or call (01429) 872311.



## Getting the Water Safety message across

Whilst it is widely acknowledged that extinguishing fires is one of our prime operational activities, it is perhaps less well known that Cleveland Fire service also undertakes rescue work in other arenas. One of these is the water rescue function which is based at Thornaby Fire Station. In 2003 the team responded to 30 incidents ranging from severe flooding to rescue scenarios in the River Tees. Unfortunately such incidents can end in tragedy and this was the case when, in December 2002, a 16 year old boy, David Steel from Norton, was rescued from the River Leven by the Water Rescue team but sadly lost his life.

Grateful for the efforts undertaken that night, David's family raised £150 which they donated to Thornaby Fire Station. The water rescue team then decided that this money should be used, as a legacy for David, to educate other children of the dangers of water and purchased 250 copies of 'Theodore the water wise cat', a book produced by ROSPA. These were then placed in several primary schools and will be used by teachers to fulfil their national syllabus requirements regarding personal safety. It is hoped to extend this scheme to all schools in the Stockton area.

Cleveland Fire Brigade are happy to visit any school or group to talk about any safety concerns and initial contact should be made with your local fire station.

## Stockton-on-Tees Crime Prevention Panel

Stockton-on-Tees Crime Prevention panel is a Charity consisting of Business people and supported by Community Safety and Police Personnel. One of their aims is to provide high quality products at low cost prices to reduce the opportunities for Crime to be committed. Security equipment can be purchased from police Stations within the Borough of Stockton.

Motor Cycle Datatag kits	£50.00	Door Chimes	£5.00
Scooter Datatag Kits	£40.00	Personal Safety Alarms	£5.00
Autolok 2000 Steering		Counterfeit Marker Pens	£2.50
Wheel Locks	£30.00	Selektemark household	
External Dusk-till-Dawn		property marking kits	£1.00
lights	£23.50	Tamperproof tax disc	
Shed Alarms	£15.00	holders	£1.00
Pedal Cycle Datatag kits	£12.00		
24hr plug in timers	£5.00		
Glass Guard Window			
Alarms	£5.00		



For further information contact  
DC Eddie Lincoln,  
Crime Reduction Officer on (01642) 302271

## Feel safe, feel good

Your alarm monitored 24 hours a day,  
365 days a year... for only £48 per year



- We will monitor your alarm all year round
- We will contact you or up to three designated telephone numbers
- We can hold household keys
- We also offer a mobile response facility that liaises with the police if needed

Your household alarm monitored for £48.00 +VAT per annum. Key holding for household keys for £48.00 +VAT per annum. Call-out to your home if you so require £41.00 + VAT per call-out – a small price to pay if you're on holiday!

Call us now on 01642 393755  
for further details on the best package for you.

Stockton-on-Tees Security Services, The Security Centre,  
The Square, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TE

**NO JOINING FEE**

**ACTIV8 CENTRES:**  
PAYMENT CHOICES  
**PAY AS YOU GO**  
NO MONTHLY COMMITMENT

**Fitness suites ONLY £21** per month  
unlimited fitness studio\*

**Swimming ONLY £20** per month  
unlimited swimming during public sessions\*

**Lifestyle Package ONLY £24.50** per month  
unlimited gym, swim, sauna and aerobics classes\*

\*Subject to programme availability

**ACTIV8 CENTRES:**

Billingham Forum **01642 551381**

Splash **01642 393900** Stockton Sports Centre **01642 607994** Thornaby Pavilion **01642 760971**

A service provided by Stockton Council [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)



**FREE 'CITY' SPORTS BAG**  
(only with this advert)  
for the first 25 people who sign up to an **Activ8** Direct Debit package.  
This includes an induction, towel, and water bottle.

**FREE 'CITY' SPORTS BAG**



**ACTIV8** Health & Fitness

Cut along dotted line

Hey everyone! It's **Party Time**!

**Swim Parties**  
**Bubble Parties**

**IMPRESS YOUR FRIENDS WITH A PARTY TO REMEMBER!**

Ice skating, swimming and football parties are just some of the great ideas available.

**FOOTBALL Parties**

**ICE SKATE PARTIES**  
from £5.00 per person  
INCLUDES:  
Arena admission  
Skate hire  
Hot or Cold Menu  
\*Ice Party min 10 people

Call any of the numbers below for more information...

Thornaby Pool **01642 616727**

Splash **01642 393900**

Thornaby Pavilion **01642 760971**

Billingham Forum **01642 551381**

Stockton Sports Centre **01642 607994**

A service provided by Stockton Council

[www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk) [www.icthebear.com](http://www.icthebear.com)




# Ward Surgeries

April 2004 - July 2004

[www.stockton.gov.uk/wardsurgeries](http://www.stockton.gov.uk/wardsurgeries)

## BISHOPSGARTH WARD (STOCKTON)

20th Apr Bishopsgarth School 5:30pm – 6:00pm  
11th May Fairfield Infants School 6:30pm – 7:00pm  
8th Jun Bishopsgarth School 5:30pm – 6:00pm  
**COUNCILLORS** S. HALL TEL: 643757  
W. WOODHEAD TEL: 584409

## BLUE HALL WARD (STOCKTON) 6:00PM – 7:00PM

14th Apr The Forge Community Centre  
28th Apr Norton United Reform Church  
12th May Frederick Natrass School  
26th May The Forge Community Centre  
9th Jun Norton United Reform Church  
23rd June Frederick Natrass School  
7th Jul The Forge Community Centre  
**COUNCILLORS** M. FRANKLAND TEL: 552667  
MRS K. NELSON TEL: 397921

## CHARLTONS WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6:30PM – 7:30PM

12th Apr The Darby & Joan Club, Cotswold Crescent  
17th May Clarendes Community Centre  
14th Jun The Darby & Joan Club, Cotswold Crescent  
12th Jul Clarendes Community Centre **COUNCILLORS**  
MRS A. McCOY TEL: 533554  
R. McCALL TEL: 554452

## EGGLESCLIFFE WARD

2nd Apr Trinity Methodist Church  
(Joint surgery with Preston Ward) 6:30 – 7:30pm  
20th Apr Eggescliffe Parish Hall,  
Butts Lane 6:00 – 7:00pm  
7th May Trinity Methodist Church  
(Joint surgery with Preston Ward) 6:30 – 7:30pm  
18th May Eggescliffe Community Centre,  
Durham Lane 6:30 – 7:30pm  
4th Jun Trinity Methodist Church  
(Joint surgery with Preston Ward) 6:30 – 7:30pm  
15th Jun Eggescliffe Parish Hall,  
Butts Lane 6:00 – 7:00pm  
2nd Jul Trinity Methodist Church  
(Joint surgery with Preston Ward) 6:30 – 7:30pm  
**COUNCILLORS** J. FLETCHER TEL: 786456  
MRS M. RIGG TEL: 782009

## ELM TREE WARD (STOCKTON)

20th Apr Elm Tree Community Centre,  
4:30 – 5:30pm Young Peoples Surgery  
6:00 – 7:00pm Adults Surgery  
18th May As above  
1st Jun As above  
29th Jun As above  
**COUNCILLOR** MRS S. FLETCHER TEL: 786456  
Email: [sfletcher@cix.co.uk](mailto:sfletcher@cix.co.uk)

## FAIRFIELD WARD (STOCKTON) 6:00PM – 7:00PM

21st Apr Fairfield Library  
19th May As above  
16th Jun As above  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS F. HAWKINS TEL: 671422  
MRS J. WADE TEL: 583549

## GLEBE WARD (STOCKTON) 6:30PM – 7:00PM

6th Apr The Education Centre, Junction Road  
11th May As above  
8th Jun As above  
6th Jul As above  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS A. CAINS  
R. CAINS TEL: 555394

## GRANGE WARD (BILLINGHAM) 5:00PM – 6:00PM

23rd Apr New Life Resource Centre, Low Grange Ave  
21st May As above  
25th Jun As above  
**COUNCILLORS** A. CUNNINGHAM TEL: 551251  
Email: [Alexander.Cunningham@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Alexander.Cunningham@stockton.gov.uk) and  
M. STOKER TEL: 648069  
Email: [mickstoker@aol.com](mailto:mickstoker@aol.com) or [mick@grangeward.co.uk](mailto:mick@grangeward.co.uk)

## GRANGEFIELD WARD (STOCKTON)

12th Apr Grays Road Institute 10:00 – 11:00am  
21st Apr Sundell Court Residents Home 5:15 – 6:15pm  
28th Apr Oxbridge Primary School 5:15 – 6:15pm  
10th May Grays Road Institute 10:00 – 11:00am  
19th May Sundell Court Residents Home 5:15 – 6:15pm  
26th May Oxbridge Primary School 5:15 – 6:15pm  
14th Jun Grays Road Institute 10:00 – 11:00am  
16th Jun Sundell Court Residents Home 5:15 – 6:15pm  
23rd Jun Oxbridge Primary School 5:15 – 6:15pm  
12th Jul Grays Road Institute 10:00 – 11:00am  
**COUNCILLORS** T. BEAN TEL: 870110  
MRS E. JOHNSON TEL: 673952

## HARDWICK WARD (STOCKTON) 6:00PM – 7:00PM

2nd Apr Hardwick Community Centre,  
Wheatley Road  
9th Apr As above  
16th Apr As above  
23rd Apr As above  
30th Apr As above  
7th May As above  
14th May As above  
21st May As above  
28th May As above  
4th Jun As above  
11th Jun As above  
18th Jun As above  
25th Jun As above  
2nd Jul As above  
9th Jul As above  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS E. NESBITT TEL: 803658  
W. NOBLE TEL: 602299

## HARTBURN WARD (STOCKTON) 6:45PM – 7:30PM

12th Apr Elmwood Community Centre  
10th May Rosehill Infants School  
7th Jun Elmwood Community Centre  
5th Jul Rosehill Infants School  
**COUNCILLORS** K. LUPTON TEL: 589863  
S. SMAILES TEL: 581574

## INGLEBY BARWICK WARD

20th Apr Teal Arms, Lowfields 6:30 – 7:30pm  
18th May Teal Arms, Lowfields 12:00 – 1:00pm  
Please confirm further dates & venues with Cllr Mrs  
Beaumont on the telephone number below or email  
[jennifer.beaumont@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:jennifer.beaumont@stockton.gov.uk)  
**COUNCILLOR** MRS J. BEAUMONT TEL: 785304

## MANDALE WARD (THORNABY) 12:00 NOON – 1:00PM

3rd Apr Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre  
17th Apr The Mandale PH  
1st May Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre  
15th May The Mandale PH  
29th May Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre  
12th Jun The Mandale PH  
26th Jun Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre  
10th Jul The Mandale PH  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS A. TRAINER TEL: 647421  
S. WALMSLEY TEL: 881886

## MARSH HOUSE WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6:30PM – 7:30PM 19th

Apr North Billingham Methodist Church  
10th May Low Grange Community Centre  
14th Jun North Billingham Methodist Church  
12th Jul Low Grange Community Centre  
**COUNCILLOR** MRS L. APEDAILE TEL: (01740) 645216  
C. LECKONBY TEL: 872896

## MILE HOUSE WARD (STOCKTON) 7:00PM – 8:00PM

20th Apr Redhill Centre, Redhill Road  
20th May Salters Lane Community Centre  
15th Jun Redhill Centre, Redhill Road  
**COUNCILLORS** D. COOKE TEL: 803648  
K. LEONARD TEL: 894191

## NEWTOWN WARD (STOCKTON) 6:00PM – 7:00PM

9th Apr Primrose Hill Community Centre  
23rd Apr Newtown Community Centre  
7th May Primrose Hill Community Centre  
21st May Newtown Community Centre  
4th Jun Primrose Hill Community Centre  
18th Jun Newtown Community Centre  
2nd Jul Primrose Hill Community Centre  
**COUNCILLORS** P. BAKER TEL: 655607  
R. GIBSON TEL: 614482

## NORTHFIELD WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6:00PM – 7:00PM

30th Apr Wolviston Court Community Centre  
28th May As above  
25th Jun As above  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS M. B. WOMPHREY TEL: 555755  
M. E. WOMPHREY TEL: 555755

## NORTON WARD 6:00PM – 7:00PM

9th Apr Albany Resource Centre  
16th Apr Norton Library  
30th Apr St. Michael's Club Room  
7th May Albany Resource Centre  
28th May Norton Library  
11th Jun St. Michael's Club Room  
25th Jun Albany Resource Centre  
9th Jul Norton Library  
**COUNCILLORS** R. COOK TEL: 890058  
Email: [Robert.Cook@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Robert.Cook@stockton.gov.uk)  
S. NELSON TEL: 534417  
Email: [Steve.Nelson@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.Nelson@stockton.gov.uk)

## PARKFIELD WARD (STOCKTON) 6:00PM – 7:00PM

1st Apr Parkfield Community Centre  
8th Apr Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre  
15th Apr Parkfield Community Centre  
22nd Apr Caretakers House,  
Rear of Richard Hind Centre  
6th May Parkfield Community Centre  
13th May Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre  
20th May Parkfield Community Centre  
27th May Caretakers House,  
Rear of Richard Hind Centre  
3rd Jun Parkfield Community Centre  
10th Jun Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre  
17th Jun Parkfield Community Centre  
24th Jun Caretakers House,  
Rear of Richard Hind Centre  
1st Jul Parkfield Community Centre  
8th Jul Cornerhouse Community Resource Centre  
**COUNCILLORS** C. COOMBS TEL: 645759  
S. LUNN TEL: 866982

## PORTRACK & TILERY WARD (STOCKTON) 5:00PM – 6:00PM

2nd Apr Mill Lane Primary School  
16th Apr Victoria Community House  
23rd Apr Frank Wiseman Hall  
7th May Mill Lane Primary School  
14th May Portrack Community Centre  
21st May Victoria Community House  
28th May Frank Wiseman Hall  
4th Jun Mill Lane Primary School  
11th Jun Portrack Community Centre  
18th Jun Victoria Community House  
25th Jun Frank Wiseman Hall  
2nd Jul Mill Lane Primary School  
9th Jul Portrack Community Centre  
**COUNCILLORS** D. COLEMAN TEL: 673952  
P. KIRTON TEL: 532076

## PRESTON WARD 6:30PM – 7:30PM

2nd Apr Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe  
(Joint surgery with Eggescliffe Ward)  
16th Apr The Wilson Institute, Long Newton  
7th May Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe  
(Joint surgery with Eggescliffe Ward)  
21st May The Wilson Institute, Long Newton

# Ward Surgeries April 2004 - July 2004

4th Jun Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe  
(Joint surgery with Egglecliffe Ward)  
18th Jun The Wilson Institute, Long Newton  
2nd Jul Trinity Methodist Church, Eaglescliffe  
(Joint surgery with Egglecliffe Ward)  
**COUNCILLOR** M. CHERRETT TEL: 783491

ROSEWORTH WARD (STOCKTON) 5:15PM - 6:15PM  
19th Apr Kiora Hall Youth & Community Centre 10th  
May Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre  
14th Jun Kiora Hall Youth & Community Centre 12th  
Jul Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre  
**COUNCILLORS** M. INGRAM TEL: 789372  
MISS B. INMAN TEL: 582644

STAINSBY WARD (THORNABY) 5:00PM - 6:00PM  
15th Apr South Thornaby Community Centre  
20th May As above  
17th Jun As above  
**COUNCILLORS** K. CRAGGS TEL: 896378  
R. GODWIN TEL: 763326

ST. AIDANS WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6:30PM - 7:30PM  
21st Apr Billingham Youth & Community Centre  
19th May As above  
16th Jun As above  
**COUNCILLORS** N. TEASDALE TEL: 803657  
B. WOODHOUSE TEL: 561899

ST. CUTHBERT'S WARD (BILLINGHAM) 6:00PM - 7:00PM 8th  
Apr Billingham Branch Library, Bedale Avenue  
13th May As above  
10th Jun As above  
8th Jul As above  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS J. O' DONNELL TEL: 559717  
M. SMITH TEL: 866573

VICTORIA WARD (THORNABY)  
3rd Apr Westbury Street Library  
11:00 - 12:00 Noon  
17th Apr The Youthy, Thornaby Road  
12:00 Noon - 1:00pm  
1st May Rochester Court Sheltered Housing  
11:00 - 12:00 Noon  
15th May Westbury Street Library  
11:00 - 12:00 Noon  
29th May The Youthy, Thornaby Road  
12:00 Noon - 1:00pm  
12th Jun Rochester Court Sheltered Housing  
11:00 - 12:00 Noon  
26th Jun Westbury Street Library  
11:00 - 12:00 Noon  
10th Jul The Youthy, Thornaby Road  
12:00 Noon - 1:00pm  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS E. FLEMING TEL: 646463  
MRS S. WALMSLEY TEL: 881886

VILLAGE WARD (THORNABY) 4:30PM - 5:30PM  
5th Apr Thornaby Pavilion  
10th May Thornaby Pavilion  
14th Jun Thornaby Pavilion  
12th Jul Thornaby Pavilion  
**COUNCILLORS** MRS E. CRAGGS TEL: 896378  
I. DALGARNO TEL: 882985

WHITTON WARD  
13th Apr Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles  
7:00 - 7:30pm  
30th Apr Wolviston Court Community Centre  
6:00 - 7:00pm  
4th May Manor House, Stillington  
6:30 - 7:00pm  
10th May The Chapel School Room, Carlton  
7:00 - 7:30pm

8th Jun Grindon Parish Hall, Thorpe Thewles  
7:00 - 7:30pm  
**COUNCILLOR** F. SALT TEL: (01740) 630771

WOLVISTON WARD (BILLINGHAM) 7.00PM - 8.00PM  
6th Apr The Common Room, Wolviston High Street  
13th Apr High Grange Community Centre  
20th Apr The Common Room, Wolviston High Street  
27th Apr High Grange Community Centre  
4th May The Common Room, Wolviston High Street  
25th May High Grange Community Centre  
1st Jun The Common Room, Wolviston High Street  
29th Jun High Grange Community Centre  
6th Jul The Common Room, Wolviston High Street  
**COUNCILLOR** S. PARRY TEL: 879478

YARM WARD 6.00PM - 6.45PM  
13th Apr Yarm Library  
11th May Challoner House  
8th Jun Yarm Library  
13th Jul Challoner House  
**COUNCILLORS** B. JONES TEL: 576855  
MRS M. SIMPSON TEL: 790691

## 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.

## ARE YOU ON A LOW INCOME?

In or out of Work you may get help to pay your rent or Council Tax

STOCKTON  
BENEFIT  
SERVICE  
*here to help*

Call our helpline (01642) 393829 or Minicom 393806  
or e mail: [BenefitService@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:BenefitService@stockton.gov.uk)

Write or call in:  
The Benefit Office, 16 Church Road, Stockton. TS18 1TX

If you wish to report a benefit fraud call Freephone  
0800 328 6340.



# Stockton Adult Education Service

## Adult Education Performance Figures

	2001-02	2002-03
Number of learners	7310	7527
Number of courses	773	877
Number of venues	82	80

### Student Information Booklet

The Senior Managers meet regularly with learners to find out how the Service can be improved. At a meeting of the 'Voice of the Learner' learners suggested what information they needed. This resulted in a Student Information Booklet being produced.

### Achievements and Proud Moments!

Skills For Life Learners in Print - We are extremely pleased that three of our learners have seen their work published this year, Dianne Gosling has had an item published on the BBC Skillswise website, Sandra Harvey-Smith had a piece published in the

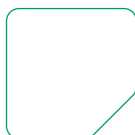
Evening Gazette and Bryan Hayden had a poem published in a book of poetry.

Adult Education was delighted to work with the management of The Castlegate Centre to create a display of students' projects in the old Dixon's shop. Soft furnishings, artwork, decorated eggs, stained glass, parchment craft, beadwork, decorative techniques, woodwork and woodcarving were all on display celebrating the quality and diversity of crafts that can be learned with Stockton Adult Education.

Linda Oliver, tutor of "Braille for the Sighted" course was runner-up for the Northern Region in the Adult Tutor of the Year Awards run by the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education.

### Comments, Compliments and Concerns

Between September 2002 and August 2003 we received 3 comments, 16 compliments and 30 complaints. Most of the compliments were from students to say that their tutors had done a great job! All complaints were actioned within 10 working days. We would like to thank everyone who has sent in a Comment, Compliment or Complaint over the past year. Your comments help us to continually improve the service.



## Calling all community groups

If you live in the south west of Stockton Borough a new area board is set to give you a greater say about the services in your area.

We are looking for representatives of residents groups, parent teachers associations, community centre associations, neighbourhood watch groups or any kind of community group to form a community forum to elect community representatives onto the new area board.




The area board will give community representatives the opportunity to meet regularly with representatives from the health sector, business sector, police, education and council to discuss issues about your area.

Please contact Dawn Welsh, Stockton Renaissance Co-ordinator on (01642) 526498 if you would like to take part.



stockton  
renaissance

## STOCKTON BUSINESS CENTRE

- 24 hours access and security
- Free parking
- Broadband internet to all units
- 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](mailto:Enquiries@StocktonBusinessCentre.org)  
[www.StocktonBusinessCentre.org](http://www.StocktonBusinessCentre.org)



Womens Royal Voluntary Service

## Meals with Care

WRVS helps people maintain independence and dignity in their homes and communities, particularly in later life.

**Tasty winter warmer soups from 75p**

**Standard main course meals £2.10p**

**Standard main course & dessert £2.60p**

- WRVS offer a friendly, reliable home delivery service, our service is available to everyone, there are no restrictions, anyone can access the service.
- ALL profits are used by WRVS to support YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES unlike most other providers.

**ASK ABOUT OUR SPECIAL OFFER 6 STANDARD MEALS FOR £10**

**BUDGET MEALS FROM AS LITTLE AS £1.75p**



You know you can trust WRVS why not give us a call today?

**Phone: 01642 222643**

**TASTY MEALS TO YOUR DOOR**

## Home Farm Foods

Working in your community for over 10 years, Home Farm Foods is now operated by Andrew and Christine Simmons from their base in Darlington. This reliable and friendly service provides a superb range of over 200 delicious frozen meals and other products.

- FREE WEEKLY DELIVERY
- NO MINIMUM ORDER
- EXCLUSIVE RECIPES



**Individual Complete Meals from £1.50 PLUS**

Top Quality Meat Fish and poultry Products  
Pies Puddings Vegetables Snacks Desserts  
Diabetic & Gluten Free Range

For a Free Colour Catalogue  
**CALL FREE ON**

**0800 052 7744**



**we deliver an extra ingredient, experience**

Wiltshire Farm Foods have been delivering frozen ready meals to the people of The North East for over nine years, offering a caring and reliable service.

Wiltshire Farm Foods are the original and the best, delivering the very finest frozen ready meals direct to your home every week. We offer a delicious range of over 150 complete dishes, with many catering for special diets. Prices start from as little as £2.00 for a main course and dessert, with delivery absolutely FREE. Why not try our special trial pack for just £5.00!

For further information call us on  
**01642 643999**

or for your FREE colour brochure

**FREEPHONE 0800 773 773**



**NEW 2004 BROCHURE AVAILABLE**



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

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

Stagecoach in Yarm and Darlington teaches the skills they need to act, sing and dance.

Stagecoach runs at weekends during school term.  
*No auditions necessary.*

**For more details ring: 01325 337667 (24hrs)**

**Ring for details of normal classes plus adult Easter workshop**



# European Parliamentary Election

10th June 2004

The new Electoral Register was published on 1st December 2003.

Unless your name is included on the Register of Electors you will not be able to vote at the forthcoming European Parliamentary Election to be held on 10th June 2004. All households have received an electoral registration form in recent months.

If for any reason you have not signed or completed a registration form, contact the

Electoral Registration Officer (address below) immediately.

If you are 18 or older between 1st December, 2003 and 30th November, 2004, you are entitled to be registered.

**THE LAST OPPORTUNITY TO REGISTER BEFORE THE ELECTION IS 13TH APRIL 2004 COMING INTO EFFECT ON 4TH MAY.**

**Electoral Services**, Law and Democracy, Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, Church Road, Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1LD.

**Telephone:** (01642) 393079. **E-mail:** Electoral@stockton.gov.uk

Failure to appear on the register may affect any credit applications e.g. interest free credit, loans, mortgages and bank accounts.

Value  
your  
right to  
vote

The European Parliamentary election will be conducted on an all-postal basis, without polling stations.

## Here is how the system would work



Delivered to  
your home



Ballot Paper  
marked  
by you



Posted  
back



Democracy

The new equation!

Your vote counts!