

What's on in December 07 and January 08

7th December 07 Stepping out in Stockton	Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre	Weekly health walks approx 1 hour long and led by a qualified instructor.	01642 528049
15th December 07 Victorian Christmas	Preston Hall Museum	Festive fun and entertainment	01642 527375
16th December 07 Christmas Event	Ropner Park	A day of fun for all the family	07017 415811
16th – 20th December 07 Pantomime on Ice. Sleeping Beauty	Billingham Forum	Tickets on sale	01642 551381
4th January 07 Whats up in the Night Sky	Wynyard Woodland Park	Find out what stars and planets are in the sky	01740 630544
6th January 07 10.30am-2.30pm	Tilery Wood Car Park	A ranger led walk from Wynyard Woodland Park to Hurworth Burn Reservoirs back	01740 630011
27th January 07 Big Garden Bird Watch	Entrance to the Reserve at Hereford Terrace, Billingham	See how many birds you can spot	01642 676407

Please contact us if...

- ✓ Your details have changed, so we can update our records.
- ✓ You now have an e-mail address and would be happy to be contacted via e-mail and/or receive your surveys electronically.
- ✓ You know of anyone who would be interested in joining the panel or if you have ideas about improving the way we consult with you.
- ✓ To get more information on anything in the Viewpoint Newsletter or you have an idea for what you want us to put on the Frequently Asked Questions Page.

Contact: Viewpoint
Phone: 01642 526090
E-mail:
viewpoint@stockton.gov.uk
Post: Viewpoint, PPSU
 Stockton-on-Tees BC
 FREEPOST NEA5980
 Municipal Buildings
 Church Road
 STOCKTON-ON-TEES
 TS18 1BR

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News

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Welcome to your latest edition of Viewpoint News.

Issue 20

Welcome to the 20th edition of Viewpoint News. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Viewpoint members and hope you find your time on the panel rewarding and enjoyable.

The 'Frequently Asked Questions Page' in this newsletter is all about Neighbourhood Enforcement.

This newsletter includes:

- ✓ What the latest survey is about
- ✓ Action on Climate Change
- ✓ Results of the latest survey
- ✓ Outcomes from previous focus groups and surveys
- ✓ The 'Frequently Asked Questions Page'
- ✓ What's on in December 07 and January 08

In the last survey we asked you about the following topics:

- ✓ Stockton International Riverside Festival
- ✓ Light Pollution
- ✓ Access to Services
- ✓ Scrutiny Process
- ✓ Wynyard Planetarium and Observatory
- ✓ Electoral Registration

Questionnaires returned 736 **Response rate 51%**

Action on climate change

Described as one of mankind's greatest challenges, the effects of global warming are already being seen. The responsibility to reduce climate change lies with all of us. Without support from the community, the country will not be able to meet the 2012 target of a 12.5 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Stockton Council has created a new questionnaire so people can find out how much they really know about this most important of issues. This will help us develop an effective climate change awareness campaign.

Visit www.stockton.gov.uk/climatesurvey to complete the questionnaire or call 01642 526596 for a paper copy to be sent to you. Questionnaires will also be handed out at various community events in the coming months. One lucky person will also win four Tees Day Ranger train tickets (two adults and two children), allowing them to see the best of the Tees Valley without using a car.

Christmas Competition

Don't forget to return your completed surveys for a chance to win a £100 shopping voucher. The lucky winner will be drawn at random from those surveys returned by the 14th December 2007. Good luck



What you told us

* In this report reference is made to 'net' figures. This represents the percentage satisfied on a particular issue or service, less the percentage dissatisfied. For example, if results show 85% satisfied and 15% dissatisfied, the net satisfaction figure will be 70%.

July 07 Feedback – What you told us

Stockton International Riverside Festival – Key findings

Key findings

- Forty per cent of you had attended the SIRF in the last three years.
- Of those that had visited the festival, thirty two per cent had visited more than three times. Eighteen per cent had visited SIRF three times, twenty six per cent had attended SIRF twice and twenty four per cent had attended the festival once.
- The main reasons you gave for visiting SIRF were an enjoyable/excellent event, to see the diverse entertainment and to take family and friends.
- The main reasons given for not visiting SIRF were, not interested, on holiday and parking/transport problems.
- When you were asked if you would still go to some of the performances, only 20% of you would definitely not go if there was a charge.
- Going by car was the most popular way to travel to SIRF.
- The method most preferred about hearing about SIRF was leaflets delivered to your home (64%) followed by newspaper adverts (45%).
- When you were asked to rank from 1 – 7 (1 being the most important) what they would like to see more of at SIRF, the results were as follows: 1 - Street Theatre, 2 - Carnival, 3 - Dance, 4 – Music, local bands, 5 - Circus, 6 – Music, chart and 7 - Music, Indie.
- When asked if the subsidy of £1.90 per person currently provided to make SIRF a mostly free event, sixty seven per cent of you agreed it was value for money.

What we will do

SIRF 2007 was the 20th festival and the 17th Fringe. Overall satisfaction was (96%) with the highest ever (43%) giving the top satisfaction grade. One thousand and eleven people took part in the carnival which again was the highest ever, representing every post code in the Borough.

SIRF & Fringe combined attracted £298,000 in grants, sponsorship and concessions. With the clear endorsement of local people, we will continue to present a broad mix of street arts, with an emphasis on street theatre which came out on top in the survey. We will also work to further increase participation in the carnival continuing the growth since 2003.

There is a great deal of evidence backed by this viewpoint survey, that charging for some shows would not put people off as long as there were also lots of free shows for those who didn't want to pay. In the future we will consider staging events and performances within the festival with a modest entry price where that makes it possible to bring something to Stockton which we could not otherwise afford.



Access to Services – Key findings

Key findings

- Sixty eight per cent of you preferred using the telephone if you wanted information about the Council. You also preferred using the telephone (79%) if you wanted to request a service from the Council.

FACE TO FACE CONTACT

- Forty eight per cent of you would like to see the new multi-service centres stay open after 5pm. Late opening until 7pm was the most popular choice.
- Sixty four per cent of you would like the centres open at the weekend. When asked what time of the day they preferred to visit, Saturday morning was the most popular choice.

TELEPHONE CONTACT

- Forty six per cent of you would like to be able to telephone the Council earlier in the morning and 52% would like to be able to telephone after 5pm on an evening.
- Sixty three per cent of you would like to be able to telephone the Council at the weekend. When asked what time of the day you preferred to telephone, Saturday morning was the most popular choice.
- Only twenty two per cent of you were aware that the Council had a range of Golden Numbers. Eighty seven per cent thought the idea of Golden Numbers was a good one.
- In total 83% of respondents would be happy to use a telephone menu system but 58% would only be happy to use a menu system if one of the options was to speak to an operator. Twenty nine respondents said they would not be happy using a menu system as they thought it was too long and 16 respondents said they would prefer direct contact.
- 258 of you were prepared to wait five minutes for their call to be answered fully, compared to 195 of you who thought it was reasonable to wait five minutes.
- When you were asked if you were waiting in a queue to have your call answered, what would you prefer to hear, seventy six per cent would like to be given an estimated time for their call to be answered. Sixty six per cent would like to be told their position in the queue and sixty one per cent of respondents would like to be given the option of leaving a voice mail message for someone to ring them back.

What we will do

The responses to questions about the Council's Access to Services project provided lots of useful information about how and when customers would like to be able to get in touch to request services or seek information. The feedback from panel members will help to shape the way the project develops in the future.

The telephone remains the preferred access channel however some people find our current telephone opening hours (8:30am - 5:00pm) do not meet their needs. Early in 2008, the Council will be opening a new telephone contact centre, which will initially deal with calls about Benefits, Council Tax and Care For Your Area services, then will gradually expand to include other services. The standard hours of operation of the new telephone contact centre will be 8:00am – 6:00pm. We also plan to open until 7:00pm on Thursday evenings and on Saturdays from 10:00am – 1:00pm for a trial period. If the trial is successful, these extended opening hours will become a permanent arrangement.

There is also demand for extended opening hours for customers wanting to visit us and speak to a member of staff on a face-to-face basis. When our new multi-service centre opens within Thornaby Town Centre Library, at the end of 2008, we will stay open until 7:00pm on a Thursday evening and will also open on Saturday mornings to respond to customer enquiries. We will do this initially on a trial basis and if the trial is successful, the new opening hours will become a permanent arrangement.

Electronic access channels, such as e-mail and the Council's website are increasing in popularity as a means of contacting the Council. We will continue to develop the range of services delivered "on-line". New electronic services will supplement, not replace, the other ways customers can contact us. Our customers expect us to respond more quickly to e-mails than letters. The Council's target is to respond to both e-mails and letters within 10 working days. Where services are unable to respond to e-mail enquiries within 1 working day, we have introduced a target for an acknowledgement to be issued so customers know their e-mail has been received and who is dealing with it.

Wynyard Planetarium/Observatory – Key findings

Key findings

- Seventy two per cent of you had heard of the Wynyard Planetarium and Observatory.
- When asked if you had visited either the Planetarium or Observatory, nineteen per cent of you had visited the Planetarium and fifteen per cent the Observatory. Of those that had visited either the Planetarium or Observatory, twenty nine per cent had visited in the last year.
- When you were asked how satisfied they were with the show they came to see, there was a net satisfaction rate of 88%.
- Only ten per cent of you had ever looked through the telescopes at the Planetarium and Observatory. Of those that had looked through the telescopes, there was a net satisfaction rate of 85%.
- You thought that more advertising was needed to encourage people to visit the Planetarium and Observatory.



What we will do

The results from the feedback survey on the planetarium and observatory will be considered in the formulation and development of future star shows for the public, community and school groups. They will also be taken into consideration to deliver a more satisfying experience at observing events and when expanding and improving the facilities.

Light Pollution - Key findings

Key findings

- When you were asked if light pollution stopped them being able to see the night sky, stars and all its wonders from where they lived, the net agreement was 35%.
- There was a net agreement of 70% when you were asked if light pollution affects energy use.
- When you were asked if action should be taken to reduce light pollution there was a net agreement of 75%.

What we will do

The results of the light pollution survey clearly demonstrate a general awareness of it's impact upon the environment. Stockton Council included commitments to tackle light pollution in it's Environment Policy adopted in March 2007. The survey results will be used in discussions with other local authorities around the region when highlighting the issue and exploring ways in which it can be tackled.

Scrutiny Process – Key findings

Key findings

- Only twenty five per cent of you were aware of the Scrutiny Process at Stockton Borough Council.
- Of those that were aware of the Scrutiny Process, fifty two per cent understood it.
- Ninety one per cent of you were not aware that they could contribute to the Scrutiny Process at Stockton Borough Council.
- Forty five per cent of you would like more information sent on the Scrutiny Process at Stockton.

What we will do

The information collected will help the scrutiny team at the Council to gauge the level of awareness of the scrutiny process by residents of the Borough. The results show there is a need to raise awareness and publicise the work of the Council's Scrutiny Committees, for example, through publications such as Stockton News and through press releases to publicise specific scrutiny investigations. We will also be seeking to find ways of providing more information on how members of the public can get involved.

Electoral Registration – Key findings

Key findings

- Only three of you who responded to the survey were not registered on the Electoral Register.
- Eighty five per cent of you did vote in the recent Local and Parish Elections. The main reasons given for not voting were holidays, forgetfulness and illness.
- Fifty six per cent of you voted at a Polling Station. Forty four per cent used their Postal Vote.
- Eighty seven per cent of you that responded were aware deadlines were in place to apply for a Postal Vote. Leaflets in the door and advertising on the TV and Radio were the top two suggestions to make people aware of the deadlines to apply for a postal vote. There was a 93% net agreement that Polling Station staff were friendly and helpful in the recent elections. There was an 89% net agreement figure that polling station staff were also well informed and organised.
- When you were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the location of the Polling Station there was a net satisfaction rate of 83%. When asked about access to the Polling station there was a net satisfaction rate of 82%.
- Twenty five per cent of you were not aware that you needed to register every year with the Electoral Registration Office for their right to vote.
- Eighty one per cent of you were aware they could change their registration address during the year if they moved house.

What we will do

One of key facts to come out of the survey was that 1 in 4 people who took part were not aware they needed to register every year to stay on the electoral (voting) register. As a result we will make this a priority for our publicity strategy.

The results will be combined with other work that has been done (e.g. the Polling Station review) to look at ways of improving our services. Where possible, this will lead to changes making it easier for electors to exercise their right to vote.

Outcomes from previous surveys

Local Policing and Neighbourhood Police teams – Viewpoint survey July 2006

Only 23% of you felt the police understood most of the problems in your local area. Since the Viewpoint survey was carried out Neighbourhood Policing has been introduced across the whole of Stockton. There is a clear drive within Neighbourhood Policing to capture the concerns of the local community. All wards have a Neighbourhood Priority Plan which gathers together the three main issues for that area. This is generated by the public and worked on by the Neighbourhood Officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). We used a variety of methods to gather the concerns of local residents:

- Local audits
- Freepost survey in Stockton News
- Face to face meetings at all the local markets

We attend all available residents meetings to again ask about local issues. All this information feeds the Neighbourhood Priority plan. We also undertake to feedback to residents via residents meetings what progress is being made on the issues raised.

Encouragingly, 42% of you felt the police deal with problems in your local area fairly well and 8% that we deal with them very well. All problems are tackled in partnership. We are delivering joint problem solving training to Police Officers/Police Community Support Officers/Council employees/ Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers/Local Councillors and key members from the Community.

You also felt a more visible police presence together with getting to know the local community better were the best ways of dealing with local problems. There has been a massive increase in the number of Neighbourhood resources. We currently have 37 dedicated Police Officers and 43 Police Community Support Officers allocated to Stockton's Council wards. The PCSO figure will eventually rise to 55. These officers and Police Community Support Officers are 'ring fenced' which prevents them being taken away from their neighbourhoods for other duties such as football matches or to cover absences in other areas. The officers and Police Community Support Officers mostly patrol their areas on foot or on pedal cycles. Their photographs and names have been published in Stockton News, Evening Gazette and Safer Stockton Audit Document.

Play Areas/Parks - November 2006

As a result of what you have said John Whitehead Park in Billingham is due to be redeveloped in the near future. One infra-red camera has already been installed with 24 hour surveillance, linked to Stockton Council's Security Centre and a second one will be added.

Additional work will be carried out which will include thinning the overgrown bushes. The height of the perimeter hedge will be reduced over the winter months to allow greater natural surveillance from passers by.

Work on a state of the art play area will start later in the year and users of the Park can expect to use it early next year.

We will keep you informed of any future developments on John Whitehead as well as other parks in the Borough in future issues.

Frequently asked Questions Page:

How do I contact Enforcement?

The team can be contacted by telephoning 391959 or 07970266660

What can I report to Enforcement?

You can report abandoned, untaxed, dangerous and obstructing vehicles, littering, unregistered waste carriers, fly tipping littering, dog fouling, unlicensed/dangerous skips, abandoned shopping trolleys, wheeled bins, groups of youths drinking and school children who litter and smoke.

What will happen if I place my household refuse or wheeled bin out before or leave out after correct collection times?

You could be given a minimum of a legal notice or fixed penalty notice of £75 or £2500 if convicted at court.

Do people really get fined or caught littering in Stockton?

Yes thanks to vehicle mounted C.C.T.V., street based C.C.T.V. and uniformed and plain clothed Officers. Over 250 people were prosecuted last year alone. The maximum conviction can be a fine of up to £50,000 and or up to 5 years in prison.

How do I become an Enforcement Officer?

You have to be suitable to become Police accredited, pass a rigorous testing process. This includes an examination, interview panel and video observation exercise and to score a minimum of 70% to be considered for an enforcement officer post.

What powers do Enforcement Officers have?

Similar to customs and excise, they can conduct and tape recorded interviews. They have a warrant card to enter premises, seize documents and vehicles. They are Police accredited and can seize alcohol and vehicles and you can be arrested for obstructing them. If you fail to supply your correct details they are DVLA agents and can seize your untaxed vehicle. They can also search and impound unlicensed waste carrier vehicles and issue fixed penalty notices for a wide range of environmental offences.

