



# DELIVERING FOR THE ECCLESHALL AREA



This newsletter has been going since December 2015, and usually it focuses on topical news and stories of what I have been doing as the elected representative on Stafford Borough and Staffordshire County Councils. It covers stories supporting individuals to those that benefit wider communities. It picks up immediate concerns as well as those built up over many years, that I have tried to have a positive impact on and resolve. It also picks up some important developments in the local area.

As we near Christmas—a time for families and friends—it provides an opportunity for some to relax and share. However this year there will be others who have spent much of the last two years on the front line in our fight against COVID 19, whether that be Councils, the NHS and Social Care staff, or retailers amongst others. This constant pressure and level of change brings its own challenges, not to mention the system pressures that have built up during this time.

So as we go into a New Year, with the opportunity to reflect and refocus, there is an opportunity to bring communities together by working sensitively together to deliver things that matter most to communities, working in partnership to make a tangible difference

## Borough and County Councillor Jeremy Pert

### This edition covers :

- Staffordshire Women's Aid's 45th Birthday
- Great Local Businesses
- Community Awards Success
- Supporting the voluntary sector locally
- Bringing derelict Houses back into use
- Walking The Staffordshire Way 2021
- Stafford Western Access Route
- Local Government collaboration

### Staffordshire Women's Aid's birthday celebrations

Staffordshire Women's Aid started with their first flat above a butcher's shop in the Highfields in Stafford back in 1976.

The work that they do in supporting the victims of domestic violence was recognised in 2017 by Her Majesty The Queen, with the awarding of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

So it was great to organise part of their 45th birthday celebrations back at the end of November 2021 at the London House Indian Restaurant in Eccleshall and raise £1,000 at the same time. Thank you to all those who supported the event in so many different ways.



**Staffordshire Women's Aid**

Together Against Domestic Violence Since 1976

Another part of the celebrations was the visit of national charity, Women Aid's, Chief Executive Farah Nazeer, and local MP, Theo Clarke, to Stafford—to see the most modern domestic violence refuge in the UK, which opened in 2016.

This was followed up by attending the Parliamentary launch of "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" in Westminster in December.

Raising awareness and creating greater holistic support for the victims of domestic violence remains a key area, whilst creating appropriate role models and safe spaces for those affected.



### Congratulations to Eccleshall's Shortlisted Businesses

In total 80 entries have been shortlisted across 16 categories in this year's Staffordshire Tourism and Good Food Awards 2022.

In total 15 out of the 51 organisations shortlisted—nearly 30% - are from Stafford Borough, which is an amazing testament to the quality of the business involved locally and include the following local businesses :-

- **The Little George, Eccleshall**—in B & B and Guest House of the Year and Pub of the Year and Unsung Hero
- **Perry's of Eccleshall**—in Food & Drink Retailer of the Year
- **Perry's Field to Fork Cookery School, Eccleshall**—in Experience of the Year and New Tourism Business
- **London House Indian Restaurant, Eccleshall**—in Independent Restaurant of the Year
- **Trentham**—in Accessible and Inclusive Tourism and Resilience and Innovation Award and Unsung Hero
- **Trentham Monkey Forest**—in Large Visitor Attraction of the Year
- **Breakfast with Monkeys, Trentham**—in Experience of the Year
- **The Crepe & Waffle House at Trentham**—in Casual Dining Restaurant of the Year



Staffordshire



## Period Power Wins Community Action Award

### Eccleshall based Charity's selfless actions Recognised

Eleven groups were shortlisted in the Borough Council's Community Awards—Community Action category—this year with all thoroughly worthy of winning. But at the end of the day the panel of judges could only choose one winner and this year it was local Eccleshall based charity, Period Power.

The charity was set up to ensure that women and young girls are given the dignity of meeting their personal hygiene needs during menstruation, regardless of whether they can afford basic hygiene products that they need or not.

The charity has grown significantly through the commitments of their volunteers and from donations from local communities and is led by Linda Allbutt.

Period Power delivers sanitary products and other toiletries to food banks, domestic abuse refuges, schools and other charities across the county and has played a vital part in raising the awareness of this issue.



**Linda Allbutt from Eccleshall based Period Power, who won the Borough Council's Community Action award at this year's Awards. With Charlotte Almond of the Community Foundation for Staffordshire, who sponsored the award.**

***Congratulations to all individuals, groups and organisations who were nominated, every one of them deserves an award and our thanks.***

## Royal British Legion Freedom of Borough on milestone birthday

The Royal British Legion was founded in May 1921 and a branch started up in Stafford not long after that in July of the same year.

financial, social and emotional support to members and veterans of the British Armed Forces, their families and dependants.

Therefore it was an enormous privilege to be at the ceremony to award the Royal British Legion Stafford Branch the freedom of the Borough, as they marked their hundredth year of providing

The council has the power to confer honorary 'Freedom' to people or organisations that have given eminent services to the borough, which they most definitely have. Many congratulations.

## Special Recognition for Financially Supporting Communities

### £2.5m of grant support used to support voluntary effort

There are many charities and organisations that work tirelessly in the voluntary sector who go unseen by many, but nevertheless their role is vital to ensure the vibrancy of the efforts that go on.

The Community Foundation for Staffordshire is one of those organisations, as a key partner to the local voluntary sector. The Foundation gives out grants, coming in the main from the return on their endowment fund investments, making them a sustainable funder.

But with the onset of the pandemic, they were recognised by government as a way of getting funding into voluntary sector organisations quickly to keep them afloat and supporting some of the most vulnerable in society. During the first three lockdowns, they gave out £2.5m of funding that kept the voluntary effort going and this was recognised at the Borough Council's Community Awards with a Special Recognition award for all their endeavours.



***The Community Foundation give out grants to local groups to sustain their work. They also accept legacies and donations in people's wills to support the local area in a sustainable way. More information can be found at [www.staffordshire.foundation/howtogive/](http://www.staffordshire.foundation/howtogive/)***



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## COVID Vaccinations Team Secure Judges Award

**Nothing better depicts the voluntary sector in Stafford than the Vaccination Programme**

Unsung heroes across the community of Stafford Borough were the big winners at the Borough Council's annual Community Awards ceremony in November.

The Awards—now in their fifth year—attracted an audience of over 150 people attending in person to see the thirty or more shortlisted individuals, organisations and businesses from across the Borough whittled down to those winning awards on the night. But as ever, everyone nominated really deserved an award, as well as our wholehearted thanks and praise.

The categories included Community Action, Environmental Improvement, Social Wellbeing and Local Hero – as well as an award to recognise sporting achievements in the borough.

This year the judges also awarded a special recognition award, which went to the COVID Vaccination Centre at the Staffordshire Showground, which had worked tirelessly to vaccinate over 95,000 people between starting in December 2020 and June 2021. The team then went on to run the Kingston Vaccination Centre. These endeavours—and those of the other vaccination centres in Staffordshire—were recognised by the Special Recognition Award, which received a well deserved rousing standing ovation from everyone attending.

Of all the volunteering endeavours that reflect the last twelve months, nothing depicts it better than the volume of volunteers and the military precision that worked to protect all in their community, as the COVID vaccination programme locally.



**The vaccination team from Staffordshire Showground, who won a Judges Award at Stafford Borough's Community Awards**



## Staffordshire's Vaccination Programme steps up again

**With the advent of the Omicron variant NHS & Social Care Rise to the Challenge**

Sooner or later within the pandemic we were going to get a variant that spreads very fast. In the earlier waves of COVID there was a concern that that would be the Delta variant, but the Omicron strain has demonstrated the theory as, in the UK, it doubles every 2 or 3 days.

The 'booster jab' was already available to anyone over the age of fifty or more vulnerable to catching things, but with the news that that would be extended to anyone over the age of 18 and that anyone wanting a jab would be able to have one by the end of the year, if eligible, this has meant that vaccination centres in Stafford Borough have had to step up more than a few gears, just at a time when people want to spend time with their friends and families, after what has been a gruelling two years.

The clinical lead for the Vaccination Programme on Monday 15th December confirmed to the County's Health committee though that there would be sufficient supply of vaccine to help vaccinate 359,000 Staffordshire residents before the New Year.



**There are three ways to get your vaccine before 31 December 2021:**

- Book online through the National Booking System by visiting [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- Phone 119 (free to call)
- Attend a walk-in clinic, the details can be found on the web at <https://www.twbstaffsandstoke.org.uk/coronavirus/how-to-get-a-vaccine-where-and-travelling>



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## Stafford Derelict House to provide a New Home for Family

**Bringing back unused properties into providing new homes reduces development burden**

Empty properties often become the blight of local communities and without the care and love and attention that they need on an ongoing basis, soon fall into a cycle of growing disrepair and soon become unlivable.

Never is this more so the case with an empty property that has taken two years of constant work to compulsorily purchase in Stafford, which has been empty for the last thirteen years and despite significant work to trace a next of kin there was none found.

So the only way forward was for the Borough to step in to buy the property, and settle all the outstanding debts by selling the property on at public auction. This will allow a new family to take ownership of the property and lovingly bring it back into a habitable standard over the next eighteen months.

These actions are always taken as a last resort as instead the Borough would prefer to work



**From Sun (The Sun), Mirror (The Mirror) and Star (The Express and Star) the story of an empty derelict house that the Borough stepped in to buy and sell at auction caught lots of attention, including ITV Central News and some 'nationals'**

with property owners to bring their properties back into use, but when all else fails, the Borough has to use the only remaining powers available to it.

## Road Improvements Finally to Start at Beaconside & Redhills

After a delay of over four years, the works to dual the A513 Beaconside road are planned to start from April 2022 in the Marston Gate area, although some of the work can be undertaken off carriageway to limit the impact.

The works on the A34 in the Redhills area to put in a new roundabout and highways accesses will start early in the New Year to keep the length of the works and disruption to a minimum.

## Community Grants given to groups across the Borough

**Borough milestone of support to local groups nears**

On a snowy Saturday at the end of November, nine local organisations shared £7,750, presented to them by the Mayor of Stafford, Councillor Tony Nixon.

The groups were as diverse as could be imagined, from those helping people recovering from addictions, through to a Scout and Guide band. And were principally from Stone and Stafford.

Locally, Chebsey Parish Hall received a grant of £1,000 to help upgrade their facilities, including a vital electrical upgrade.

These grants provide an important lifeline to many groups to help them expand support or become financially viable.



**Borough has been supporting local groups with up to £10,000 a year for coming up to ten years, supporting the creation of many community assets**



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## Walking The Staffordshire Way & Raising £2,500 to 'boot'

Back in 2018, in a moment of madness, I agreed to walk the Staffordshire Way—all 95 miles of it from Mow Cop in the North all the way down to the Shropshire borders at Kinver Edge, with Patrick Farrington, the Leader of Stafford Borough Council and Jeremy Lefroy, the Member of Parliament for Stafford from 2010 through to 2019.



It took us three years to start the Walk, which we managed to complete over eight days, principally in the Summer, but finishing on one very wet day in early October.



**Walking The Staffordshire Way over 8 days with Councillor Patrick Farrington and Jeremy Lefroy as a sponsored walk—at the finishing point on Kinver Edge**



As part of the launch of doorstep walks in the Borough, we also invited anyone who wanted to join us to do so. Some of the days we had full days with just the three of us, but also days, especially around Stafford, where we had ten or more walkers out. Some came for an hour and others for the day and decided to come back again too.

It was a really useful reminder of how beautiful not only Stafford Borough, but the whole of Staffordshire is. So varied and under-appreciated.

The walk raised a total of £2,500 for the Stafford charity supporting the local area—Stafford Together.

## Stafford Western Access Route opens for Traffic

**Investing in infrastructure allows the local economy to benefit**

The new link road from A34 Foregate Street at Madford Retail Park in Stafford to the A518 Newport Road Castlefields in Stafford opened in November 2021, following nearly two and a half years of construction and a cost of £63m.

The link aims to boost growth in the Borough and ease congestion in the centre of town, whilst also improve provision for bus services, pedestrians and cyclists.

There will also be environmental benefits through the re-development of areas of derelict land and landscaping along the route.



**The £63m Stafford Western Access Route—just one of a number of schemes worth more than £120m to boost Stafford through regeneration and economic development, making Stafford Borough a great place to live, work and thrive**



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## DELIVERING FOR THE ECCLESHALL AREA

Councillor Jeremy Pert is the elected member to Staffordshire County and Stafford Borough Councils for the area west of Stafford over to the border with Loggerheads and as far north as Trentham and most of the areas in-between (- for the exact area please see website—[www.jeremypert.co.uk](http://www.jeremypert.co.uk)).

I have been an elected Borough Councillor for the past ten years and prior to that was a Parish Councillor for ten years on Eccleshall Parish Council. I am the Cabinet Member for Community & Health on the Borough Council and Chair of the Staffordshire Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the County. I am heavily involved with numerous community groups including Eccleshall Eagles Junior Football Club, Stafford Together, Stafford United Charities, etc.

For more general details and work please visit [www.jeremypert.co.uk](http://www.jeremypert.co.uk)

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## County & Boroughs to Present United Front

**Working together can drive savings and bring in more funding and powers**

Local government collaboration has been one of the success stories of the past two years—if there can ever be a success story coming from the pandemic.

So building on that and working more collaboratively as eight Borough (or District) Councils and the County Council across the whole of Staffordshire has to make sense. Working to address the financial pressures that all Councils are feeling and to address the growing needs of aging populations and of our communities, without losing sight of the most vulnerable.

This is the platform that has been created as part of pledging to work more closer than ever on the economy, skills and training, climate change and improved public services.

The eventual hope is to create a 'County Deal', which will create new financial support, with more devolved



**Never has the phrase 'The Knot Unites' been more apt than with the aim of working more collaboratively across the public sector**

powers, from central government.

It is probably a set of news that passed most people by earlier this month, but its importance and relevance could last for much of the next decade or more. And when taken with the creation of an Integrated (Health and) Care System next year, could fundamentally improve services.



**Representative STAFFORDSHIRE COUNTY & STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCILS**

### **Four Dreaded Letters – GDPR (and Your information)**

There are clear policies and protocols that are used when publishing this newsletter including an ability to have your name removed from further newsletters and communications and the right of anonymity.

As part of the data policy, I am committed to protecting and respecting your privacy in compliance with EU - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016/679, dated April 27th 2016. In addition to which you have the following rights with respect to your personal data :

- The right to request a copy of your personal data that is held about you
- The right to request that your personal data is corrected, if inaccurate or out of date

Please feel free to contact me with any data questions or concerns that you have.

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