



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.

Christmas this year, for many, will be difficult either through the impact of the cost of living squeeze that is gripping most developed countries across the world or through the pain of losing loved ones in such a difficult couple of years living through COVID and the aftermaths that have happened as a result. But Christmas also offers the opportunity to reflect on the year just closing, whether that be the strength of the voluntary sector, celebrated in a small part through the Borough's Community Awards or in the physical presence of places coming together united in setting up a network across the Borough of Warm Spaces. It could also be in the opportunity that securing funding for the Borough to cover significant infrastructure development to benefit our residents, like Stone's Crown Wharf Theatre development or the Business Innovations Hub in the town brings. These will all help demonstrate confidence in our town as well as in our abilities to invest for a bright and successful future. Hoping that everyone has a loving Christmas and 2023.

Borough and County Councillor Jeremy Pert

This edition covers :

- Funding boost for Borough of £4.7m
- Various Highways schemes delivered
- New Primary School for Marston Grange
- Food Distribution hub opens
- Community Champions recognised
- Warm Space network
- Climate Change champions
- Sponsored walks raise £2.5k
- Residents Flooding survey launched
- Dealing with violence against women and girls

Boost by Investing £4.7m in the County Town & Borough

Supporting the Borough's key priorities for communities and infrastructure

Early December brought the announcement that Stafford Borough Council had secured the largest funding pot of any District or Borough Council in England with £4.67m being secured over three years to continue the investment in our towns and infrastructure.

The money is being used to continue supporting the delivery of projects that help communities in their drive to be strong, vibrant and diverse places to live, work and thrive, like the Stone Crown Wharf Theatre project, which aims to open in 2023 as a new community venue for the arts, based on a co-location with Joules Brewery in Stone, which brought forward that area of the canal-side for redevelopment and regeneration.

This grant will help kit out the auditorium and help make it an attractive new performing arts space in Stone. Money is also going to the town's Scout building.

Other project beneficiaries include the further investment in our visitor economy with an investment of £1m to boost the opportunities that people have to visit the Borough — and visit the Borough for longer - with so many highlights on our doorstep, from Canal Towns, through to Trentham Estate, the Ancient High House and the Castle, and with many additional features close by like Alton Towers and the Peak District.

Additional moneys have been set aside to support and boost the rural economy, given that so much of the Borough is



Stone's Crown Wharf Theatre—one of a dozen projects to receive funding from the Borough Council to support their ambitious plans for a new community space for over 200 people, which will open in 2023

rural.

Another project beneficiary is extending the existing planned £7m History Centre development in Eastgate Street in Stafford.

Money is also being targeted at linking up the various investments coming along in the County Town, making attractive, accessible areas for all to use, whether that be from the proposed Station Gateway to the town centre or from the Riverside Centre and St. Georges.

Climate change projects will receive £250,000 and a new £1m partnership will be formed to support business innovation and growth and encourage new businesses to relocate into a business innovation zone in the County Town centre.



Lineage & Signage Schemes — Delivered Locally

Longstanding Community Highways Concerns Addressed

Many in local communities have longstanding concerns, whether that is with the speed of traffic in their neighbourhood or down to inconsiderate parking.

Community highways initiatives can have an impact on reducing the severity or frequency of these, whether that be things like vehicle activated Speed Indication Devices (SiDs) or gateways to settlements. In addition some improvements to lineage and signage can help. These are never easy 'quick fixes' and often one scheme can consume the available highways resources locally for the whole year and take two or three years to deliver due to the legal processes involved.

Therefore it is pleasing to see the delivery of a large number of schemes that have been championed by local communities this quarter, including :-



No parking—Double Yellow Lines round bends in Swynnerton



New 40mph Speed Limit at Newcastle Road, Hanchurch



No parking round the junction and Tittensor War Memorial on Winghouse Lane



No parking—Double Yellow Lines at Ferdown Drive South



New 40mph Speed Limit at Hatton round the waterworks and cottages



Access improvements for bus users in Swynnerton

Many of these schemes can cost between £4.5—£7.5k to deliver with multiple rounds of consultation and the need to get the process properly executed so that the restrictions are legally enforceable. Hence the sheer volume of time that they take to deliver.

At least this is an added 'Christmas present' to a number of communities and something that helps directly address their concerns.



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Proposed new Primary School for Beaconside

The majority of the new houses have now been built-out on the Beaconside development at Marston Grange, with @ 500 new homes being delivered to date.

The original planning application for the site back in 2016 included a new Primary School at the Beaconside road end of the site to increase primary school capacity in that area.

Plans were submitted early in December 2022 for this new school to be delivered with a single form entry and a 26 place nursery on a 2.6 acre site.

The planning application can be viewed— on the County Council's website using planning application number SCC/22/0151/FULL at the following location :- [Citizen Portal Planning \(agileapplications.co.uk\)](#) alongside a large amount of supporting documents.



Plans have been submitted to Staffordshire County Council to build a new Primary School on Marston Grange, north of Stafford

The school is designed to Department for Education standards and the building will be very thermally efficient, for example the orientation of the buildings was selected based on maximising solar gain and it will obviously allow a 'walk or cycle to school' option for many of the residents on the Marston Grange estate. The school is anticipated to be in use for the educational year starting in September 2024.

Food Distribution Hub Opens after five years in the making

Support can come in so many different ways but different and consistent approaches help massively

A longstanding desire to help the voluntary sector— in particular the food banks in the Borough — to access more food in a cost effective way has culminated in the opening of a food distribution hub in Stafford at the old Shop Mobility site, in partnership with the excess food distribution charity, FareShare.

The concept has been an ambition for the past five years, but for a variety of reasons has never really been deliverable, but with the endeavours and enthusiasm of a new purpose-created Community Interest Company, under the leadership of Mike Court and John Marshall, these ambitions came to fruition in December 2022 with all six local foodbanks benefitting from this support, just at a time when their demand was increasingly significantly.

Not even a pipe burst following the cold snap in the last few weeks, deterred the volunteers from delivering an impeccable and valued service, which brings so much new support to the endeavours of other voluntary sector groups, during this cost of living squeeze. Thanks to all involved in 'delivering the vision'.



Mike Court of Stafford's Food Distribution Hub Community Interest Company and Martin Harrison of FareShare in Nottingham



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Community Awards Celebrate Community Spirit

Stafford Borough Council's Community Awards offer a chance to say 'thanks' and celebrate

At no time has the importance of the voluntary sector been as recognised as in the last couple of years, firstly in the response to the COVID pandemic and more latterly in the response to the cost of living crisis.

Some groups have come together as a direct response to events, whilst others have been supporting local communities for decades. The annual Community Awards gives that chance to recognise and thank many of those people who give their time freely and act selflessly to help others in our community.



Housing and Homeless Minister, Mrs. Heather Wheeler MP, with Dickie James and Charlotte Almond of Staffordshire Women's Aid and ex-Stafford MP, Jeremy Lefroy, during a visit to ForWard House in Spring 2019

One of those groups, winning The Judges Award on the night was Staffordshire Women's Aid with their ForWard House Refuge, who first set up in the Borough forty six year ago, and opened their first safe accommodation above a butchers shop in the town—and now have one of the country's most modern refuges, which is visited by many as an exemplar.

Another recognised on the night was Josh Kershaw for the work that he has done in raising funds to support the response to the war in Ukraine, by creating and selling a calendar of his own creation, raising £3,720 in the process.

Another shortlisted for an award was Andy Stone following his epic feat of completing 70 triathlons in 75 days and whilst not the ultimate winner of his category, he was able to meet the Guest of Honour, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Staffordshire Ian Dudson CBE and share the news of the Guinness Book of Records formally recognising his unique accomplishment.



Martin Young of Rising Brook Community Church, Stafford with His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Staffordshire, Ian Dudson CBE

The Special Recognition Award went to Martin Young, who after twenty three years of leading Rising Brook Community Church in its many different guises from running the Signpost Centre in Highfields, a charity furniture bank, several food banks across the Borough, as well as a debt advice service, had decided to leave Rising Brook to pursue other opportunities, but not without leaving a significant mark and legacy.

There were many more nominated for Awards—including all of the Commonwealth Baton Bearers—who have been active in our local community for many years who all deserved to win, but hopefully their endeavours were suitably recognised and celebrated as part of the Awards evening.



Special Recognition Award to Josh Kershaw, with The Mayor of Stafford Borough, Councillor Philip Leason MBE and parents Bethan and Tony Kershaw



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Network of Warm Spaces launch across Borough

Community Groups come together to Offer a Warm Welcome, supported by £50,000 funding pot

The unfolding situation around household costs can be a worrying prospect for many, as everyday household costs have risen on a near weekly basis over much of the year. It has not just been food and fuel costs, but also housing costs, as the Bank of England tries to get a grip on inflation, amongst others.

Many groups could see the impact in their communities first hand and wanted to provide a natural response —somewhere warm for people to go during the colder, dark nights of Winter, to receive a warm welcome, in a warm safe space, with something warm to eat and drink.

So over the summer, the Borough Council pulled together an outline of what a network of Warm Spaces could look like across the Borough — local to communities, with funding to help contribute to some of the running costs of the scheme, as those group were not immune to the same cost pressures and increases. Equally some funding was allocated for Community Car Schemes to help get people from more remote parts of the Borough to their nearest 'Warm Space'.

By early October the first of twenty nine Warm Spaces opened in the Borough, with Warm Spaces covering places from Yarnfield, Gnosall, Chebsey, Great Bridgeford, Seighford, Gnosall to Great Haywood as well as the more obvious places in Stafford town itself.

Warm Spaces were supplemented by Warm Places, with many libraries coming on board as a Warm Place, offering the same warm welcome and friendly place and a warm drink, just not the warm meal.

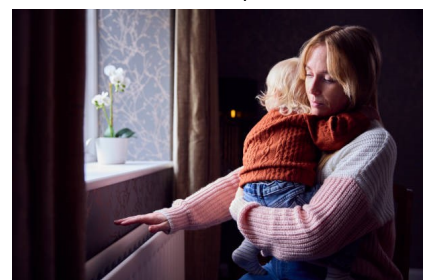
Warm Spaces has been a community response to a crisis that no one forecast, especially given it has come so quickly after the COVID pandemic, with funding coming from Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust (MPFT), grant support from The Community Foundation of Staffordshire, as well as the Borough Council, supporting a raft of groups and organisations wanting to provide help and support—from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Homes Plus — the Housing Association covering Staffordshire and Shropshire - many faith based groups, a couple of Parish Councils and many well known and well established support groups. We've also had interest from sports clubs and village halls.

The response has been phenomenal, with everyone bringing, in no small part, their own skills and abilities to making this scheme a success, by working collaboratively together. No one party could have delivered this network without the other with lots of trust that not only was this 'the right thing to do', but also in the other partners round the table.

Warm Spaces also give the opportunity to those people who have not had the confidence to go out as much since the pandemic, to take the opportunity of a warm welcome and other people's company. Whatever the reason for using a Warm Space in the Borough, the main message is not to suffer the cold weather this Winter in silence, as there is support out there.



The cost of living crunch is affecting many in our communities, so a network of Warm Spaces has been launched by community groups across the Borough to offer a warm welcome, warm space and something warm to eat and drink



[FURTHER DETAILS ON LOCATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON THE BOROUGH COUNCIL'S WEBSITE HERE](#)



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Cabinet meet with Climate Change Research Champions

Opportunity to shape the response to Climate Change locally

Back in 2009, entrepreneur and innovator, Jo Bradwell bought Norbury Park Estate, with the aim of planting trees to offset his family's carbon emissions.

Some thirteen years later, having planted over 436,000 trees on some of the 1,500 acre estate previously owned by the Lords of Lichfield, and undertaken numerous climate change controlled experiments, Jo is widely regarded having won numerous climate change research awards, for his work, including

recognizing the importance to growth of mixed species woodland and selective coppicing and woodland management. Jo has also looked at the role mixed herbal leys in pasture-land can play in carbon capture.

Alongside the Norbury Estate is the BiFORS Face research establishment, where Birmingham University researchers look at the impact of climate change on accelerated carbon infusion over a 10 year project—one of only two such research establishments in the world.



Norbury Park Estate—where they have planted 436,000 trees to reduce the impact of climate change & are storing 5,000 tonnes of carbon every year—with Jo Bradwell & Steve Spencer and members of Stafford Borough's Cabinet (- dog not included).

BiFORS Face Research project looking at the impacts of climate change

Sponsored Walks in Peak District & Gritstone Trail raise £2.5k



Finishing the Gritstone Trail in October 2022, with Jeremy Lefroy and Councillor Patrick Farrington — at the top of The Cloud, Bosley



At Gradbach Mill with NSCG students, Jeremy Lefroy and Lesley Morrey, having walked both Three Shires Head and up to the top of The Roaches, in the Peak District

Back in the summer a range of students from Newcastle & Stafford Colleges Group's Stafford campus took part in a sponsored walk, led by Site Director, Lesley Morrey and Jeremy Lefroy, chair of Stafford Together and myself. The event raised £1,500 with some spectacular Staffordshire views seen from Three Shires Head—the meeting point of Staffordshire, Derbyshire and Cheshire — with funds going towards local charity, Stafford Together.

Following on from the walking of the Staffordshire Way last year, Jeremy Lefroy and Council Leader, Councillor Patrick Farrington and I walked the Cheshire-based Gritstone Trail this Autumn and raised £1,000 in the process — for local charity, Stafford Together.



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Severn Trent Water launch Resident Flooding Survey

Flooding has only got worse in the centre of Eccleshall over the past decade or more, as flooding events become more severe due to climate change, with Eccleshall sitting at the bottom of 'a bowl' with water coming off the surrounding elevated areas and along the river network and converging in the centre of town.

Staffordshire County Council has invested significant amount of money into an alleviation scheme on the Stone Road last year and also into significant ditch and highway gully clearance with land owners. The latest to benefit from this preventative works being along Castle Street.

Severn Trent Water, in partnership with the County Council, have set up a project team to model water flows and are installing water flow monitors in drainage assets in the New Year to help inform their modelling, so that they can accurately predict the impact of flooding and then look at



'Before' and 'After' Photos from some ditch clearance works to reduce the risk of flooding

remedial measures to go alongside the work that they have already done to remove roof water from the foul water drainage system.

In addition, they will be launching a targeted survey for residents affected by flooding in Eccleshall to share with them details about the effects and impacts.

Amey's Community Action Day helps Searchlight Lane users

The highways contractor that delivers all of Staffordshire County Council capital projects — like the Stafford Western Access Route— and their ongoing maintenance is a company called Amey.

As part of their commitment to Staffordshire residents, they offer to undertake individual volunteering days and aggregate them into small projects that make such a difference to local communities, working on things like simple piping works and side of the road reinstatements.

This was the scheme that they delivered along Searchlight Lane between Chebsey and Norton Bridge just before Christmas, which removed the dangerous hollowed-out ruts along the side of the lane and replaced it with a tampered, crushed aggregate run-off for passing vehicles to use. Thank you to Amey for all their support.



Eccleshall High Street to be Surface Dressed in 2023

Surface dressing is designed to extend out the life of the highway asset and remove the need for expensive carriageway reconstruction, provided the carriageway has not deteriorated too much — after all it is about 10 times more expensive to undertake reconstructive works.

So the completion over three successive Sundays in November and December of preparative works for the High Street in Eccleshall to be surface dressed during 2023, was welcome news and a welcome sight as this should keep the High Street looking its best and not needing more significant works for many years to come.



Eccleshall High Street will be surface dressed in 2023



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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).

I have been an elected Borough Councillor for the past twelve years and prior to that was a Parish Councillor for ten years on Eccleshall Parish Council. I am the Deputy Leader and 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

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Challenging Violence against Women and Girls

Raising awareness & challenging behaviours will help make a difference

A new initiative has launched this Autumn at weekends in Stafford town centre to help women feel safer at night.

This has involved the 'Stafford Safe Space Bus' which is stationed in the town centre as a 'safe place' and part of a joint scheme with Staffordshire's Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, Ben Adams.

The bus is manned by the Stafford Street Pastors who already do a fantastic job helping people who feel upset or vulnerable in the town centre at weekends.

The vehicle has been converted to provide room for people to have a space to be able to talk with the Street Pastors - who will help make sure they are able to get home safely.

This initiative is part of a successful funding bid from the government's Safety of Women at Night Fund (SWaNF), including creating safe



Funding and partnership working with Stafford Street Pastors to offer a 'safe space'

places in our town, taxi marshalls at ranks during some of the busiest periods at night, special lids distributed to prevent drinks from being spiked, training for workers and volunteers in the night-time economy and improvements to the CCTV system within the town .

After all looking after our residents and keeping them safe is at the heart of everything that is driven forward by the Council.

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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