

News You Can Use on the Doorstep

Leader's Monthly E-Newsletter for September

From the Leader of the Council

Conservatives win Staffordshire County Council by-election

Congratulations are due to all concerned for the election of our newest county councillor—Bryan Jones, a Hednesford resident who spent 30 years' service as a police officer. He has pledged himself to work closely with fellow Hednesford resident Phil Hewitt who is the other Conservative councillor for the division.



The Hednesford and Rawnsley by-election on September 7 followed the premature death of former county councillor Graham Burnett, aged 59, who was only elected to the county council in May.

Council Leader Philip Atkins says: “Bryan and his team of helpers worked the patch hard and fought off a very strong challenge from both Labour and the Greens to produce a winning margin of votes from local people. Bryan will be a great asset to us. On a night when by-election results elsewhere in the country were disappointing, our new County Councillor delivered a huge boost to our campaigning ability at county level.”

Bryan held the seat for the Conservative party with 1,484 votes with Labour trailing in second and the Greens in third. UKIP and the Liberal Democrats polled only a handful of votes. The turnout was 4,572 (19.98 per cent) The make-up of the county council remains unchanged with Conservatives holding 51 seats, Labour/Labour and Co-operative Party 10 and one seat held by an independent councillor.

New appointments to the County Council Cabinet

Council Leader Philip Atkins says: “Following on from this, I am now pleased to announce two new appointments to the county council’s Cabinet. Mike Sutherland, who represents Etchinghill and Heath, takes up the role of Cabinet Member for Finance and Gill Burnett, who represents Kidsgrove, takes over from Mike as Cabinet Support Member for Adult Safeguarding.



“I am delighted that both Mike and Gill are taking up these two important roles and although they are both new to the county council they bring with them a wealth of experience in local politics. With a growing ageing population funding of social care, proactively managing the financial challenges and of course safeguarding the most vulnerable in our communities continue to be key priorities for the council.”

The full cabinet membership now is:

Philip Atkins – Leader of the Council. I will also take on responsibility for Corporate Matters

Alan White – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health, Care, and Wellbeing

Gill Heath – Cabinet Member for Communities

Mark Deaville – Cabinet Member for Commercial

Mike Sutherland – Cabinet Member for Finance

Mark Sutton – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Mark Winnington – Cabinet Member for Economic Growth

Gill Burnett – Cabinet Support Member for Adult Safeguarding

Helen Fisher – Cabinet Support Member for Highways and Transport

Philip White – Cabinet Support Member for Learning and Employability

People get their first glimpse of new Staffordshire History Centre plans

Council Leader Philip Atkins explains: “This month we are giving people a sneak preview of our plans for the exciting new Staffordshire History Centre at a series of open days.

“We have communicated about this before when the architects and design team were appointed but now it seems much more real as we can all see exactly what the new centre is going to look like.

“The new Heritage Lottery funded £4 million centre would be located on Eastgate Street in Stafford and would hold our historical records. It would provide a bright, welcoming space for visitors and exhibitions with browsing areas creating an easy entry point to the archives.



“The plans, which have been well received include artist’s impressions and designs, ideas for future exhibitions, and even a 3D model which helps show how the new centre would link to the William Salt Library. People also liked the idea of bringing our collections together in one place and approved our ideas for the kinds of exhibitions that would be on display and going out into local communities.

You’ll also find more details on the project or how to sign up to the new e-newsletter at www.staffordshire.gov.uk/archives/ourvision

It’s back to school again for our children, parents, and carers

It’s September again and it’s already seen children across the country heading back to school for the new term after the summer break. And for some parents, families, and carers it could also see teenagers off to college, university, or to do an apprenticeship. Many of them will be leaving home for the first time.

The county council is working hard to continuously improve results and give our children and young people the best schooling experience we can. We will continue to work with our partners to support our schools to improve even further.

Our teachers and other school staff work exceptionally hard to help pupils achieve strong academic results. For this September start, nine out of 10 parents in Staffordshire were also offered their first-choice primary school. We are continuing to create more school places to cope with the rise in pupil numbers. Over the past year we created nearly 1,500 more school places in both primary and secondary schools in readiness for the new school year.



September also saw the national roll out of 30 funded hours of childcare for three and four-year-olds available for working parents. It's great news for eligible families, it puts more money in their pockets by either saving on fees, or allowing a parent to go out to work, or it simply makes a massive improvement to their work-life balance.

And to start the new term, 15 more schools will benefit from our "20 is Plenty" scheme. These flashing signs help keep children safe on the way to and from school by encouraging motorists to slow down when near schools.

So, with our roads among the safest in the country and recent evidence suggesting that a brisk 10-minute walk is good for our health, it's a great opportunity, this term to leave the car at home and walk to school with the kids.



Low Staffordshire jobless figures show economy plan is working

The latest August unemployment figures have been released and show our Conservative number one priority of having a productive Staffordshire economy is working. People in work are healthier, safer, happier, and reduces the need for the services a county council provides which in turn means we can keep council tax low.



The latest unemployment figures for August have been released. In Staffordshire, there are 5,580 people claiming out of work Universal Credit benefits including Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), this equates to a rate of 1.0 per

cent, the number of claimants has decreased by 0.8 per cent (45) compared to the previous month, whereas the rate has remained the same.

Staffordshire County has the second lowest rate in this measure of all West Midlands Strategic Authorities.

The growth in employment over the past four years has meant that last October there were 439,100 in employment across Staffordshire with an increase over the year of 12,300. The picture looks even better when you remember self-employed, voluntary workers, and those working their own business are not included in these figures.

With so many employed and such a small number of people claiming JSA across Staffordshire, this is good news for everyone in the county and means people are making the most of the opportunities on offer and our long term economic plan in action.

Burton Gateways project progressing well



A major refurbishment scheme to safeguard the future use of St Peter's Bridge and Burton Bridge is progressing well.

The £6.1 million project involves vital strengthening work on St Peter's Bridge, meaning HGVs and buses can continue to

access the town. Waterproofing and resurfacing work will also take place. Without this vital improvement lorries and buses would be banned from using the bridge by 2019.

People are being advised to allow additional time for their journeys, particularly at peak times. The county council has been working with bus operators to minimise disruption to passengers, with some putting on additional services. Some routes and stops may have temporarily changed so people are being advised to check current timetables before they travel. Both daytime and twilight working has started, meaning work is carried out on site from 7.30am to 10.30pm. This will help to get the work completed as quickly as possible.

The project team has also been working on the new bearing designs and introduced a revised traffic control signal plan in Burton to help reduce congestion during peak hours. The project has seen the beginning of the bearings replacement and new deck joints installed as the remaining road surface is removed.



To allow the strengthening work to be carried out safely, St Peter's Bridge is closed both ways with traffic diverted via Burton Bridge and pedestrians via Ferry Bridge. This essential work is expected to take around three months and should be completed by the end of November.

Improvements to Burton Bridge will begin next year, which will include strengthening, resurfacing, and upgrading gullies to help prevent surface flooding. The people of Burton will be asked when the best time for this work is. Immediately following or sometime in the summer. The bridge will be closed to all traffic during the work, which will be diverted via St. Peter's Bridge.

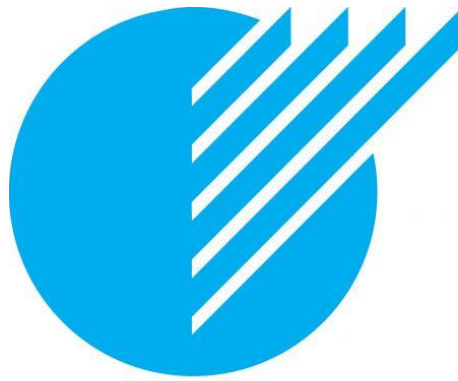
The funding for the project is part of the multi-million-pound Highway Challenge Fund by the Department for Transport. The improvements will ensure that both bridges, which form vital links through Burton will be free of unplanned and disruptive maintenance work in the future.

The announcement of our successful bid to Government was made in August and we were required to begin the work as quickly as possible.

Rest assured every effort is being made to minimise disturbance and get the work done as efficiently as possible. We would like to thank all businesses and residents for their patience while work takes place. Businesses may want to consider allowing flexible working arrangements to improve employees' journeys by avoiding peak travel times.

Staffordshire businesses invited to sign up for 2018 UK Corporate Games

With some of the UK's top firms already signed up for the 2018 UK Corporate Games, local companies are being encouraged to follow suit. The Games, which will return to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent next year, are expected to attract thousands of amateur athletes from top companies and boost the local economy to the tune of around £3 million.



UK Corporate Games™

Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire
21 - 24 June 2018

Businesses interested in taking part are being invited to a special celebration launch event on 4 October at Keele Hall. England Legend Gordon Banks will be welcoming guests alongside Jenny Booth, world record holder and gold-medal winning Paralympic swimmer, and Ian Marsden, British Para canoeist, hand cyclist and bronze medallist in the 2016 Summer Paralympics.

Local companies taking part include Staffordshire Police, Wade Ceramics and Knights1759 who have already signed up to enter 95 participants.

The joint Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent approach was selected by the Games organisers ahead of several other bids following the success of the Games in the region in 2015.

Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth at Staffordshire County Council, says that hosting the Games again will be great for the county and provide yet another real powerful opportunity to show off what Staffordshire has to offer.

He says: "The last Games were a real success giving thousands of business people the chance to visit and see the huge economic opportunities available in the area. It's great that we have so many prestigious companies already signed up but we're keen to see as many local companies getting involved and taking advantage of the many benefits too."

Freight group presses ahead with measures to reduce HCV impact

A group formed to reduce the impact heavy commercial vehicles on Staffordshire's roads is set to deliver a package of measures to benefit communities along one of the county's main routes.

The Staffordshire Freight and Communities Forum met with a specific focus on reducing HCV impact along the A515, affecting the villages of Draycott-in-the-Clay, Yoxall, and Kings Bromley. The group, which includes parish council representatives, the county council, Highways England, police, and the fire service, agreed to deliver the measures as soon as possible.

Among 21 options being considered are new signs to advise HCV drivers that the route is unsuitable for them, engineering improvements such as build-outs on parts of the route, and looking at restricting HVC movements onto the A515, such as from the A513 to a By Pass for Yoxall.



The forum also agreed to write to all Staffordshire MPs to ask for their support in lobbying the Government to address issues resulting from national freight policy. It will continue to look for solutions to issues in other parts of the county at future meetings.

Staffordshire County Council's cabinet member responsible for highways and transport Mark Deaville says:

"The meeting was hugely positive and enabled us to make great progress towards delivering measures which we hope will make a real difference. Our highways officers drew up a highly detailed report with several options, with considerable input from the parish councils to which we are very grateful. It means we can act as soon as possible to begin to address some of the community concerns. There has been a great deal of necessary process to get to this stage, so we're pleased now to get things started. We will, of course, monitor the impact of everything we do. We know these measures won't fix everything, but we're certainly moving in the right direction."

Individual entries to Staffordshire's IRONMAN 70.3 triathlon in 2018 officially open

Interest in the race is always high, so competitors are being encouraged to sign up at www.ironman.com/staffordshire70.3 as early as possible to avoid missing a place.



The 2018 edition of IRONMAN 70.3 Staffordshire will take place on Sunday 10 June 2018, and is the first year that the race finishes in Stafford Town Centre. The finish and run course will be in the heart of the town, allowing supporters and spectators to get closer to the action than ever before.

Once again, the event will see competitors complete a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride, and 13.1-mile half marathon

Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth says: "IRONMAN 70.3 Staffordshire is a fantastic race, and interest is always really high. Nearly 8,000 athletes have competed in the event since 2015. We expect that even more people will be interested in the new run course and finish line. Because of this, I'd urge people thinking about taking part to sign up as early as possible to secure their place on the starting line.

"We're really pleased to be able to continue this and showcase what a great county Staffordshire is to live, work, and visit. By bringing the race to Stafford Town Centre we can ensure even more people will have the opportunity to get involved, and more local businesses will benefit."

Lisa Dent, IRONMAN 70.3 Race Director says: "There is always tremendous interest in IRONMAN 70.3 Staffordshire, which has quickly become one of the UK's biggest and most popular events. Athletes can look forward to a truly world-class race experience that always produces great support, so it's well worth taking the plunge and signing up to race in 2018."

For more information, and to sign up, visit www.ironman.com/staffordshire70.3

Detailed course maps and descriptions will be released later.

THE ECONOMY

THE FACTS



The economy is now **15.2% bigger** than it was at the 2010 election.

SOURCE: ONS, 26 July 2017

We will recruit **21,000** new mental health workers in England

We will spend **£1.3 billion** to treat an extra one million people by 2021.

 Conservatives



MIDWIVES IN THE NHS

THE FACTS

May 2010
19,478
MIDWIVES

March 2017
21,597
MIDWIVES

SOURCE: NHS Digital, 21 June 2017