



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.

This edition is slightly different as it picks up on some of the activities of some of the other locally elected representatives, principally to the Borough Council and what they have been working on in their own areas. This is a really good contrast as everyone brings different experience and expertise to what they do as elected representatives and they have different emphasises, supporting communities in different ways. Their input to this newsletter is easy to see in discrete sections.

This edition covers :

- Visit of Secretary of State for Education
- New surface for Eccleshall Tennis players
- Commemorative Tree Planting
- Pets at Home opens job opportunities
- Springfields First School Climate Initiative
- Speed reductions to make roads locally safer
- HS2a Update
- Warm Spaces support
- Stafford's Market Square renovation
- Staffordshire Day—1st May
- Guest Columns

Borough and County Councillor Jeremy Pert

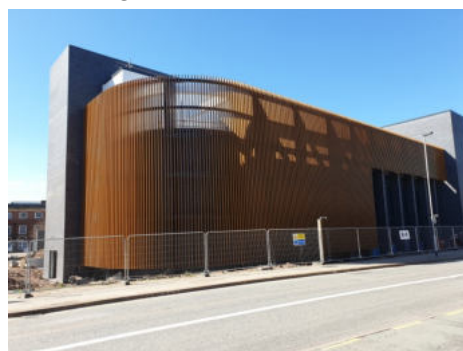
Secretary of State for Education visits Stafford campus

Reflecting on the massive investment in education in the County Town

At the end of March, the Secretary of State for Education, the Rt. Hon. Gillian Keegan MP, came on a visit to the Stafford campus of Newcastle and Stafford Colleges Group (NSCG).

Gillian spent time talking to senior staff and students and was keen to see first hand the impact of the Department for Education's (DfE) involvement with the new £28m Skills and Innovation Centre at the campus.

Gillian was able to hear that the building, that is scheduled to be used as teaching space from the Autumn for engineering, motor vehicle and building qualifications amongst others, with a large auditorium, was both on track and on budget, which given the delivery is the first of its kind with the DfE was reassuring to report.



Road-side view of the new Stafford campus, Skills and Innovations hub—based on an investment of £28m in education provision

The Secretary of State spent the largest amount of time talking to and answering questions from students, whether that was about apprenticeships, life long



Outside the new Skills and Innovations hub with Craig Hodgson, Principal NSCG, the Rt. Hon. Gillian Keegan MP, Secretary of State for Education and Theo Clarke, MP for Stafford



learning opportunities, the new T Levels or about general experiences at the College and what the qualifications being achieved will mean to individual students.

NSCG has become in recent years one of the Top 6 Further Education providers in the country and has continued to invest in first class facilities in the County Town and the visit reaffirmed its top quality reputation, as an Outstanding College group.

Eccleshall Tennis Club players to benefit from Artificial Surface

Supporting different Community Groups across the patch

When Eccleshall Tennis Club's two courts on the Chester Road started to have seen their best playing days the Club's committee started looking at what alternatives there were and just as importantly how to fund them.

Following months of researching into some of the eleven different types of surface they decided to go down the route of an artificial 'Third Generation' (3G) grass surface, which utilises longer fibres with a combination of rubber and sand infill to offer a better quality surface for players.

Having given Eccleshall Tennis Club a compendium of different funding sources, covering over 75 different grant funding bodies, the Borough Council was able to help further by supporting the project with a contribution of £15,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which was secured at the back end of last year as part of £4.5m coming into the Borough area, as part of works to support delivering a variety of projects.



With Mark Embrey of Eccleshall Tennis Club during works to move to new Third Generation surface

The works to the courts were undertaken in March and now the Club is waiting for the 'Wimbledon bounce' coupled to the additional interest from its investment in the new surface.

Commemorative Tree Planting—The Highfields, Croxton

With the forthcoming Coronation of King Charles III about a week away, residents of the Highfields, led by the Parochial Church Council of St. Pauls Church in Croxton, decided that they wanted to commemorate the event, to be held in Westminster Abbey, by planting a tree on the green in the centre of the village.

The tree planted was a flowering apple, which will not only provide much beauty in time, but will also provide a tasty treat in the Autumn for anyone lucky enough to be passing by.



Residents of the Highfields in Croxton turned out en masse for the commemorative tree planting

The tree fits in line with another one to mark the late Her Majesty The Queen's Jubilee and also a third tree marking the centenary of the Broughton WI, which was planted in December 2021.

Housing Plus Group, the local Housing Association with 18,000 homes across Staffordshire and Shropshire, have also volunteered to provide a plaque to mark the occasion.

It was great to be out in the Spring sunshine as a group of local residents, enjoying each other's company and making sure that the Coronation of His Majesty the King will be remembered for decades to come, even if that was the most unusual place that the national anthem has been sung in a long while.

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Pets at Home finds its new long term home at Redhills

Where Pets at Home Goes, others will Follow

Pets at Home has an extremely successful track record and has a unique culture, through both their pet-centric and employee centric approach. This has enabled them to grow rapidly, without many of the usual growing pains that other organisations have seen.

As part of their planning for their next growth phase, three years ago they started looking for where they should base their new national fulfilment centre. And as part of this review, land just north of Redhill Industrial Estate by Junction 14 of the M6 seemed an ideal location. So much so that they also decided to relocate their head office to the same location.



At the opening of Pets at Home's new national fulfilment centre with Lyssa McGowan, CEO Pets at Home, and Daniel Gallagher, Joint Managing Director Stoford Developments



Inside the 670,000 ft² highly mechanised facility offering retail store fulfilment, b2b and b2c shipment capability

Three years later and Pets at Home's new head quarters and 670,000 ft² national fulfilment centre was opened on Tuesday 25th April 2023. Already employing 300 staff in the operation and a further 120 staff in the head office and bringing on new members of staff at the rate of 40 per week, their operation is impressive.



Compact high bay storage for some of Pets at Home's 11,000 lines with picking by individual line, case and pallet to suit the specific customer segment

The facility was opened by Pets at Home's Chief Executive Officer, Lyssa McGowan and Daniel Gallagher, the Joint Managing Director of the property's developer, Stoford Developments and will be the eventual home to 750 new employees to the Borough and at peak capacity that will become over 1,100 members of staff.

To have such an impressive recognisable name and market leading business relocate to Stafford Borough, laying down their roots for the future and investing over £70m in the local area, bringing a range of quality of roles, shows that Stafford Borough is uniquely placed in the country to be a great place to live, work and thrive. And clearly where Pets at Home leads, others will follow.

When coupled to the business support and great places to live right the way across the Borough, with top quality education provision this should provide the platform for the growth in attracting exciting and innovative businesses into the area over the next few years.



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Yarnfield's Springfields First School in Climate Initiative

Seed funding can help deliver Fundamental Change

Two years ago the County Council launched a Climate Change Fund to help encourage new initiatives from encouraging bio-diversity through to climate change adaptations—for example the re-wilding of areas through to the move to energy saving devices.



Yarnfield's Springfields First School was one of the groups that submitted an application from within the local area and were delighted to be successful in their desire to retrofit energy saving lighting across the whole school in a move to LED lighting, in a simple bid to show that green initiatives don't need to cost the earth.

The project was duly completed during February half term.

Springfields First School in Yarnfield secured funding to move to LED lighting as part of the County's local Climate Change fund

Road Safety Schemes Implemented after Years in the Making



New 40mph buffer zone added to Eccleshall on both A519 and A5013

A number of road safety schemes have been implemented across the wider area to try and address community concerns about the speed of traffic in their local areas and road safety.

These schemes run across the Swynnerton, Yarnfield, Cold Meece, Sturbridge and Eccleshall areas and come after the best part of four years fighting to get them delivered, through all the legal and consultation processes involved.

One of the areas affected is the Swynnerton Road where local residents, road users and pedestrians have all complained on a regular basis about the difficulty trying to live on

and use that road. And speed has led to a number of fatalities in the area and it is hoped that that will now be a thing of the past.

Other changes to be introduced are buffer zones being brought in to abut settlement 30mph zones, with the aim of slowing down traffic consistently so that greater adherence to the actual 30mph zone in the settlement may be achieved, making it safer for everyone living in those areas.

It is planned to leave the new speed limit areas for the first six months, to allow driver behaviour to change and then invite the Speed Camera Van to come and visit some of those areas to help encourage the adherence to the new limits.



New 40mph speed limit for Cold Meece and 50mph up to Swynnerton village, along Swynnerton Road

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HS2a Ltd.—Impact on Staffordshire—an Update

The Government announced in March 2023 that the new high speed train line between Birmingham and Crewe, known as HS2 would see construction delayed by two years, with the re-phasing of works to deal with "significant inflationary pressure and increased project costs".

What that means in practical terms is something of a moving feast and further changes to the HS2 construction programme has been subsequently announced and further announcements may well yet come on top of that, but the latest position would seem to be :-

HS2 Phase 1

The County Council are not aware of any impact on Phase One.

HS2 Phase 2a

The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to delivering HS2 from London Euston to Manchester, including Phase 2a. But the main civils works between the West Midlands and Crewe will be paused.

HS2

However, during this time HS2 Ltd will continue with preparatory works already underway, including completing live utilities works and habitat creation. Phase 2a land acquisition will also continue. HS2 Ltd. will continue to progress the scheme design ahead of construction. HS2 Ltd. are awaiting the award of the Design Delivery Partner (DDP) who will undertake this work.

Early Environmental Works (EEW) - Balfour Beatty

Delivery of Early Environmental Works is expected to continue (although not confirmed). HS2 Ltd will undertake a detailed review of the 76 ecology sites, to establish work that will be completed plus maintenance requirements. And Balfour Beatty will continue to monitor and provide site management.

Early Civils Works 1 (ECW1) – Balfour Beatty

HS2 Ltd will review contractor activities for detailed design of works at Wood End Lane (Lichfield) and Hanchurch Interchange Junction 15, M6. All preparatory work and future construction activities has been paused.

Early Civils Works 2 (ECW2) – Kier

Most ECW2 work has paused with immediate effect, including detailed development for the highway designs and any future construction work. Ecological surveys, given that they are time limited, will be paused. HS2 Ltd and Kier will review ground investigation and topographical works associated with highway design, with some of these surveys being completed. Some traffic management to undertake these surveys will be taking place in upcoming months.

Utilities Diversions

HS2 Ltd will continue to deliver utility diversions at Chorlton, Toldish Lane and Hanyards Lane. These are critical non-contestable diversions which will be delivered by National Grid, Gas and Cadent. The remaining diversions will be deferred as part of the rephased works.

General

HS2 Ltd have said that they are continuing to work closely with the Government and their supply chain on the details of any changes to the HS2 works currently taking place and the future programme of works. They have stated that communities will be kept updated as this work progresses.

At the moment, the Community Funds and Road Safety Fund are not currently affected by the works being paused.



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Warm Spaces Webinars for Volunteers

Working to support the Voluntary Sector doing what they do Best

The Borough Council could see back in the Summer of last year that there was a serious problem coming with the cost of living crisis and by working in partnership with the Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust and the Community Foundation for Staffordshire and the voluntary sector was able to set up a network of 30 Warm Spaces across the Borough.



The first one was up and running in October and some have decided to keep running, even though the funding was until the end of March 2023.

During the mobilization, the Borough Council ran a series of six webinars to help provide additional information to volunteers to help them with a range of different—may be difficult—conversations to provide them with the confidence and knowledge to be able to have those conversations or signpost people to where more help was available

The webinars covered things like Damp and Mould, Where to get Housing Advice, Energy Efficiency, Fire Safety and Mental Health advice and support and provided a useful resource to many groups.

Update on the A34 Redhill Roundabout and Whitgreave Lane

The original plan for the new roundabout on the A34 was to have the two way closure of Whitgreave Lane lifted at the end of May 2023.

However due to a variety of construction challenges, including material failures, encountering a major water main and requiring some new carriageway foundation, the scheme has encountered some delays.

Instead the existing contraflow will now remain in place until early July. With only one lane running both north and south to allow repairs to the central reservations until the end of August / early September.

Once these works have been completed however, Whitgreave Lane will then re-open both ways, both in and out.

Warm Spaces Parliamentary Award Nomination

The initiative to set up a network of Warm Spaces across Stafford Borough, whilst an instinctive thing to do for so many in the organisations actively involved in their delivery, has been nominated for a NHS Parliamentary Award for the work that it did through a difficult Winter in supporting people and helping reduce some of the anticipated additional pressure on our local and regional hospitals. At the end of the day, there was not an appreciable number of additional non-seasonal admissions or attendances at the areas acute hospitals.

This is a great demonstration of the public sector working together with the voluntary sector to support individuals and communities. The Winners, in this the 75th anniversary year of the NHS, of the Parliamentary Awards will be announced on Wednesday 5th July 2023.

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Work Starts on Stafford's Market Square

Retail has changed forever with the boom of the internet and effective home delivery networks. Suddenly everyone has access to hundreds of thousands of products at the touch of a button, all delivered conveniently to home within a day or a couple of days.

No wonder the High Street can't compete directly. But what it can compete on is a shopping experience—like trying on clothes from an individual clothes retailer, like combining shopping with a nice coffee and cake experience with friends, etc..

High Streets used to have people living in them until the 1970's trend of moving people out of town centres and just having shops and offices.

To bring back town centres to life, there needs to be a range of homes and flats, alongside the retail, there needs to be a mixture of retailers and not all the same type and there needs to be things for people to do and places for them to go.

That is the journey that Stafford town centre is embarking on, with the rejuvenation of the Market Square, with the first kerb stones being laid to create a larger, more flexible space in the centre of town, as part of an investment of £1m to enable more events and specialist markets to be held. All of this work will be complete by the Autumn.

The aim is to make this iconic landmark an attractive centre piece for the area and fit for purpose for the future.

Elsewhere confidential discussions are still taking



Council Leader, Patrick Farrington, Councillor Mrs. Frances Beatty, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning in Market Square overseeing the laying of kerbing

place to bring back some more empty buildings and give them a new lease of life. Although these discussions can be somewhat drawn out with landlord price aspirations often out of this world and simply unaffordable for the public purse.



The vision for the new Market Square

Staffordshire Day—Monday 1st May 2023—is nearly Upon Us

Staffordshire Day is the day where we celebrate everything we love and cherish about Staffordshire.

It happens annually on May 1st, with people putting on events of all shapes and sizes across the county, with loads of competitions and special offers from our great attractions, restaurants, pubs, and hotels.

Whether you love our captivating countryside, our thrilling theme parks or our eye-opening history and heritage, there will be something for everyone to make Staffordshire Day special this year.



STAFFORDSHIRE DAY
MAY 1ST

Celebrating all that is great about the place we live



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Peter Jones—Volunteering Supporting the Blind

Working to support the Voluntary Sector



A group which provides weekly news items in spoken form for members of the blind community is supported by Borough Councillor Peter Jones.

The Stafford and Stone Talking Newspapers has a group of volunteer news gatherers, technical folk and readers.

And Peter has been one of the band of readers for some years regularly providing snippets from the local newspapers, so that people can keep up to date with local news and current affairs, regardless of their eye sight.

Peter & Joy Jones—Enabling Residents to access the local Services they need



Peter works with his wife Joy as co-ordinators for the Eccleshall Voluntary Car Scheme which provides transport for all types of medical appointments from doctors, hospitals, chiropodist, opticians etc.

The group has a team of volunteer drivers who can be called upon to help people without transport of their own or the use of a bus service.

Peter & Joy founded the scheme in 2018 and with the wonderful support of the team of volunteer drivers has been helping a registered list of over 100 members of the community, many referred by Crown Surgery.

Peter Jones—Co-ordinating the Volunteers to keep the Show on the road



The Stafford Gatehouse Theatre also benefits from the support of Peter and Joy as Front of House volunteers.

Peter is a volunteer Front of House manager



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Roy James—Working within the Swynnerton & Oulton area

Over the past few months Roy has been engaged facilitating two exciting biodiversity projects. The first is the introduction of beavers into Trentham Gardens. This will no doubt draw visitors from all over the county as well as those living far afield. The second is a project some two years in the making which will see the Green in Yarnfield transformed into a multi-functional area increasing biodiversity and amenity.

Roy has also been championing the concerns of residents over several Planning Applications which have raised serious concerns. By "calling-in" these Applications for review by the Planning Committee allowing residents to voice those concerns directly.

After many months, the 40mph buffer zones introduced outside Swynnerton, Cold Meece and Yarnfield have reached fruition and it is the aim of these zones to slow the traffic down before they enter our villages. I sincerely hope that motorist will take heed.

James Nixon—On the Campaign Trail

Councillors for Swynnerton & Oulton alongside Stone Town Councillor Steve Walley, have been busy out and about talking to and meeting with residents across the local area from as far afield as Moddershall and Meaford to Stone.

James has been helping to not only talk about some of the work that he and the team have been involved with, like investments in Westbridge Park and the Stone Theatre, and even helped one set of gardeners to remove a tree from their front garden.



James Nixon—Support for Ukraine

James—the grandson of a Ukrainian himself—, spent a weekend in Stafford's Market Square manning a stall to raise much needed funds and collect essential items generously donated from members of the public recently.

Over £2500 was raised on the day with quite literally hundreds of items of clothing and essentials donated and going directly to those in desperate need.

People can still donate here - <https://donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-crisis-appeal>



James Nixon—Trentham's Beaver Success

James along with Councillor Roy James met with the incredible team at Trentham Gardens. Learning all about their investment plans for the future and the heart-warming news of the arrival of Beavers at Trentham thanks to a special partnership between Trentham and the Beaver Trust.



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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).

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

Rejuvenating the Offer in Stone town

Work has recently started on the new £1.5m destination play area at Westbridge Park in Stone.

This comes on the back of news of support of £500,000 to the new Crown Wharf Theatre and investments at the Scout Hut and on resurfacing some of the town's car parks.

Separately a network of EV charging points are being added to the town's car park infrastructure to enable the move to electric vehicles.

And all of this was driven by the move of the leisure centre back in 2019 to a brand new purpose built site at Westbridge Park, which went alongside the new highly successful M & S Food Hall, which provides a real draw to the town centre.

All in all @ £11.5m has been spent by the Borough Council in Stone in the last ten years and it shows that services available — and attractive — to all can be delivered through the best use of all available resources.



Work has started on the new destination play area at Westbridge Park, with Councillor Mrs. Carolyn Trowbridge



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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