

## News You Can Use

### From the Leader of the County Council

November 2017

#### Tributes Follow Death of Staffordshire County Councillor



Philip Atkins, the Leader of Staffordshire County Council has led the tributes following the death of county councillor Robbie Marshall at the age of 57.

Robbie who was first elected to the county council in 1997 and represented the Codsall division, died after suffering a heart attack recently.

Philip, said: “We are all hugely saddened to hear about the passing of Robbie. The news of his collapse came as a huge shock to everyone as he was in great spirits when we last met at a meeting of the Full Council only a few weeks ago.

“All who knew Robbie will testify what a larger life character he was. He had an incredible zest for life, tremendous energy, and an absolute passion to do everything he could to do make life better for people.

“He was immensely likeable and a true friend and colleague. In essence, Robbie summed up the very best about what a local councillor should be.

“As well as serving residents in Codsall both at a district and county level, Robbie also played a key role in the council during his years as Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care and in opposition on the Minerals Policy, reducing the amount of sand and gravel mined in the county. Both the council and the county will undoubtedly be a poorer place for his passing.

“Robbie was a hard-working councillor and local businessman, but he was also very much a family man and a devoted husband and proud father. Our thoughts are very much with his wife Jane and children James and Hayley at this sad time.”

As well as being a member of the Cabinet Robbie was also the first chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board. During his time with the council Robbie also served on several committees including the planning committee, corporate review committee and the pensions committee, where he was chair.

As a mark of respect, the flags on county buildings in Stafford were lowered to half-mast

## Getting down to business expansion and creating more jobs

We're unashamedly putting the focus on business and job creation in this latest News You Can Use bulletin with a new determination by the Conservative administration to roll up its sleeves and get down to work. This is highly topical and relevant to all communities in the county because further business expansion



announcements made in October were welcome news and will help strengthen the county's position as a place of opportunity. Staffordshire County Council now has a well-founded reputation for supporting businesses large or small and that will continue.

Here is a roll call of the major recent developments but we should also remember the part played by small and medium size enterprises which are the backbone of our economy.

First, Jaguar Land Rover is planning to build a £40 million storage facility for 6,500 vehicles mainly for export in Stone which would create around 75 jobs. Stafford-based Perkins, which produces diesel and gas engines for global export, has also submitted its plans for site expansion in the town.

And that's not all. GE's relocation to the county council-developed Redhill Business Park in Stafford should be completed in November. In South Staffordshire, automotive supplier Gestamp has started initial operations at the Bericote Four Ashes site early as the county council completes road junction improvements and access to the site.

These are all important developments showing real strength and resilience in our countywide economy as we continue to support the creation of better paid, higher skilled jobs in Staffordshire. And, with the latest Jobseeker claimant figures at just one per cent of the local population, we're lower than both the regional (2.4 per cent) and national (1.9 per cent) averages.



I also attended and spoke at the Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership AGM where we reviewed our achievements and future ambitions. Delivering growth and raising our national and international profile and how we were going to achieve this was the focus of my speech. We were also

pleased to have Sir John Peace there, chairman of the Midlands Engine, who spoke about the region's wider role in growing the UK economy.

Hearing direct from some of our local companies, what it's like doing business in Staffordshire and their challenges and opportunities was also refreshing. Ian Middleton, UK chairman of Gestamp spoke about its exciting plans to invest in a new purpose-built 555,000 sq. ft. facility in South Staffordshire.

Finally, Sarah Montgomery, chair of Destination Staffordshire and managing director at the National Memorial Arboretum, gave an overview of the tourism and leisure economy, its considerable contribution to the overall economy, and the partnership's plans to grow this even more.

### **Drawing New Investors to the Area**

In continuing the story of our economic regeneration in Staffordshire, a group representing councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in Cheshire and Staffordshire, is taking new steps to draw investors to the area.

The Constellation Partnership highlighted investment opportunities at MIPIM UK, ahead of submitting its HS2 Growth Strategy to the Government

Presenting at the property trade show, the alliance explained how it plans to supercharge the impact of being at the heart of the nation's High-Speed rail investment.



The Constellation group comprises seven authorities and two Local Enterprise Partnerships based between Birmingham and Manchester; Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Stafford Borough Council, Stafford Moorlands District Council, Staffordshire County Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the LEPs for Cheshire & Warrington and Stoke-on-Trent & Staffordshire.

Constellation Partnership's independent chair Jackie Sadek says: "HS2 will reshape the economic geography of the UK and its impact on the Constellation area, will be so huge that it really will become a leading economic powerhouse in the UK.

"The depositing of the HS2 bill earlier this year has given the project real impetus and has already resulted in great interest in this area's future, from Stafford to Crewe and everywhere in between."

She adds: "I am confident that this is going to grow rapidly and there will be a rush of potential investors following the publication of our Growth Strategy in November."

HS2 is forecast to transform travel times from 2027, giving people across Cheshire and Staffordshire access to new job and housing markets, in addition to increasing rail capacity for local services and freight.

Jackie continues: "We are not waiting for the trains to arrive, we are getting ready now. Each of the partners is creating comprehensive investment opportunities which cannot be replicated in the confines of a city region.

"There will be a significant uplift in economic growth in a range of sectors, creating a highly skilled workforce not only in residential and commercial construction, but also in logistics and distribution, advanced manufacturing, financial and professional services, science and technology, creative and digital and automotive and aerospace."

## **The county council's performance**

The Cabinet has received an overview of the county council's performance, including the delivery of the Medium Term Financial Strategy, and progress in delivering the council's three priority outcomes at the end of the first quarter 2017/18. They noted that:

- In April 2017, the percentage of working age Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimants (including Universal Credit claimants) in Staffordshire (1.1%) continued to be below both the West Midlands (2.5%) and national rates (1.9%).
- In April 2017, 88 per cent of all schools in Staffordshire were rated as 'Good or Outstanding' by Ofsted, which is similar to the national average (88.9

per cent) and has increased since April 2016 (83.2 per cent). The target was for 92 per cent of Staffordshire's schools to be 'Good or Outstanding' by August 2017.

- The infant mortality rate was 4.9 per 1,000 live births in Staffordshire which was higher than the national rate (3.9) with Cannock Chase district (6.3) having the highest rate in the county. Several risk factors, such as poor housing, low employment, teenage pregnancy, and substance misuse are known to increase infant mortality, so understanding these provide the opportunity to ensure early intervention and prevention strategies are appropriately targeted locally.
- In March 2017, there were 994 looked after children in Staffordshire. Of these, 8.7 per cent (86) were Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC), compared to 7.8 per cent (76) at the beginning of the last financial year in April 2016). At the end of Quarter 3, 2016/17 (the date of the latest benchmarking data), Staffordshire had a rate of 58.7 per 10,000 looked after children which was lower than the West Midlands rate of 75.
- At the end of Quarter 3, 2016/17 (the date of the latest benchmarking data), the rate of children subject of a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 population (35.8) was lower than the West Midlands average (44.4).

## Marking National Adoption Week in Staffordshire



In October we marked National Adoption Week and with almost seven out of 10 children waiting for adoptive families from sibling groups, there's a real need to help find them loving homes.

We know from experience that in most cases keeping brothers and sisters together is in their best interests rather than the experience of further stress caused by being separated from each other.

In this latest campaign, we are asking people to #supportadoption and we are particularly looking for adoptive families who would be willing to adopt

sibling groups. We have sibling groups of two, three, and more children looking for a forever family home together. So if you're thinking of starting, extending or completing a family then maybe adoption is for you. And, while siblings remain the focus of our campaign, we are also seeking potential families for children of all ages, those with additional needs, and children with ethnic minority backgrounds.

Our Adoption Service offers an excellent package of support and training and I would encourage people to get along to one of our campaign roadshows, or information events to find out more. You can also visit [www.Staffordshire.gov.uk/adoption](http://www.Staffordshire.gov.uk/adoption) or call 0800 169 2061.

### **Something close to our hearts—good food and beverages**

Some of the best food and beverages businesses from across the county went head-to-head at the Taste of Staffordshire GOOD FOOD AWARDS. Forty of the top restaurants, pubs, tea rooms, and other food and beverages businesses from across the county were all in the running for awards at the ceremony at Lichfield Cathedral.



We are incredibly lucky here in Staffordshire to have such a wide range of wonderful, high quality food and drink businesses and our awards are a great way of celebrating this.

These are all independently run establishments going above and beyond to deliver the highest quality of locally-produced food and drink and the best possible service for their customers. The awards are a great opportunity to give them the recognition they deserve for their hard work and determination

The Taste of Staffordshire Good Food Awards saw 12 awards handed out. The Four Seasons Restaurant at Swinfen Hall Hotel won the Independent Restaurant of the Year, sponsored by Porsche Wolverhampton, and Tea Room and Coffee Shop of the Year went to Pom's Kitchen and Deli in Lichfield.

The Three Horseshoes Country Inn, Leek, picked up the Casual Dining Restaurant of the Year award, sponsored by Rainbow International, while The Sun Inn in Stafford won Public House of the Year, sponsored by Majestic Wines.

The Red Lion in Bradley, near Stafford, won Afternoon Tea of the Year

Essington Fruit Farm in South Staffordshire bagged two awards – Farm Shop of the Year, sponsored by NFU and Food Processor, Producer, or Distributor of the Year, sponsored by SBS Insurance Services.

Any Staffordshire food and drink business with a minimum four-star Food Hygiene Rating (Rate My Place or equivalent) can apply for the Taste of Staffordshire Quality Marque. [Businesses can find out more by clicking this link.](#)

## Unlocking the power of the crowd

Supporting communities to be at the heart of local initiatives is the future of local government, and the way that your county council will continue to improve the lives of people in Staffordshire.



From our network of community managed libraries, providing customised local services, to changes to local children’s support which is already improving early education, the power of social action is clear to see.

We also know that there are hundreds of groups out there with great practical ideas to help their community, but need support to get them off the ground. That’s why we’re really pleased to launch our Crowdfund Staffordshire project. Anyone can use it to raise funds for projects that benefit the local community. And, advice is also available for groups to make sure their fundraising campaign succeeds. It’s an easy way for groups to highlight their projects to the thousands of people who regularly donate to good causes online.

We are also setting aside £50,000 for projects that help to support the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and families. Projects could be eligible for up to £5,000 from the fund if the community also supports it.

We want Staffordshire to be a great place to live, with strong and resilient communities that work for everyone, and this is just one of the ways that we're helping communities to take the lead locally.

You can get crowdfunding today at

[www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/crowdfund-Staffordshire](http://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/crowdfund-Staffordshire)

## **Appeal underway to keep Leekfrith Torcs in Staffordshire**

Back in February, people worldwide were amazed at the story of how two friends struck gold in a field in Leek. But, this isn't the first time the mention of treasure and a Staffordshire field have made headlines with the Staffordshire Hoard springing to mind.

### *Torcs discovered in Staffordshire*

The four intricate artefacts that make up the Leekfrith Iron Age Torcs were an amazing find and are believed to be the earliest example of Iron Age gold ever discovered in Britain. I blogged about this earlier in the year at Staffordshire Strikes Gold again and hit the national headlines

Now, a fundraising campaign has been launched to raise £325,000 to save for the nation the ancient jewellery.



The Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, and its friends' organisation are leading the campaign and already have a track record in saving unparalleled artefacts and world-leading treasures. These include the Staffordshire Hoard – the largest and most valuable collection of Anglo Saxon treasure ever discovered, and the Wedgwood First Day's Vase, made by Josiah Wedgwood himself on the opening day of his Etruria pottery works in 1769. We only have until 5 December 2017 to raise the money and I am urging residents, businesses, and organisations to step forward and show their support.



# THE ECONOMY

## THE FACTS



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

SOURCE: ONS, 26 July 2017

# MIDWIVES IN THE NHS

## THE FACTS



SOURCE: NHS Digital, 21 June 2017