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**Moment to shine!**

Pride of Sandwell’s Olympic torchbearers

Mark Our Scorecard Today!
www.sandwell.gov.uk/mycouncil
Great people, Great place, Great prospects, Great performance

From the Editor...
Summer in Sandwell in 2012 promises to be a time to remember. The Olympic Flame will be passing through the borough – and there is a host of other activities going on, too, for everyone to enjoy. To help you make the most of the celebrations, the Herald gives you a rundown on what’s coming up so you can plan how you’ll join in the fun.

We’ve also been keeping a close eye on latest developments in Sandwell that will impact on your lives – and your families.

So we are featuring, for example, information on issues like the Government’s latest (and totally disappointing) decision on schools rebuilding, looming changes to public health in Sandwell and what’s happening on council housing and plans for new homes around the borough.

We hope you find it of use.

Don’t forget – the Herald and latest council information are online at www.sandwell.gov.uk and you can follow us on Twitter @SandwellCouncil and @sandwellcouncilsandwell and Facebook www.facebook.com/sandwellcouncil

Mystery shoppers plea
Sandwell residents have another opportunity to help check out the quality of council services that run in the borough.

Council bosses are appealing for volunteers to come forward to act as ‘mystery shoppers’ to provide feedback information on a range of services.

They want residents to step forward, pose as users of key services – such as adult’s, children’s and waste collections – and send a report.

Volunteers will not be paid but will get training in the ‘mystery shopper’ role and travel expenses when they take part.

Councillor Mubashar Hussain, Sandwell’s Cabinet member for service improvements, said: “We are always looking for ways to improve services and have tested the ‘mystery shopper’ approach before. Volunteers have come up with some very good suggestions for improvements to services in the past.”

Residents interested in volunteering are asked to contact a customer focus team on 0121 569 2101.

Council leader hits out at Government decision on schools rebuilding
Sandwell’s council leader has slammed the Government for refusing to help rebuild or improve 14 Sandwell schools.

As the Herald was going to press, the Department for Education announced that only three Sandwell schools will receive money under the Priority School Building Programme.

Only Harvills Hawthorn Primary, Hall Green Primary and Phoenix College will be included.

Leader Councillor Darren Cooper said: “This announcement is a slap in the face for hundreds of pupils. We put in 17 primary and secondary schools for refurbishment or rebuilding and have been told we can go ahead with just three.

“It’s a half-hearted bolt which will impact on young people in a deprived area. It’s Education Minister Michael Gove’s breathtaking arrogance which is so shocking – he’s actually gone against his own advisors.

“The Head of Schools at Dical Langton, which is a leading a condition survey of schools for the DfE, said it would be over a year before the full results of it were known. Now the Government has announced the list.

“Mr Gove now has to make a list of assumptions about which schools to give money to. My question is:

From the
Editor...
www.sandwell.gov.uk/mycouncil

14 Sandwell schools.

The schools that missed out are:

• Holyhead Primary, Wednesbury
• Balsall Hall High, Oldbury
• Cap Primary, Smethwick
• Cawsey Green Primary, Oldbury
• Heathley Primary, Smethwick

Five more schools that have been built to cater for increasing numbers are:

1. Holyhead Primary
2. Balsall Hall High
3. Cap Primary
4. Cawsey Green Primary
5. Heathley Primary

The number of victims of crime in Sandwell has fallen by 2,000 in a year. There were 20,000 fewer crimes between April 2011 and March 2012 compared to the same period the previous year, almost a nine per cent reduction. The latest figures also showed some significant reductions in offences that cause most concern for the public.

There were 1,462 fewer victims of burglary (down 21.8%) and 172 fewer robbery victims (down 12.1%), with most serious violence such as GBH down 20.5%.

Business crime fell by over six per cent.

Councillor Darren Cooper, council leader, said: “We are pleased that Sandwell are half what they were ten years ago and this is good news for local people.

“I think the past year’s performance is particularly good considering the millions of pounds of savings the police and council have made in reducing staff, including reductions in staff numbers.

“People have not even been told how the scheme will work. Without extra classrooms they are going to have to put more on each class.

“Without extra play staff children are going to have to queue outside for the toilets.

“Without extra clerical staff we are going to have to put more on to clear the paperwork.

“I have heard from more of my fellow councillors that have been involved.

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“We are as keen as ever to update you on latest information so you can plan how you’ll join in the fun.

To help you make the most of everything, the Herald gives you a rundown on what’s coming up to the Olympic Torch for London 2012 – see Page 10.

Did you know?
Sandwell’s new team has cut out metals theft for the third time this year. It was set up in November to target thieves and rogue scrap metal dealers.

Businesses and organisations can now sign up on line to have their products protected by calling the council on 0121 569 2101.

Over 29,000 council tenants and leaseholders in Sandwell are being asked to have their say over the future of their housing service.

Local councillors want to hear tenants’ and leaseholders’ views before they make a final decision.

The council is pleased that Sandwell Homes has improved services to tenants and brought time of every 10 homes managed in the past year.

Reports have fallen steadily over recent years, and over the past year more than 2,000 jobs have been recorded, including 788 new jobs and 1,212 losses.

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Councillor Mubashar Hussain, Sandwell’s Cabinet member for service improvements, said: “We are always looking for ways to improve services and have tested the ‘mystery shopper’ approach before. Volunteers have come up with some very good suggestions for improvements to services in the past.”

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Free NHS Health Check

People are being urged to take up the offer of a free NHS Health Check as part of a national initiative to help people identify health risks early. The check is offered to people aged 40 to 74 for cardio-vascular conditions and diabetes. If you have a Sandwell doctor and are aged between 40-74, you can book a free Health Check by calling 0121 561 1969 or email SandwellLINk@sbcc.gov.uk.

CASE STUDY

Salamina McCreadie
Lives: Tipton, Age: 60

Salamina was invited for a free NHS Health Check as her medical records suggested she might be at risk of cardio-vascular disease (CVD). She hadn’t heard of the service before but decided to give it a go.

At the check she had her blood pressure taken by Emma Thompson, Senior Health Trainer for Mytime Health. Salamina was very pleased to find the reading was normal.

After asking Salamina some lifestyle questions Emma found out that she was a smoker. She explained to Salamina if she quit her blood pressure would fall and this would cut the risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Emma offered to refer her to a stop smoking service but she decided to stop without the use of patches or gum, using willpower alone and encouragement and support of Emma.

She has now given up for six months and at every monthly check her blood pressure reading has gone down. She also says her sense of smell has improved and food tastes nice. The Health Check also led to a discussion about exercise and diet.

From this Salamina has started to walk more and has been told about Sandwell Sticks, a walking group. Also her diet is more varied and she has started to eat more vegetables. As a result of her lifestyle changes her diet is more varied and she has also started to eat more vegetables. As a result of her lifestyle changes she has found out that she was a smoker. She explained to Emma Thompson, Senior Health Trainer for Mytime Health that she was interested in solving people’s problems and families.

People receive information, advice and support for goal-setting and advice about safe exercise, diet, smoking, alcohol, reducing cholesterol levels and other factors related to good health.

However, he is urging everyone sent a letter to take up the offer, no matter how fit they are.

He said: "It doesn’t matter if you are really fit, reasonably so or a bit out of condition, everyone can benefit from a health check-up."

Saying that prevention is a lot better than cure and a Health Check is a good way to spot any potential problems.

The campaign is being run by Sandwell Primary Care Trust in partnership with Mytime Health.

The latter is a social enterprise – this is an organisation which invests surplus money in the business or the community, rather than maximising profit for shareholders and owners.

Eileen Kibbler, Public Health Nurse Consultant, said: “We are really grateful to Dave and Daws for supporting this campaign and potentially saving lives."

"We are encouraging everyone who gets a letter from their GP to have a check-up but we are particularly keen on men to take up the offer as, generally speaking, they are less likely to do so than women."
Summer in Sandwell
it’s going to be great!!!

We’re looking forward to an exciting summer in Sandwell with lots of things to do, places to visit and fun stuff to see.

The Sandwell Show – Sunday 26 and Monday 27 August, 11am-8pm
One of our most popular events of the summer is the Sandwell Show held at the county showground at Sandwell Valley over the August Bank Holiday.
This year’s event promises to be as fun packed as previous years. A huge fair will take over the showground, along with a circus, craft show and plenty of activities to keep the whole family entertained. There’s also the Horticultural and Leek Show area and on the Sunday the Six Towns Challenge Walk/Run.
For more information on the Sandwell Show, go to our website www.sandwell.gov.uk/sandwellshow or call 0121 569 4703.

High Ropes and Adventure Playground at Sandwell Valley Country Park
One of the newest additions for the summer holidays is the fantastic free adventure playground at Sandwell Valley. The park, just off Sables Lane in West Bromwich, is open all day, every day during the holidays. Admission to the playground is free. While you’re there, why not visit the Park Farm, a walk around Sowe Pool or check out the crazy golf or the tennis courts? For details call 0121 563 0200 or go to www.sandwell.gov.uk/sandwellvalley
And don’t forget the High Ropes Aerial Adventure Course which stands 40ft above the trees of Sandwell Valley. To book, go to www.closeertotheedge.co.uk or call 01485 880 2472.

Our leisure centres
Whether you want to go for a swim, book a court, take up a new sport or try out an exercise class, there’s plenty going on for all ages at Sandwell leisure centres during the summer holidays. Sandwell Leisure Trust look after our leisure centres and they also run sporty holiday camps throughout the holidays to keep the kids entertained – with activities ranging from snorkeling and swimming to street dance and athletics.
For more about holiday camps and other activities at Sandwell Leisure Centres, go to www.sllf-lease.co.uk or call 01485 660 4815.

What’s on?
There’s a great guide on page 16 of your Sandwell Herald with more detailed information of events coming up around Sandwell, from fun family activities at your local library to exhibitions and shows at The Public in West Bromwich.
You can also download and print out your own What’s On guide from our website - www.sandwell.gov.uk/whatson

Festival will be the best yet
Sandwell Arts Festival this summer promises to be the best yet after organisers secured a £10,000 grant from the Arts Council. The annual event takes to the streets for two weekends in August with a wide variety of music, dance and circus fun as well as community-based arts events and activities. The highlight will be a spectacular community procession through West Bromwich on Saturday, August 18, kicking off the festival of the mythical Sandwell Giant.
The popular street performance programme will take place in six high streets and shopping centres across Sandwell on 11 and 18 August. The council is working on the festival with organisations including Maltbyes Black Country Country, County Coupe, Canvas Arts Centre, Parallel Arts, Sandwell Mind, Sandwell Primary Care Trust, The Public and Sandwell Third Age Arts.
For more information phone 0121 560 4710.

Welcome the Olympic Flame

The Olympic Flame will pass through Oldbury, West Bromwich and Smethwick on 30 June on its way to Birmingham.
It will pass through the borough between 5:50pm and 7pm – and people can join celebrations along the route. For information on where you can see the torch in Sandwell, who will be carrying it and three free public events where you can celebrate, check out the centre pages.
If the torch is passing by your house, school, community centre or business, you are also invited to get together in your community and make lanterns or decorations to line the streets and welcome the Flame.
Sandwell is proud to have a dozen inspirational residents from across all our six towns carrying the torch across the UK this summer. Find out who they are and their stories on the back page of the pull-out.
Keep up to date with all Sandwell news for the London 2012 Games at www.sandwell.gov.uk and www.sandwell.co.uk.

Get involved in London 2012
The West Midlands for 2012 team have a lot of 100 different things you can do, right here in the West Midlands, to play your part in the Games. Visit www.london2012.com/localleaders

Become a Local Leader to help your community celebrate key moments of London 2012, from the opening ceremony to barbecues and quizzes – and receive free London 2012 event materials. Visit www.london2012.com/localleaders
Share your own stories, photos and videos about how the London 2012 Games has inspired you at www.thegamesandme.com

Join in a golden opportunity for every sports club to turn the excitement around the Games into new supporters and members. Visit www.joinus.org.uk
Welcoming the London 2012 Olympic Torch to Sandwell

Carrying the Flame

The Flame will be carried through the streets of Oldbury, West Bromwich and Smethwick by inspirational torchbearers aged between 18 and 81. They will each carry the torch for a 300m stretch of the route. Torchbearers carrying the Flame in Sandwell are expected to include:

Oldbury
Elisabeth Powell, aged 16, from Birmingham, is a London 2012 fencing hopeful for Team GB. She represented Great Britain Under 17s at the age of 15 and was nominated for her dedication and inspiring peers.

Jan Malatesa, aged 51, from Coventry, has his roots in the Black Country. She works with young people and has raised thousands of pounds for charity through her marathon-running and knitting challenges.

John Ova, aged 35, from Bitterfenron, South Africa.

West Bromwich
Jonathan Brilli, aged 24, from Birmingham, has overcome severe physical disabilities to achieve a foundation degree in sports management and has used his skills as a volunteer, mentoring unemployed children in inner city Birmingham.

David Consell, aged 53, from Speach, is an inspiring individual who lost his home to a fire. He was left with no possessions to take part in a 350 mile charity cycle ride and has gone on to run marathons and ultrathons (over 27 miles), inspiring others and raising thousands of pounds for charity.

Matt Bridge, aged 35, from Birmingham, is a London 2012 fencing hopeful for Team GB who won the Under 20 and Under 29 England Championship four years in a row. He has also volunteered with school children.

Smethwick
Janice Williams, aged 51, from Smethwick, is Sandwell’s oldest torchbearer. She has dedicated much of her life to Old Hill Tennis Club, and Haden Hill swimming clubs.

Doug Chamberlain, aged 55, from Coventry, is an amazing ambassador for people with a learning disability who has been a member of Wayne’s Club Coventry Mencap for almost 40 years. He is described as a true friend to many and shows strength and support to others with his determination to just have a go.

Jessica Oripin, aged 81, from Cradley Heath, is Sandwell’s oldest torchbearer. She has dedicated much of her life to Old Hill Tennis Club, and Haden Hill swimming clubs.

Adele Lang, aged 22, from Birmingham, is a London 2012 athletics hopeful for Team GB who won the Under 20 and Under 29 England Championship four years in a row. She has also volunteered with school children.

Dave Waldron, aged 33, from Birmingham, is a dedicated nurse who works with young people suffering with cancer and has raised money for them through a kayaking challenge.

Peter Moss, aged 19, from Castle Vale, Birmingham, has worked tirelessly with Yale Youth Green Action to protect the local environment and help run holiday schemes for young people.

You can read more about torchbearers at www.london2012.com/olympictorchrelay.

Carrying the Flame

You can follow the Torch Relay and live updates at www.bbc.co.uk/torchrelay.

The direction the Olympic Torch Relay will pass through may be subject to change.

Parking and travel

Police will be on hand from 2pm to assist with parking and traffic management.

The Olympic Torch Relay will pass through Sandwell in two phases – an advance ‘activation’ convoy followed shortly by a second convoy including the torchbearers.

All roads along the route will experience some disruption as the convoy pass through the borough and the following road closures will be in place:

Oldbury
Halesowen Street/Church Street, from 4.30pm until torch passes through.

West Bromwich
Brentford Lane, from 4pm; Ringway, 90-45 minutes before torch passes through.

Smethwick
High Street from Crocketts Lane to Cranmore Road, from 6pm until torch passes through.

The route in Sandwell where the Olympic Flame will be carried by torchbearers and local community. Times are approximate and may be subject to change.

The direction the Olympic Flame will be carried.

Confirmation of Torchbearers

Please be aware that filming/photography will be taking place during the Torch Relay and at all events to be used in publicity – both online and in print – by the media, the council and other partner organisations.

The Olympic Torch Relay will pass through Sandwell in two phases – an advance ‘activation’ convoy followed shortly by a second convoy including the torchbearers. The convoy will enter the borough at Burnt Tree Island but you will not be able to see the torch until it is carried by torchbearers from Oldbury town centre.

The torch will again be out of sight as it travels between West Bromwich and Smethwick. Please follow the orange line on the maps to see where you can see the torch being carried by torchbearers.

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Brentford Lane, from 4pm; Ringway, 90-45 minutes before torch passes through.

Smethwick
High Street from Crocketts Lane to Cranmore Road, from 6pm until torch passes through.

Free events

Three free public events are being held on the afternoons of 30 June to give an opportunity for people to celebrate.

Oldbury Civic Square
2-6pm – join a military-themed event to mark Armed Forces Day, including a parade, active service units, veterans and training corps. There will also be a display and activities and a My Council information roadshow.

Smethwick College, West Bromwich
2-4pm – follow the fantastic new college building’s open day in the morning, there will be a One World Day event featuring music performances, African drumming, steel pan, zither, Street dance, Indian arts demonstrations, photoshoot and football event.

Victoria Park, Smethwick
12-2pm – come along to an extravaganza of sport, music, dance and community celebration being organised jointly by Isap FM, Sandwell Council and many local organisations.

The day will include the Lawk Naach Finale – a world record-breaking attempt for the largest ever bangra & goldie dance performance, involving over 2012 people from across the region. It is being co-ordinated by Dance Sanaaz for the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad. You can register to take part in the attempt at www.dancesanaaz.com/events/london2012.

Thank you

Thank you to all our volunteers that are helping out on 30 June.

For latest updates visit www.sandwellfor2012.co.uk, www.sandwell.gov.uk/london2012 and @SandwellCouncil

From the age of 12, when he undertook a school project in the Olympics. Ravendar has been inspired by the whole, death and spirit of the Olympic. A keen runner and fundraiser, Ravendar studies for Walsall College, developing the skills of youngsters and adults from across the Black Country.

Dave Hesley

From West Bromwich

Torchbearer in Oldbury

A retiree from Yew Tree estate

Family man Ron has raised tens of thousands of pounds with his marathon runs – running mainly in aid of Breast Cancer and after his wife Janet was diagnosed with the disease in 1997. A former with Dowseth-based Smethwick Striders for more than 20 years, the grandfather-of-three has also raised funds for the breast clinic at Sandwell Hospital.

Jesica Grippon

From Cradley Heath

Torchbearer in West Bromwich

Grandmother Jesica is a life-long runner in sport at the age of 81, coordinating matches at Old Hill Tennis Club where she has been joint organiser for more than 30 years. She has also been heavily involved in a number of West Bromwich and Hill swimming clubs – despite being unable to swim.

Karl Hinett

From Tipton

Torchbearer in Wolverhampton

A retired BBC gardener Karl was badly burned when his tank was petrol bombed in Iraq. He underwent five years of gruelling skin grafts and operations in the burns unit at Birmingham Children’s Hospital. He gave something back to those who saved his life, the remarkable former soldier has raised money for the war wound unit, including running marathons across the world.

**Pride on Sandwell**

Inspirational residents from all six Sandwell towns are carrying the Olympic Torch for London 2012, representing the borough at a local, regional and national level.

Lisa Higgins

From Rowley Regis

Torchbearer in Wednesbury

School teacher Margaret Higgins, who was an Olympic judge for rhythmic gymnastics for the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Dennis Sanders

From Great Barr

Dennis has released six albums at charity events around the country for more than 50 years and even presented the Queen with two doves for her Golden Jubilee in 2002. The peace campaigner, who goes under the name Pax Liberations, is hoping for a European and world record in the sport.

Ryan Cockbill

From Great Barr

Torchbearer in Birmingham on 1 July

Inspirational Ryan is a London 2012 Paralympic Games hopeful for target shooting. After an accident in July 2006 left him a quadruplegic, Ryan began to learn the skill of rifle target shooting – a skill which has already seen him equal a European and world record in the sport.

Graham Howell

From Rowley Regis

Torchbearer in Bston

Marathon runner Graham completed his first 26-mile run at the age of 21. Since then he has completed numerous marathons, raising thousands of pounds for charity, including Breast Cancer and the Stroke Association.

Beth Broadhead

From Great Barr

Torchbearer in Birmingham on 1 July

A footballer with Tamworth Ladies and Sutton United, Beth was nominated by her school, Great Barr Secondary. The dedicated 16-year-old also does voluntary work for a school sports partnership.

Ravendar Kumar Bangar

From Wednesbury

Torchbearer in Wolverhampton on 30 June

A former of Wolverhampton and Sutton United, Beth was nominated by her school, Great Barr Secondary. The dedicated 16-year-old also does voluntary work for a school sports partnership.

Juanita Williams

From Oldbury

Torchbearer in Smethwick on 30 June

Since her father passed away in November 2005, Juanita has raised a staggering £26,872 for Macmillan Cancer Support through her fundraising cycling challenges. Dad Bob ran a cycling shop in Smethwick High Street for many years, teaching thousands of local youngsters to ride; and it is for her father and the local community that Juanita will be running.

Karl Hinett

From Tipton

Torchbearer in Great Barr on 30 June

Grandmother Jesica is a life-long runner in sport at the age of 81, coordinating matches at Old Hill Tennis Club where she has been joint organiser for more than 30 years. She has also been heavily involved in a number of West Bromwich and Hill swimming clubs – despite being unable to swim.

Josefa Gripton

From Cradley Heath

Torchbearer in West Bromwich

Grandmother Jessica is a life-long runner in sport at the age of 81, coordinating matches at Old Hill Tennis Club where she has been joint organiser for more than 30 years. She has also been heavily involved in a number of West Bromwich and Hill swimming clubs – despite being unable to swim.

Dave Hesley

From West Bromwich

Torchbearer in Oldbury

A retiree from Yew Tree estate

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What’s your workout? 
Gym, swim and fitness with Sandwell Leisure Trust

Summer holiday fun at The Public

Families will be able to participate in a huge range of drop-in sessions and workshops including:

- Summer Art Camp, a showcase of activities including classic ‘drop-in’ drawing tents, craft making, robotic drawing, map designing and ‘stop frame animation workshops.’
- Den build and soft play workshops for children to let their imaginations run wild.
- Fireflies Den workshops for children to create products for the Fireflies-Albers to take back to their world.
- Bhangra bunny workshop for families to experience Bhangra dance.
- Zumba classes for children to learn cool new dance moves and routines.

Linda Saunders, Managing Director, said: “The Public promises to be a great day out this summer as there’s something for the whole family.”

For details of The Public’s Summer holiday programme, visit thepublic.co.uk or call 0121 553 7171.

Workshops are priced at £5 in advance to guarantee your place.

www.slt-leisure.co.uk
0845 659 4815
Select your nearest leisure centre.

www.sandwell.gov.uk/mycouncil
www.slt-leisure.co.uk
No place like home

Thousands of new homes will be built across Sandwell in the next three years. And the housing programme, worth more than £200 million, is set to boost Sandwell’s economy by supporting the borough’s supply chains while creating new jobs and training opportunities for local people.

Over 1,500 new and affordable homes will be built by 2015, with the council’s housing developer partners carrying out the work on various schemes to be announced later this summer.

The council has announced that all developers and housing associations appointed have signed construction contracts to work with local suppliers and contractors. This will involve them linking in with the council’s Team Local and the council’s ‘Sandwell’ business initiative.

Councillor Simon Hackett, Cabinet member for housing, said: “It was the largest housing construction programme undertaken by the council for many years. “We are thrilled to be able to provide an excellent range of homes for local people to buy, rent or rent to buy. As part of this package of new homes, there will be two-bedroom bungalows available for rent to older residents to release under-occupied council houses for families.”

People will be able to find out more about the new homes as and when partners are appointed this summer.

Earlier this year, Sandwell Council directly secured social/housing investment of £15 million from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The funding means a mix of 450 private sale and homes for rent will be built as part of the overall programme of work.

Boost for first-time buyers in Sandwell

Sandwell Council is ready to help first-time buyers get their foot on the property ladder by offering mortgages.

Since the banking crisis, mortgage lenders have asked for deposits of up to 40 per cent, restricting many from taking their first step on the property ladder.

However, as a new self-funded council scheme, deposits of just five per cent would be required from first-time buyers of new private sector homes in the borough.

Councillor Steve Eling, Sandwell’s deputy leader and cabinet member for strategic resources, said the scheme was aimed at getting the local housing market moving and increasing house building in the borough.

“First-time buyers in Sandwell are struggling to get a foot on the housing ladder and we want to help them,” he said.

“The mortgages we plan to offer will be sensible and affordable, not the type of reckless mortgages that some banks and building societies used to offer. This scheme will also help people who are looking to buy new homes that we know are being built in Sandwell and encourage new house building too by giving developers increased confidence.”

The scheme will be up and running later this year. Keep an eye on www.sandwell.gov.uk for further information.

Clampdown on booze and fag sales to young people

Shopkeepers in Sandwell face potential fines up to the order of thousands of pounds for selling alcohol to under-age people.

And if they flout the law, they face prosecution.

Trading standards officers will be carrying out test purchases under an ongoing crackdown to check retailers stick to the law.

Between April 2011 and March 2012, 137 premises were tested with six – with 37 caught selling illegally to children.

In the same period, out of 73 premises tested sold cigarettes illegally to children.

Mark Blessey, area trading standards officer, said: “I’m delighted that the majority of retailers refused to sell to the young customers who were attempting to buy age-restricted products.”

However, he added that there was a minority of retailers still selling age-restricted products to young people.

The issue of underage sales in Sandwell is a high priority for us and our partners – both in health and education – to help prevent this.

Two of the shops had their licence suspended, one for 28 days and the other for 14 days.

Honour for school

A Sandwell school has gained coveted teaching school status.

Lightwoods Primary in Castle Road East, Oldbury, is one of only around 100 schools in England to be so recognised by the National College for School Leadership.

It now entitles the school to lead training and professional development for further teachers.

The teaching school initiative began last autumn, marking a shift towards school-centred training and development.

The programme gives schools the freedom to lead a group of schools – working with other partners including at least one university – to deliver high-quality support for teachers and leaders at all stages in their career.

Ellie Brown, headteacher at Lightwoods, said: “We are extremely pleased to gain this status which recognises our work and gives us further opportunities to share our practice with others.”

Steve Murphy, Chief Executive of the National College, said: “Teaching schools like Lightwoods Primary need to be at the top of their game to take on this role – outstanding in their own performance – and have a track record of raising standards through school-to-school support.”

Cabinet member for children and families, councillor Bob Batterham congratulated the school and said it showed the improvements the borough was making in education.

Better services from six high-quality Housing Service Centres

Sandwell Homes is closing 16 housing neighbourhood and estate offices – and replacing them with six high-quality housing service centres from 2 July.

The cut in the number of offices across the borough will allow for more employees to be released at the relocated service centres in each of Sandwell’s six towns.

This will mean:

• a quality reception service with trained officers

• housing officers cut on estate more often, identifying issues and dealing with them quicker

• greater resident involvement on our estates and community cohesion activities

• introduction of 5-day opening at all six service centres to include one late night opening (either Wednesday or Thursday up to 7pm per week – this is currently cut for consultation with tenants and residents and will be piloted for one year).

Councillor Simon Hackett, Cabinet member for housing, said: “As a result of Government cuts and the decision to scrap Decent Homes, we are having to make changes and make the money we have for housing go further. The new housing service centres will enable us to deliver a much improved service overall. Each of the centres will offer better opening hours and services.

Norman Fletcher, general manager of Sandwell Homes, said: “We are confident that the six new housing centres will provide an efficient and helpful service to our 20,000 tenants.

“We will also be introducing regular drop-in surgeries in the areas where we have closed heart-offices to help tenants keep in touch. This will give customers the opportunity to visit offices in a nearby locality to discuss and report any neighbourhood issues.”

There is also a Customer Service Centre open from 8am – 8pm. Call 0121 569 6000.

Wordsearch

Name………..………..….  Telephone ……..………..

Sudoku

Across

1. Aircraft building (6)

7. Long way and off nominal (8)

13. Low-lying country (7)

19.  Ship that sank 100 years ago (5)

25. bun (7)

Down

1. Two quarters (4)

2. Just call time in the world (7)

7. Leave behind (7)

13. A gaggle of (5)

19. Great pick not vegetable (6)


Kick off the summer with Sainsbury’s vouchers

Send your answers to The Editor, Sandwell Herald, Communications Unit, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury, B69 3DE by 3 August 2012.

Win £25 in Sainsbury’s vouchers

The winner of this competition will be entered into the draw for a £25 voucher with Sainsbury’s to be used in a Sainsbury’s store.

There are 100 prizes to be won over the next four weeks, with five winners announced each week.

Suduko

Clues

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Great people, Great place, Great prospects, Great performance

15

You can also contact councillors through their website: www.councillor.info/sandwell

You can also ring these numbers if you are unsure who your councillors are.

Ring 0121 569 3129 or 0121 569 3044 to get details of exactly when and where.

Sandwell’s 72 councillors are here to represent you.

Your councillors

Abbey Ward
Great Barr with Yew Tree Ward
Oldbury Ward
St Paul’s Ward

Blackheath Ward
Great Bridge Ward
Old Warley Ward
Tipton Green Ward

Bristnall Ward
Greets Green & Lyng Ward
Princes End Ward
Tividale Ward

Charlemont with Grove Vale Ward
Haleley Heath Ward
Rowley Ward
Wednesbury North Ward

Cradley Heath & Old Hill Ward
Langley Ward
Smedswich Ward
Wednesbury South Ward

Friar Park Ward
Newtown Ward
Soho & Victoria Ward
West Bromwich Central Ward

People living in Sandwell are recycling more than ever before. According to the latest statistics, household recycling rates across the borough have shot up by a massive 26% since April 2011. Over 40% of waste collected from homes across the borough is now being sent for re-use, recycling or composting.

The leap in recycling rates comes 16 months after the council teamed up with Services to deliver its waste, recycling and street cleaning services. Since then, lots of improvements have been made including blue kit and food waste recycling bins for all homes with kerbside collections. This has allowed recycling of a greater range of materials than ever before – and more regularly.

Councillor lan Jones, Sandwell’s cabinet member for neighbourhood services, said: ‘Wals clearly like to say a big thank you to everyone who’s using the new recycling services as it’s made a big difference already. But we’re keen to see recycling rates continue to climb. We urge anyone who isn’t making full use of their blue kit recycling or food waste kits to give it a go and do their bit for the environment.’

Keeping people safe

Sally Rees is the chair of the Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board and the Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board. The Herald caught up with her for a chat about her work, and what it means to her.

What’s your job? I lead the safeguarding boards here in Sandwell. They are independent and bring together a number of partners such as the council, the NHS and the police, to keep children and vulnerable adults safe from harm, abuse and neglect. We can help organisations to account where necessary.

What’s the best thing about it? I enjoy being a part of a group of people from all professions who are committed to protecting and improving the wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults. We are passionate about this, and are always keen to get it absolutely right.

And the hardest? Reaching some children and adults have awful experiences in their lives, regardless of anything we can do. Listening to the detail of that is difficult for everyone, but it’s a reminder of the importance of the work we do. It’s hard, too, for everyone who is trying to improve things at a time when public services are going through so much change.

What was your last job? I was a director of children’s services, and over a long career have managed just about everything in the children’s services world. I started my professional life as a social worker, although I also have a music teaching qualification, and I have to say it’s a fantastic area of work to be in! I have met some amazing staff over the years, and some truly inspiring children and young people, who have come through despite everything they have faced.

Throughout my career I have been privileged to be part of all sorts of music and drama events and have seen some extraordinarily talented children and young people in all sorts of places, from fabulous theatre productions to prison halls and hospitals.

If you were a superhero what would your special power be? This is a very tricky one, but if it could be done I would like to give everyone access to clean, safe water. One in eight people around the world have to struggle without this basic necessity.

Greatest sporting achievement? Well, I was quite sporty and so was my family, my dad played hockey and cricket and as a youngster I spent much of my time in cricket pavilions! I played hockey myself and until recently was a regular badminton player, so no great standard at all, but I loved running about a bit. My greatest achievement though is having a very sporty daughter who played in the Commonwealth Games last year. We went to Delhi to see her, and I nearly burst with pride.

What’s the last film you saw at the cinema? The one in Hindi with Jodh Daan and all the usual suspects of British acting. The Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, something like that?

Best thing about the Black Country? The people. Ready down to earth, hard- working good folk. Couldn’t be better.

For further information: Sandwell Safeguarding Children Board, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk
Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board visit www.sandwell.gov.uk

New look for West Brom High Street

Work on the pedestrian stretch of High Street – between New Street and Bull Street – will get under way this summer to give the town centre a modern feel.

It coincides with refurbishment of Queen’s Square Shopping Centre to help boost the appearance of the town centre and attract new businesses. Plans for the High Street include repaving work, new lighting, waste bins, seating areas and trees. The new-look High Street will also be better equipped to host events such as town festivals.

Councillor Derek Richmond, Sandwell’s cabinet member for planning and economy, said the work was another example of ongoing plans to make West Bromwich one of the region’s premier towns. He added: “We’re dedicated to improving the appearance of the town centre. The High Street is the heart of West Bromwich, and this work will not only support existing businesses but help attract new ones as well.”

The old canopy and kiosks between King’s and Queen’s Square shopping centres will be removed this summer. The new entrance to Queen’s Square will then be built in time for Christmas shopping, with all improvements to the central area of the High Street completed by summer 2013.

The project is part of an £8.2m scheme to improve the appearance of the town centre. Sandwell Council and partners will spend £4.1 million European funding to match private sector investment in various regeneration projects in the town.

To find out more about the regeneration of West Bromwich, visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/westbromwichregeneration

Well done, Sandwell – recycling rates up!

Despite the rise in recycling, some residents are still putting incorrect items in their blue lid bins. Below is a list of the most common items we find that should not be in your blue kit bins:

- Clothing
- Carpets, mats and rugs
- Shoes
- Duties, pillows, bedding
- Pappes
- Cuddly toys

Department of Transport
www.gov.uk/westbromwichregeneration

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What’s On in Sandwell

Black Country Mansions
Tuesday 19 June
Tipton Library
Come and join local historian Ian Bott as he tells us more about the lost mansions of the Black Country. Refreshments provided.
Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm
Price: FREE by advance ticket only
For info: 0121 557 1796

Community Fun Day
Saturday 23 June
Options for Life, Oak Green Lodge, Oak Green Way, Oldbury, B68 8LR.
A chance for our service users, their carers and families to have fun and learn about services/projects available locally, and for the wider community to learn about our organisation. A positive opportunity to promote social inclusion and develop positive community links. The event is open to all and refreshments are available to buy. The following activities planned include, face painting, bouncy castle, rodeo bull, raffle, fire engine, tombola, cake stalls, art and crafts, steel band performances and many more!
Time: 11am – 3pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 544 6611

Armed Forces Day
Saturday 30 June
Oldbury Civic Square, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury
Military themed event featuring: military parade, active service units, veterans and training corps. There will also be displays and activities.
Time: 2pm – 6pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 569 4703

Brickhouse Tenants & Residents Association
Family Fun Day
Sunday 1 July
Playing fields opposite Powke Lane Cemetery, Rowley Regis, B65 0AD
Traditional family fun day including stalls and funfair, car boot sale, Youth Service Bus, climbing wall arena with traditional competitions such as tug of war and children's games, raffle and tombola. Food stalls including traditional funfair treats and pig roast.
Time: 12noon
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 574 8572

Picnic in the Park
Sunday 8 July
Victoria Park, Tipton
A fun day for all with a wide range of activities, information stalls, stage performances, rides, and food stalls, car boot sale and much more. There will be lots of sporting activities and entertainment on the day.
Time: 12noon – 6pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 557 6766

Go the extra smile – Happiness Event
Saturday 14 July
Tipton Library
Come and join in the fun at the library’s first Happiness Event. Try all sorts of new things such as nail art, hair-brading, make-up sessions, face painting, laughter therapy, art workshops and much more. Don’t forget to bring your smile. Refreshments available.
Time: 10.30am – 3pm
Price: FREE by advance ticket only
For info: 0121 557 1796

OH (Our Heroes) Festival
Saturday 14 July
Old Hill High Street (Halesowen Road)
Military and community parade along Old Hill High Street followed by family fun day including stalls and funfair, climbing wall, military displays and parade, vintage vehicles, children’s games, raffles and tombola. Food stalls including traditional funfair treats, curry and pig roast. Main stage events include live music throughout the day and well known tribute bands.
Time: 11am
Price: FREE
For info: 07885481687; ohfestival@googlemail.com

Community Fun Day
Sunday 8 July
Victoria Park, Tipton
A fun day for all with a wide range of activities, information stalls, stage performances, rides, and food stalls, car boot sale and much more. There will be lots of sporting activities and entertainment on the day.
Time: 12noon – 6pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 557 1796

The Thimblemill Bat Detective Walk
Wednesday 18 July
Thimblemill Library, Smethwick
Bat walk led by Steve Hodgkinson from the Wildlife Trust. A bat walk is a chance to see and hear bats in their natural habitat (flying through the trees, skimming over the water) usually at night. It's really rather magical, and a fantastic way to explore your local environment. Join Steve as he leads a walk up to Thimblemill Brook with bat detectives. Ideal for children and families to come and learn all about bats. Meet at Thimblemill Library for 8.30pm for registration and a brief talk. The walk will last for an hour.
Time: 8.30pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 429 2039

Foundries of Tipton – a personal experience
Tuesday 24 July
Tipton Library
Local history coffee morning with a personal experience by Mike Ford who worked at Triplex, Eclipse and Conenye Foundries. Bring in your photographs and memories to share.
Time: 10.30am – 12.30pm
Price: FREE by advance ticket only
For info: 0121 557 1796

Food and Craft Fair
Sunday 19 August
Forge Mill Farm, West Bromwich
Food and crafts from local producers
Time: 10.30am – 3.30pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 553 0220

Sandwell Show
Sunday 26 August to Monday 27 August
Sandwell Showground, Sandwell Park Farm
Community Show featuring: Beacon Radio roadshow, fun fair and giant inflatables, circus, Horticultural and Leek Show arena, craft show, Six Towns Challenge Walk/Run (Sunday only), children's activities, hot and cold food available to buy.
Time: 11am – 5pm
Price: FREE
For info: 0121 569 4703

Visit www.sandwell.gov.uk/whatson for more information about events and activities

If you like reading The Big Sandwell Read is for you.
To find out more go online or visit any Sandwell library to read the authors on The Big Sandwell Read booklist.
www.sandwell.gov.uk/bigread

The Public

THE ART OF MOTION
EXHIBITION
30 May – 9 September (Wednesday - Sunday, but open Monday and Tuesday in school holidays).
Free entry, suitable for all ages

SINATRA: JIM MCALLISTER IS THE VOICE
Saturday 30 June, starts 7.30pm, £10 advance, £12 door, suitable for ages 16+ (Seated event).
A tribute to the legend Frank Sinatra

THE LAUGHING SOLE – FEATURING PAUL KERENSA
Wednesday 4 July, starts 8pm. £8.50 advance, £9.50 door, suitable for ages 16+
A monthly comedy club featuring the best up and coming and established comics compered by Barbara Nice.

JUDGE STOCK 2012 (IN ASSOCIATION WITH GEORGE SALTER COLLEGIATE ACADEMY)
Saturday 7 July, 12pm – midnight £8 Adults, under 12s free entry
Live music festival.

SANDWELL MUSIC AND ARTS FESTIVAL
Monday 9 July – Saturday 14 July
Come along and listen to the live music and performances from Sandwell school pupils.

SUMMER HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES
23 July – 31 August
Join in the fun-filled activities and workshops for the whole family including Summer Art Camp and special workshops with animation and digital design.

SATURDAY ART CLUB
Every Saturday, 10am-1pm, £4, suitable for ages 4-11

For more information, visit www.thepublic.com or call 0121 533 7161.
The Public, New Street, West Bromwich, B70 7PG

Don’t forget to follow us on Facebook and Twitter
www.facebook.com/thepublicwestbromwich
www.twitter.com_/the_public
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