

Countylink April 2004

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Councillors at Town and Parish Councils and Parish meetings; County Councillors; District and Borough Councils, interested individuals and organisations.

In This Issue:

Alabaster Virgins
Around The County
Beacon Status
Be a Creature of Habit
Big Smoke Debate
Burglar off
Centre of Excellence
Community Co-operative Action
County Council's tourism package
DEFRA Awards £95 million
District Council Contacts
Dogs on Leads
East Midlands Tourism
Environmental Education Centre
Fly-Tipping
Future of Listed Places Worship
Linger Longer in Libraries
Making Nottinghamshire Safer
New Local Nature Reserves
OFWAT
Papplewick Feasibility Study
Parish Census information out
Pension Credit
Periodic Electoral Review (PER)
Post Office Closure Study Group
Proving Heritage is more than just a History Lesson
Quality of Life Counts
Review of Wildlife Act 1981
Right to Walk on Access Land
Robin Hood Festival Sherwood Forest Community Rangers Landowner Consultation
Sherwood Forest Visitors Centre
Shopmobility launch
Trading Standards Warnings
Training at NALC
Useful information/websites
Welcome
Wheels in Motion for better cycling
Wheels to Work Update

Freda Shaw

Parish Councillor, Executive Committee representative of Nottinghamshire Association of Local Councils (NALC) since 1987, Chair of NALC since 1997, National Association representative, Voluntary Sector organisations, DARE, Village

Hall Forum, Committee Member Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council ... the list is endless, but then Freda's enthusiasm and passion for community work is endless. Freda wrote in the last Countywise, NALCs newsletter, that she is leaving Nottinghamshire and thanked everyone for their help and support. Through this newsletter we thank Freda for all the work, time and effort she has given. Nottinghamshire's loss is North Yorkshire's gain.

Sustainable Rural Communities Conference

A regional conference, 'Working Together for Sustainable Rural Communities', is being held on 19 May 2004 at Melton Mowbray. With 40% of the East Midlands' population living in a rural community or market town, there is a clear need to include the future of the rural East Midlands in regional thinking on sustainable communities.

For more information and a booking form contact Mrs Jenny Stone, Community Council of Lincolnshire on 01529 302455 E-mail: jenny.stone@cclincs.com

DEFRA Awards Countryside Agency £95 million for 2004/05

The Countryside Agency, which works to improve the quality of the countryside and the quality of life for people in rural communities, has been allocated £95 m for 2004/05 enabling the agency to deliver on key objectives including:

- supporting Rural Transport Partnership Officers
- funding the second and third years of existing Rural Transport projects
- supporting Rural Housing Enablers to secure affordable homes
- continuing the core funding for rural community councils and supporting the community development workers
- helping all rural communities to benefit from the lessons learnt through the Vital Villages grant schemes
- maintaining Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty total funding at 2003/04 levels.

Parish Census information now out

Information on parishes from the 2001 Census is now available. A report with Key Statistics and profiles for civil parishes in England and communities in Wales was published on 16 March. The printed part of the report is downloadable free from the National Statistics website (1).

To meet the demand for information for the many smaller rural communities, simpler 'Profiles' have been released for all areas with at least 50 residents and 20 households. Profiles for parishes are available on the Neighbourhood Statistic web site, with 'Key Statistics' to follow by early April. A CD of both data sets is also available from Census Customer Services (2) free of charge. This will require installing software on your computer. The County Council will be adding parishes to its series of Census profiles already available on the County Council website at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/2001census

These will also shortly be available in printed form in libraries.

The Nottinghamshire County Council's website gives more information on the Census and what is available. Printed bulletins on Census results are already available in libraries (to copy) and from the Research Team at County Hall (3).

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/>

To obtain data for your parish use the "Find detailed statistics by area name" or the interactive map. In both cases click on 'Change' where it says "For different geographies..." and select '2003 parishes'

Census Customer Services, ONS, Titchfield, Fareham, Hants PO15 5RR
Telephone: +44 (0)1329 813800 E-mail: census.customerservices@ons.gov.uk

(3) Research Team, Culture and Community Department, Nottinghamshire County Council, NG2 7QP Tel: 0115 977 4541

Periodic Electoral Review (PER)

The Boundary Committee for England (BCFE) has been considering the areas for which County Councillors will be elected as from May 2005. It will be issuing a final recommendations report on electoral arrangements for Nottinghamshire on 27 April 2004.

The recommendations will also be available on the website at: <http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/> and for public inspection at local libraries. There will then be an opportunity for interested parties to make representations on the final recommendations direct to The Electoral Commission.

All matters concerning the implementation of any recommendations for changes to electoral arrangements, should be directed to The Electoral Commission, Trevelyan House, Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HW on 020 7271 0500 E-mail: implementation@electoralcommission.org.uk

Post Office Closures Study Group Produces Final Report

A Post Office Closures Study Group, set up under the County Council's scrutiny arrangements, has produced its final report. The Group was established by the Community Services Select Committee on 26 January 2004 in order to review the impact of the latest round of post office closures in Nottinghamshire.

Twenty-one urban post offices in Nottinghamshire were earmarked for closure in an announcement before Christmas. Of these, only one (Carlton Hill, Gedling) has been saved; a final decision has yet to be announced on two of the other branches (Manton, Worksop and Bellamy Road, Mansfield); the Post Office has however announced that the remaining 18 branches will all close permanently, mostly during March and April this year. These closures follow a number of other branch closures in Nottinghamshire over the past couple of years.

The review established that there were major concerns among many organisations and individuals about the impact of the closures on the vulnerable members of society – older people, those without access to a car, those living in disadvantaged communities and disabled people. There were also real concerns about the availability, accessibility and cost of public transport to link residents with the nearest alternative post office branch. A sense of frustration with the perceived shortcomings of the Post Office consultation process was

also evident from many of the respondents. The Government recently announced improvements to the national consultation arrangements as a result of objections from a wide number of organisations, including Postwatch.

The County Council report suggests several measures that could help protect the remaining post offices in Nottinghamshire:

- Setting up a system to pick up quickly on announced branch closures
- Working closely with the consumer watchdog, Postwatch
- Together with partners, exploring ways of strengthening the viability of the remaining post offices in the County
- Inviting the Post Office to discuss the specific issue of rural post offices with the County Council
- Exploring, where there's a demonstrable need, other ways of providing post office services.

County Councillor Joyce Bosnjak, who chaired the Study Group, thanked those organisations and individuals who had contributed towards the review. 'We had representatives from Postwatch, Sure Start Ravensdale and Nottinghamshire Older People's Advisory Group who found the time to attend our meetings,' she said. 'We also had a great response from many other local organisations and groups who wrote to us with their views. We simply couldn't have completed our work in such a short timescale without their help – it was very much appreciated.'

Sherwood Forest Visitors Centre

Did you know that Sherwood Forest was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1954? The Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre, first opened in 1976, now attracts 650,000 people a year, so how do we protect the rare habitat and species that live there, while allowing visitors the chance to enjoy its natural beauty?

The ancient oak wood and heathland found here is now extremely rare across Europe, where few such habitats remain. Ancient wood and heathland has a rich eco-system which takes centuries to develop.

As a reflection of this, the site is now being considered as a candidate for Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) status. If this is awarded, it will mean even greater legal protection for Sherwood's trees, birds, beasts and rare insects.

Nottinghamshire County Council would like your views on the future of Sherwood Forest.

Read about the 4 options and then give your views at:
<http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/home/whatdoyouthink/tourismconsultation.htm>

Right to Walk on Access Land

Plans to look after important conservation sites and areas of high visitor pressure when the new public right to walk on access land is introduced across England were unveiled in March. Sites which are considered especially sensitive will be given priority for on-the-ground management measures including signposts, information boards and stiles, funded by a DEFRA grant scheme for local authorities.

In November 2002 the Government affirmed that the new right of access will be introduced in a region by region basis. The public right of access will commence in September 2004 in

the first two regions - the Lower North West and the South East. The remaining regions will follow a rolling timetable, with every region in England scheduled to open before the end of 2005.

Linger Longer in Nottinghamshire Libraries

Due to popular public demand, Nottinghamshire libraries are continuing with a programme to increase the number of hours during which libraries are open for business. The first two phases resulted in Saturday afternoon opening in nine main libraries and 57 hours of opening every week at the County's 8 largest libraries.

It was recognised that further phases of opening hour's developments should deal with the rest of the library network, and address local needs such as 'benefit days'. Accordingly, careful consideration has been given to a range of factors including customer comment, the provision of additional choices for users and potential library users, and patterns of local activity. The current phase of changes involve 50 libraries, and add 267 hours of opening per week throughout the county.

An extensive marketing promotion campaign including bus adverts and bill boards is coinciding with the launch in recognition that increased usage will not be automatic without making the public aware of the improved and more convenient service.

The new opening times are posted on the County Council website at:
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/libraries or can be obtained by calling 0115 977 4401

Alabaster Virgins

Willoughby on the Wolds Parish Council's clerk Mike Elliott recently found himself assisting a German visitor who wanted to look at tombstones in the parish church. The lady, Mrs Karin Land, is working on a PhD thesis for the University of Düsseldorf in Germany about alabaster Virgins with Child of English origin. She was interested in the church at Willoughby because, according to Francis Cheetham's 2003 book about English alabasters, there is an alabaster tomb with a Virgin on one of the panels in Willoughby.

Mike joined with local resident Mrs Monica Smith, who knows the history of the church and its tombs, to welcome Mrs Land and her husband. And they weren't the only international visitors to the church that week, because the day before Mrs Land was welcomed, Mrs Smith and the Minister the Rev Mrs Christine Turner had shown a visitor from the USA who believed that they had relatives buried there at the church.

Community Co-operative Action Project (CCAP)

Nottinghamshire RCC has made successful funding applications to The Greater Nottingham Partnership, Social Enterprise East Midlands and North Nottinghamshire Sub-regional Strategic Partnership to work with communities in Rural Nottinghamshire which have no retail services.

A Retail Development Officer will be appointed to bring together all strands of each participating community using a selection of consultation methods to find out their specific needs. The appointed person will look at developing community based co-operative facilities in villages within the County. The Community Co-operative Action Project (CCAP) will work to bridge the gap in service provision in villages that currently do not have a village shop. Working as a team with the new officer, community representatives will identify suitable accommodation for each project and look for help and funding to make each scheme

sustainable with volunteer support. It is envisaged that each outlet will employ 3 part-time staff including a delivery person who will despatch goods locally by bicycle! A bank of volunteers will also play a valuable role in making each enterprise sustainable. The project will endeavour to give each centre an affordable solution to buying consumables in an easily accessible way. Each outlet will be run as a social enterprise and any profits will be re-invested into the businesses. Funding for this project is available for 2 years.

For further details contact Jackie Colquitt, Head of Rural Services 01623 727614 or e-mail: jcolquitt@nottsrcc.org.uk

Making Nottinghamshire Safer

County Council folk are being urged to play their part in helping Nottinghamshire to be a better place to live, visit and work in. The Community Safety Team has set up an internal community safety network, with representatives of senior managers from every department. Community safety is a big issue, and the County Council has a major role to play in making people feel safer and less fearful of crime.

We're already doing good work – the results of a recent Audit Commission inspection said we've made good progress on community safety, with promising prospects for improvement. To support that progress, it's vital that employees across the Council know what is happening on community safety and what their input can be. "I am extremely pleased with the report from the Audit Commission," said Councillor David Kirkham, Deputy Leader of the Council. "It is a fair reflection of the importance that the Council puts on community safety; this will remain a priority issue for the Council for the future, and has implications for staff in every department. A better sense of safety and a decrease in the fear of crime can have a dramatic impact on both communities and individuals – increasing community activity and making Nottinghamshire a more attractive and welcoming place to be.

The Council is currently working on:

- street lighting
- safer public areas
- well designed buildings
- safety at home
- facilities for young people
- safer transport
- provision for older people and vulnerable groups.

We're also making progress in areas of concern like:

- domestic burglary
- car theft
- substance misuse
- violence
- anti-social behaviour.

"We are a key member of the 7 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships that cover the county," explained Community Safety Manager Chris Walker. "Part of our work is about training employees to be aware of community safety – so that you know your responsibilities about making Nottinghamshire safer and what to do if someone has a problem. Often it is local people and employees on the front line who know what the best local solution to a problem is. Working with partners is vital to our success in reducing crime and disorder and increasing community safety for everyone in Nottinghamshire. So it is essential that people from across the Council are aware of the community safety agenda and how they can be involved."

For more information on community safety or for details of the Community Safety Network contact Rachel Farrand: on 0115 977 4330, email: rachel.farrand@nottscc.gov.uk or write to Nottinghamshire County Council, Community Safety Team, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

Papplewick Feasibility Study

Nottinghamshire County Council is to provide £15,000 to fund a feasibility study to look at setting up a new project at Papplewick Pumping Station, which has been pumping fresh clean water to local people since 1884.

The feasibility study will look at the possibility of extending the work currently undertaken at Papplewick and will look to provide a resource on the importance of water to us all, for school children to study.

“I’m delighted to be able to support Papplewick with this project” said Councillor Chris Winterton, Cabinet Member for Economic Development. “Papplewick is a fantastic place to visit and we hope that the funding that we are providing will lead to them being able to offer even more for visitors, especially school children who have to study water as part of the national curriculum”.

Proving Heritage Is More Than Just A History Lesson

A community project worker from Papplewick made it to the finals of a national search to discover England's "Heritage Stars" of 2003-2004. Lee Scudder was one of 6 finalists shortlisted for the adult heritage star title which was announced at a national Local Heritage Initiative conference in the British Museum, London.

It was organised by the Countryside Agency-managed LHI project to pay tribute to people who made an outstanding contribution over the last year.

Lee is a member of the Moor Pond Wood Heritage Project near Papplewick. Once the centre of a thriving 18th century cotton industry, it is now a county wildlife site with rich natural resources - wet woodland, meadow wetland and shrub woodland.

The group devised a well structured plan to involve the wider community in discovering the importance of the site and its role in their heritage. Work involves research and investigation as well as improving access to woodlands. Lee was pipped to the award by a nominee from the south west.

Delegates at the London conference heard the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) backed initiative has reached far beyond traditional history or environmental projects.

Evaluation of LHI demonstrates its success in reaching new audiences:

- LHI has encouraged people from all walks of life to take part in projects to celebrate their local heritage - more than 12,000 people have never been involved before
- 41% of all projects are in disadvantaged areas
- 82% of participants gained a knowledge of local history
- 80% also gained project management skills which will help them do more community schemes in the future

- and that the critical factor in LHI's success is the support given to projects by LHI advisers: 52% of groups said their projects would not have got off the ground without the support of their adviser.

LHI is a nationwide community heritage conservation scheme, which gives communities across England practical help and funding to explore, cherish, celebrate and share their local heritage, landscape, landmarks and traditions. It is run by the Countryside Agency with £8 million grant aid from the Heritage Lottery Fund and over £1million sponsorship from the Nationwide Building Society.

A region by region round-up of the current projects can be accessed from the website: www.lhi.org.uk. Other projects in Nottinghamshire include: Ashfield's Cricket Heritage, Bingham Heritage Archive Project and Trails, Hucknall Heritage Archive Project, Wellow Dam Research and Greenwood Woodland Wildflowers.

Robin Hood Festival

This year's Robin Hood Festival - Nottinghamshire's biggest celebration of the life and times of its legendary hero - will be taking place at Sherwood Country Park and Visitor Centre, Edwinstowe, from **Monday-Sunday 2-8 August 2004**.

Entry to the Robin Hood Festival is **free**, although there will be a small charge for some of the events and car parking:

- **Alan a'Dale and Festa** - good-natured storytellers
- **Legends** - recreate daring exploits of Robin Hood and the Sheriff's men with live action skirmishes as well as the exciting jousting spectacles.
- **Hat Trick Singing Plague Victims** - Be warned – their humour is infectious!
- **What a Palaver** - Enjoy the frantic antics of these jovial jokers
- **Ye Olde Red Tail Falconry** - a spectacular show by the country's leading falconry outfit
- **Sir Ralph of Epperstone** - this medieval physician has a packful of remedies to peddle!
- **Zebediah the Ratcatcher** - take a peek into the Ratcatcher's hovel
- **Grunal the Moneyer** - when that crafty Sheriff of Nottingham confiscates all your riches, Grunal is a useful man to know! Watch him mint medieval coins by hand.

No Robin Hood Festival would be complete without archery and swordfighting, and down by the Major Oak, costumed longbow archers will demonstrate their skills and also give visitors a chance to test their own prowess.

The popular Medieval Market will also be back.

You can visit the Robin Hood Festival website at: www.robinhood.co.uk/robinhood or contact: Marilyn Loudon, Culture and Community Department Nottinghamshire County Council, The Abbey, Rufford Country Park, Ollerton, Nottinghamshire NG22 9DF Tel: 01623 821327 Fax: 01623 825919

Sherwood Forest Community Rangers – Landowner Consultation

The Sherwood Forest Community Rangers Project is a partnership, supporting landowners and local communities to work together to protect and manage countryside areas across the Sherwood Forest area. The project works with a variety of partner organisations and local communities to raise awareness of these sites, including new community woodlands and proposed Local Nature Reserves.

The project has successfully increased levels of community involvement in the care and management of new community woodlands (restored colliery sites) across the four initial target areas covered by the project – Blidworth, Rainworth, Ollerton and Manton. Projects carried out so far have included:

A heathland creation project with Dukeries Community College

“Adopt-a-nestbox” scheme with the Friends of Tippings Wood and Robert Jones School

Facilitation of a working group to look at off-road motorbiking issues in Manton

Working on these successes, the project has now expanded to include Clipstone,

Edwinstowe, Silverhill, Mansfield Woodhouse and Shirebrook as additional target areas.

Having carried out a number of community-based consultation exercises to find out how local people wanted to see the new community woodlands develop, the Sherwood Forest Community Rangers have recently commenced the Landowner Consultation phase of the project. Initial questionnaires have been sent out to give landowners the opportunity to identify current and desired levels of community activity and involvement on their land. Responses from the questionnaires are now being collated to inform the project which organisations and individuals wish to become more involved in managing and, if appropriate, increasing levels of community involvement.

Following on from the initial questionnaire, respondents are given the opportunity to take part in a more detailed consultation. This is designed to establish how each landowner can work with the Community Rangers to develop community involvement on an area-wide basis. The project will then work with landowners in each target area to develop Area Action Plans to provide a framework for landowners and communities to work together more effectively to manage countryside sites across the Sherwood Forest area.

The Sherwood Forest Community Rangers project is a partnership between Nottinghamshire County Council, Forestry Commission, Sherwood Forest Trust and the Greenwood Partnership. Funding support is from the Heritage Lottery Fund, New Opportunities Fund and English Nature’s Wildspace! scheme. If you would like further information about the Sherwood Forest Community Rangers Project, please contact Jo Lindsay, Project Co-ordinator on 01623 822447.

New Local Nature Reserves proposed for Nottinghamshire

Nottinghamshire County Council is in the process of declaring four areas as Local Nature Reserves.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are for both people and wildlife. They are places with wildlife or geological features that are of special interest locally, which give people opportunities to study and learn about them, or simply enjoy and have contact with nature.

Local authorities can designate Local Nature Reserves under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act (1949). Nottinghamshire County Council is working with the Sherwood Forest Community Rangers project to raise awareness and develop active community involvement in the care and management of the four proposed LNRS. This has been made possible by funding from the Wildspace! scheme run by English Nature and the New Opportunities Fund.

The four areas proposed as Local Nature Reserves are:

Tippings Wood, Rainworth (part of the former Blidworth Colliery site)

Rainworth Water, Rainworth (part of the former Rufford Colliery site)

Cockglode and Rotary Woods (between Edwinstowe and Ollerton)

Southwell Trail (Bilsthorpe, Farnsfield, Kirklington and Southwell).

The consultation phase of the process is now underway. Organisations, groups and individuals within each area will receive information about each site, including maps showing boundaries of each proposed LNR and a management plan outlining how each site will be looked after.

If you, your group or organisation would like to comment on the proposal to declare the above sites as LNRs, or would like to see copies of the site management plans, please contact Liz Fleuty on 01623 758231 or e-mail: liz.fleuty@nottscc.gov.uk

Wheels in motion for better cycling

The County Council is improving the way cyclists are catered for in Nottinghamshire with the launch of its new Cycle Design Guide. The guide, which has already been selected as an example of good practice by the Government, is being adopted by the County Council to ensure that all cycle routes will meet a certain standard across Nottinghamshire.

The Design Guide draws together information into one all-encompassing manual about how to cater for cyclists when schemes such as roundabouts, traffic lights or new roads are built. The guide uses text, flow charts, diagrams and photographs to make clear what design principles are to be followed.

The guide, which will be used by the County Council's Engineering staff, will also:

- Encourage better provision for cyclists on the road through the use of cycle lanes or quiet road routes
- Advise on the retention of cycle access for all new and existing pedestrianised streets
- Encourage the increased provision of Advanced Cycle Stop Lines at traffic lights in 30mph areas to improve safety for cyclists.

By making life easier for cyclists and providing a set standard for cycling around the whole of the county, we hope to encourage more people to get on their bikes and consider leaving their cars at home when they travel to work or the shops. The Cycle Design Guide has already become a hit with the Government, with the Department for Transport requesting permission to use parts of the guidance to demonstrate good practice on the National Cycling Strategy website.

The Cycle Design Guide has been developed in discussion with the English Regions Cycling Development Team and the National Cycling Strategy Team. Consultation also took place with District Councils, cycle user groups and the County Council's Disabled Workers' Group.

Trading Standards Warnings:

1 - Data Protection

Many small businesses are being charged over £100 to register with the Data Protection Commission when they can do it for themselves at a cost of only £35.

Letters sent out by a private company, often contain the heading 'Urgent Notice' and state that the recipient/addressee is not registered under the Data Protection Act 1998 and is therefore breaking the law and liable to incur a large fine. The company then offers to register the business usually for a fee of more than £100.

Although there is a need for certain businesses to register under the Data Protection Act 1998, Notts County Council Trading Standards urge small businesses to do it themselves for

£35 and not to confuse this private company with the Government Department – the Information Commissioners Office website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk
Businesses can check whether notification is required under the Data Protection Act 1998 by telephoning 0162 5545740 or visiting www.dpr.gov.uk

Businesses seeking further advice can call 0845 0505 200. This is a 24-hour number and recorded information is available outside of office hours. Complaints and enquiries can be made on-line at www.consumercomplaints.org.uk or by textphone on 0115 977 2325. People who live in the City of Nottingham can telephone 0115 950 7910.

2 - Only give to registered charities ...

Trading Standards are asking people to be careful about whom they donate clothes to when they respond to requests from organizations. Not all are charitable institutions.

A flyer has recently been posted through letterboxes around Nottinghamshire, asking people for unwanted clothes, footwear and household linen. The impression given is that the items will benefit people in need, but the flyer does not have a charity registration number, so there is no way of verifying where the donations will end up.

Graham Lambert, Advice Services Manager for Nottinghamshire County Council's Trading Standards, says: "There is no doubt that there are many bona fide charitable organizations that do a tremendous job in relieving poverty, suffering and providing support to those in need. These charities rely heavily on the generosity of the general public. People must make sure that they are donating to a registered charity. To check whether an organization is a registered charity, members of the public can **telephone 0870 3330123**. Registered charities will have their registration number on their literature.

A charity registration number is not a business registration number. I would urge consumers who wish to give a charitable donation to donate only to recognized or registered charities. If in doubt, do not give".

Further information is available from Nottinghamshire County Council Trading Standards offices. These are at the following addresses:

County Hall, West Bridgford
17B The Square, Retford
16 Regent Street, Mansfield

Opening hours are Monday to Thursday 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and Friday 10:00 am to 4:30 pm.

The Advice Line telephone number is: 08450 505 200 (line closes 15 minutes before office).

People who live in the City of Nottingham can telephone 0115 950 7910.

Or contact by email via: www.consumercomplaints.org.uk

Centre of Excellence

Nottinghamshire County Council has been named by the Government as the East Midlands Regional Centre of Excellence for Procurement.

The Council has been chosen because of the work it has pioneered with the City of Nottingham in buying goods and services.

The new centre, one of 9 created across the country, will provide expertise to other councils by building on existing good practice, by buying goods and services efficiently and at the best price possible.

Councillor John Stocks, Cabinet Member for Resources, said "I'm delighted that our previous good track record in buying goods and services efficiently has been recognised by the Government and we look forward to sharing our experiences with other councils across the East Midlands."

Michael Edwards, Deputy Leader of Nottingham City Council, said: "Councils are responsible for buying in a large amount of goods and services so it's essential that they have the systems in place to get the best possible deal on behalf of council tax payers. We will be more than pleased to share the good practice we have built up in Nottingham and Notts with other parts of the region."

The new centre will be established at County Hall in West Bridgford and the team will work towards producing a 3 year plan to improve purchasing in the region.

Be a Creature of Habit

The County Council has enlisted the help of some special garden creatures to encourage local children to muck in and learn the benefits of composting.

A worm, frog, robin and owl have been drafted in to appear on a set of 50 limited edition compost bins, which are up for grabs in a competition for schools around the county.

The fun cartoon animals are being used on the novelty compost bins to help make composting more fun and friendly for school children.

The competition to win one of 50 novelty compost bins is open to schools throughout the county, all of which will have to say in 20 words or less why they should be a winner. Schools can enter the competition by completing the form in the County Council's newspaper 'County News', by phoning 0115 977 2019 or by completing an entry online at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/compostcomp

Nottinghamshire residents who are interested in composting can also take part in a free 90 day trial by phoning 0870 849 4872 or visiting www.trycomposting.com/nottscc

Big Smoke Debate

People from the East Midlands are being asked to air their views on this issue by logging onto www.bigsmokedebate.com/eastmidlands or via questionnaires distributed through local free papers and a range of venues including GP surgeries, pharmacies, libraries and schools throughout the region until 30 April 2004.

The campaign is not about *whether* people should smoke, but *where* smoking should occur. It has been designed to elicit detailed responses about the type of restrictions on smoking people in the East Midlands would like to see in a range of different enclosed public places. People are given the option of whether they would like to see certain places completely smokefree, mainly smokefree, mainly smoking or allowing smoking throughout.

The Debate coincides with the recent launch of the Treasury Report on public health, *Securing Good Health for the Whole Population*, which supports the idea of smokefree public places.

The report said, "Measures that introduce more smoke-free workplaces and public places not only reduce exposure to second-hand smoke, but may also result in a fall in cigarette consumption. If national restrictions are not introduced, an equivalent city or town in England could act as a champion for smoke-free public places across the country and make a real impact on the health of their population, whilst piloting a ban on smoking in public places in England."

Wheels to Work Update

The Nottinghamshire Wheels to Work Scheme has now been running for 2 years and in that time 55 clients have benefited from the scheme. The fleet of mopeds has expanded from the original 15 to its current 40 and funding is in place to take it up to 50 by 2006.

The scheme is aimed at young people aged 16-24 or anyone who has been unemployed for more than 6 months. Clients have the loan of a moped for up to a year to help them to access training, employment or education. When they join the scheme, clients undergo Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) which is organised and paid for by the scheme. They also receive basic safety equipment including helmet, reflective jacket, leather gloves and waterproof suit. Clients pay £3 per week towards the upkeep of the moped and they are visited regularly by the scheme's Co-ordinator.

Examples of clients who qualify for the scheme include those whose hours of work fall outside the hours of public transport provision or whose home or work location is not adequately served by public transport.

Although much work has been done to publicise the scheme across the County, there is still an imbalance in distribution across the various areas. Since the start of the scheme there have been a large number of clients in the North of the County, especially in Bassetlaw, but relatively few in Gedling, Broxtowe and Rushcliffe. We are keen to ensure that the needs of these areas are met. The Co-ordinator would welcome enquiries from groups and organisations who would like to receive publicity material or a visit and presentation. Enquiries and applications are also welcome from individuals.

For further information, please contact:

Gina Brindley, Telephone: 01623 727620

Email: gbrindley@nottscc.org.uk Or visit our website: www.nottswheels2work.org.uk

Environmental education centre

An environmental education centre is being built next to the existing rangers' hut at Rushcliffe Country Park in Ruddington. Work began in March and the centre should be open in the summer. The building will provide an education facility for schools, groups and individuals focusing on environmental and conservation activities at the park. The project has been made possible thanks to a very generous grant from Experian, as well as funding from Biffa, other award bodies and Rushcliffe Borough Council.

The building will promote sustainable development and will be constructed using the latest good practice in green architecture. It will feature solar panels for water heating and a wind turbine to generate electricity.

The first woodland trail in Gibbies Wood near Asher Lane - suitable for wheelchair users - is opening on 1 May giving people the opportunity to get closer to nature. The park is home to various athletics events throughout the year - the 10K run in March, primary schools' cross country events and Rushcliffe Youth Games orienteering in the summer, as well as being very popular with walkers, cyclists and families who visit the play area.

Dogs on leads please

Dog owners must put their dogs on leads in the car park, around the lake and near the children's play area at Rushcliffe Country Park in Ruddington from the beginning of April. Anyone caught and refusing to put their dogs on a lead could face a fine of up to £500. Rangers are erecting temporary signs to warn dog owners of the new rules.

There have been a number of incidents that have forced Rushcliffe Borough Council to introduce this rule. Recently one dog was injured and another was killed by a car. Dogs are also guilty of jumping in the lake and attacking and scaring the birds. Dogs have even bitten swans resulting in costly vet bills. Dog excrement can cause blindness in young children as well as being foul and smelly. Dogs have frightened and jumped up at young children, as well as stealing off with people's picnics and being a general nuisance.

There are still 5 miles of footpaths and plenty of open land in the country park where dog owners can let their dogs off the lead. Also, people can bring their dogs into the park from other entrances, such as off Asher Lane, without them having to wear a lead.

Shopmobility launch

Shopmobility arrived in West Bridgford at the end of March. The new facility will initially be based at Bridgford Park Pavilion, Bridgford Road (next to the library). Shopmobility provides mobility aids (one manual wheelchair, one powered wheelchair and 6 scooters) to help people to shop and use local facilities.

People can register to become regular users by visiting the Shopmobility office, open on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 am until 2 pm.

For more information and details of how to register, please call the Shopmobility office on **0115 981 5451**.

Registration costs £5 but then using Shopmobility is free.

Shopmobility has been supported by a £2,000 grant from Nottingham East Midlands Airport's Community Fund to purchase a powered wheelchair, £2,000 from Boots to buy 2 scooters and £1,000 from Nottingham Building Society to buy a scooter. West Bridgford Round Table has funded a sign and leaflets.

Quality of Life Counts - update 2004

An update of the government's core set of indicators of sustainable development, "Quality of Life Counts" is now available on the government's sustainable development website at: www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

Burglar off

A staggering 69% of house burglaries in February were as a result of people failing to lock their doors and windows. If you don't want to be the next victim, remember to lock all doors and windows, remove keys from locks and make sure they are away from reach through cat flaps. Handbags should be out of sight. You should take similar precautions when you go to bed and when you are in the garden. But please remember where your keys are so you can find them and escape quickly in case of a fire. Fit smoke alarms and regularly check the batteries. Don't make it easy for burglars. Taking a few simple precautions can be very

effective in reducing burglary. Burglar alarms and security lights are also very good deterrents.

Pension Credit

NEED MORE MONEY? AGED OVER 60?

Call FREE on 0800 99 1234 to apply for Pension Credit by telephone. For deaf and hard of hearing use the Textphone 0800 169 0133

Ring 0845 60 60 265 if you wish to see an advisor from the Pension Service or log onto the website: www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/pensioncredit

The Pension Service is part of the Department for Work and Pensions.

New figures show that 110,000 additional people (83,000 households) started receiving Pension Credit in February, so extra help from Pension Credit is rapidly reaching more people. As of 29 February, the average Pension Credit weekly award was confirmed at £42.60 with over 1.93 million people (1.61 million households) gaining extra money compared with the old system.

OFWAT

Large businesses and other large organisations should contact WaterVoice if they want to find out whether and how they could benefit from a new competitive regime in the water industry from August 2005. WaterVoice is looking at the guidance on which customers will be eligible to switch their supplier. From Autumn 2005 non-household customers which are likely to use at least 50 mega-litres of water will be able to switch from their water company to a new water supply licensee. Businesses with individual consumption of less than 50 mega-litres may still qualify if they can show that they are part of a site under common ownership, occupation or management which does use more than 50 mega-litres. A form for businesses to use and complete is available on the WaterVoice website at: www.ofwat.gov.uk

The Future of Listed Places of Worship

Heritage Minister Andrew McIntosh is asking religious communities, heritage groups, local authorities and the general public, if the current system of protection of places of worship is fit for the 21st century.

In the spotlight is ecclesiastical exemption, the arrangement whereby buildings held by certain denominations are exempt from listed building and conservation area controls. A part of the ongoing review of heritage protection, *The Future of the Ecclesiastical Exemption*: A consultation paper for England offers suggestions for change upon which interested parties are invited to comment.

Written comments (address below) in response to the consultation paper are required by 31 May 2004 or e-mail comments to: ee.consult@culture.gsi.gov.uk

The Consultation Paper can be accessed on the DCMS website: www.culture.gov.uk. Hard copies are available from David Hall, Architecture and Historic Environment Division, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH

County Council's tourism package

Nottinghamshire County Council will be providing £40,000 towards a package of initiatives aimed at supporting the County's tourism and leisure sector. The aim of the package is to:

train ambassadors to represent the industry
recruitment campaigns
skills initiatives
awards scheme to celebrate successes
improve the image of the industry.

More than 30,000 people in Nottinghamshire (7.3% of the workforce) are employed in the sector in more than 3,000 businesses.

East Midlands Tourism

East Midlands Tourism, the new tourist board for the region is now up and running. Led by Steve Brown, who helped turn Center Parcs into a household name, EMT will bring together support from businesses, EMDA and local government. It will drive forward the regional tourism strategy 'Destination East Midlands', published last year.

Source: East Midlands Development Agency

Training at NALC

The next round of training for parish clerks for the AQA qualification which is one of the criteria necessary for a Quality Council has been arranged. The meetings are scheduled for 9.30 am-12.45 pm on:

19 June, 26 June, 10 July and 17 July

all of which are Saturdays at County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham.

If you wish to know more about the Quality Council qualification or wish to attend please contact Lynda Ogilvie at NALC on 01636 816890.

Fly-Tipping

The government has outlawed the illegal dumping of waste, known as fly-tipping.

Speaking at an event to publish the findings of a survey of the state of England's streets, Minister for Local Environmental Quality, Alun Michael, gave details of 2 consultation exercises which will inform the Government's action on tackling fly-tipping. He invited everyone with an interest to contribute their views. "Fly-tipping activity ranges from individuals who irresponsibly dispose of their domestic rubbish, to organised large scale criminal activity. In the worst incidents it is not only an eyesore and an inconvenience but can pose a threat to human health." The first consultation seeks to develop effective joint working between the various agencies with an interest in fly-tipping prevention. The second consultation, the Fly-Tipping Strategy, focuses on changes to existing legislation to make it more useable and effective.

Both consultations will run until Friday 14 May 2004 and are available at www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/current.htm or by contacting Defra Publications, Admail 6000, London SW1A 2XX, tel: 08459 556000

Review of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

DEFRA has commenced consultation, in England and Wales, on an amendment to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This Act transposes the EC Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) into domestic legislation, and the proposals will ensure that it delivers all of their commitments on the protection of wild birds under the Directive.

The consultation which runs until 11 May 2004 can be found online at: www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/wildbird/index.htm then consultation on other issues of Part 1 of the Act will take place in the summer.

Beacon Status

Nottinghamshire County Council Services for Older People has just been awarded Beacon Status. A total of 45 Beacon awards will be presented to 63 authorities. The successful authorities will receive a share of Government funding worth £3 million to help boost their activities for spreading best practice.

Welcome

Welcome to the following new clerks:

Mrs A Haddon, Shireoaks Parish Council
Mr D Fretwell, Besthorpe Parish Meeting
Mrs S Beresford, Carlton on Trent Parish Council
Mrs E Leggat, Harworth Parish Council
Mrs P Clarke, Papplewick Parish Council
Mr D Langmead, Sturton le Steeple Parish Council

Useful Information:

County Council Waste hotline: 0115 977 1019
Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111
Domestic Violence: 0808 800 0340
Floodline: 0845 988 1188
Report Racial Abuse: 0800 085 8511

District Council websites:

www.ashfield-dc.gov.uk
www.bassetlaw.gov.uk
www.broxtowe.gov.uk
www.gedling.gov.uk
www.mansfield.gov.uk
www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk
www.rushcliffe.gov.uk

City and County websites:

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk
www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Other useful websites:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
www.defra.gov.uk
www.odpm.gov.uk
www.countrysideagency.gov.uk
www.emda.org.uk

Around the County

Broxtowe Borough Council has produced their 4th 'Broxtowe Business Directory'. The Chief Executive has endorsed the directory, "This version reveals the strengths and diversity of the Broxtowe economy and lists many new companies. It reflects Broxtowe's continued success in attracting new firms and supporting the expansion of existing businesses."

Stanton on the Wolds Parish Council has decided to seek Quality Council Status. The seven-strong Council under the chairmanship of Councillor Bryan Baines serves a population of 415 people. They have recently started publishing a village newsletter which is distributed free to each house in the village and plan to do this every two months. It is produced at the office of the clerk, Mike Elliott.

Nottinghamshire Bike Ride 2004

The 2004 Great Notts Bike Ride takes place on **Sunday 27 June**. Entry forms for the 2004 Bike Ride will be available in libraries from March 2004 and are available in a pdf format on the Nottinghamshire County Council's website at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/bikeride

Horse Passports

Horse-related enterprises including veterinary practices, riding schools and other businesses have been sent leaflets and posters, reminding horse owners in England that they should obtain a horse passport by the deadline of 30 June 2004.

The European Elections take place on Thursday 10 June 2004

Business Advice for Farmers

Farmers will be able to call upon free support from the Farm Business Advice Service (FBAS) for another year after Ministers agreed to extend the scheme until March 2005. Since 2000 the government has invested nearly £32 million in FBAS, helping around 15,000 farmers. FBAS offers farmers 3 days free consultancy including a business 'health audit' and help in drawing up business plans. The extension announced in March 2004 by DEFRA will give around 3,000 more farmers access to free advice and support. FBAS is funded by DEFRA and run by the Small Business Service through its Business Link network. For further information on FBAS and other business support services call 0845 600 9006 or go to www.businesslink.gov.uk

Aslockton Parish Council has recently launched its website. Visit them at: www.aslockton.org then click on parish council —loads of information.

Your Newsletter

This newsletter is sent to **Town and Parish Councils/Meetings**, for distribution. Names and addresses are held on a database. I want mail to get to the right people without delay so please help by informing me of any changes as it is my responsibility to inform others within the authority who mail out to parish councils. Parish contacts information, the Code of Practice and this newsletter are on the authority's website at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/parishcouncils.htm

Please contact me if you have:

- Articles for Countylink
- information or an event during **July, August and September 2004** in your local parish
- Changes of Parish Clerks details
- requests for extra copies of Countylink
- A request for Countylink in other formats
- information/links/photograph you would like to add to your details on the Nottinghamshire County Council's website.

Barbara Worrall

Your District Council Contacts:

Ashfield District Council, Public Relations
01623 457004

Bassetlaw District Council, Public Relations
01909 533726

Broxtowe Borough Council, Public Relations
0115 917 3743

Gedling Borough Council, Public Relations
0115 901 3801

Mansfield District Council, Public Relations
01623 463021

Newark and Sherwood District Council
Public Relations 01636 655255

Rushcliffe Borough Council, Public Relations
0115 914 8555

Contacting us:

E-mail: barbara.worrall@nottscc.gov.uk
Phone: 0115 977 4085
Fax: 0115 977 3859
Post: Regeneration, Learning, Skills and Employment, Culture and Community Department, Nottinghamshire County Council, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP
Internet: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/parishcouncils.htm

**Deadline date for articles for the next issue is:
26 May 2004**