

Countylink

April 2003 No 56

Circulation to:

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

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Sustainable Communities

In early February, the government published their long heralded 'Community Plan'¹. Much of the press coverage of this focused upon the impact on the South East and the Thames Corridor of proposed major new developments in those areas. More generic issues covered by the paper include explanations of new initiatives such as the purpose of a new 'Liveability Fund' to improve parks and open space and a Land Restoration Trust to transform derelict land unsuitable for development into green spaces. This latter initiative will treat 1500 hectares of derelict land.

A companion East Midlands regional volume to the main paper was published simultaneously with the above². This document particularly discusses housing, planning and neighbourhood renewal as well as services in rural areas, transport, skills, economic growth and deprivation. In discussing housing, the focus is upon areas experiencing excess demand or low demand for housing. The document exemplifies the work being undertaken in the Meden Valley as being a good example of how low housing demand can be addressed.

(See also page 9 for further news of a good practice example from Newark discussed in this document.)

¹ODPM; Sustainable Communities; building for the future.

²ODPM; Sustainable Communities in the East Midlands.

Both of these documents can be viewed on:
www.communities.odpm.gov.uk

£200,000 Up For Grabs to Fund Local IT Initiatives

The North Derbyshire & North Nottinghamshire Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership's SRB funded "ICT in the Community" project has £200,000 available between April 2003 and March 2005. The fund commenced in July 2002 and has to date supported 50 community initiatives to expand the provision of ICT learning in local communities.

Access to the fund is restricted to Community and Voluntary Groups and its

purpose is to enable successful applicants to set up community based projects that either use ICT to train people, or train people in the use of ICT. Alternatively it can be used to give people information, advice and guidance on learning and/or working using ICT facilities.

There are no 'priority wards' under this fund so all Mansfield, Ashfield, Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood wards are eligible. The priorities are to attract new adult learners and help them to progress.

Further details can be obtained from: Glen Williams, Director, Learning & Skills, Unit H1B Mill 3, Pleasley Vale Business Park, Pleasley Vale, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG19 8RL Tel: 01623 819809 E-mail: glen.williams@nottsc.gov.uk

Unique Coffee Bar Training Facilities One Step Nearer

New training facilities at the Unique Coffee Bar, Newark have taken a step nearer being completed following a Social Risk Capital Fund grant awarded by Newark and Sherwood District Council.

The grant will allow the coffee bar to provide a classroom and training facilities for local young people aged 14 to 25. The facility will encourage participants to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and enable them to access mainstream education and training opportunities. The Unique Coffee Bar has been in operation since January 2000 and provides a safe environment for all young people aged 14 to 25 in the Newark area.

The award is from the Council's Social Risk Capital Fund, which is a small locally administered fund for social enterprise community projects. The fund aims to provide small grants to local communities which can be implemented in the short term and which can provide long lasting benefit to communities within the Newark and Sherwood District.

All projects seeking assistance must provide a clear justification for the project that must be

based on identifiable needs and include details of a satisfactory funding package to cover the costs of developing the project.

For further information please contact: Julie Rushby, Economic Regeneration Officer Social Enterprise, Tel: 01636 655253

Playschemes in Nottinghamshire

There are about 40 to 50 playschemes operating across Nottinghamshire. Each one provides local communities with a much-needed service.

Playschemes run during the school holidays and provide play for children from the age of five. Younger children are often allowed to attend as long as an adult accompanies them. If the scheme runs for more than two hours in any day and for more than five days a year and cares for children under eight years old, it must be registered with the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

Registration means the playscheme must be able to show that it complies with 14 National Standards set out by the Government as a baseline of quality in childcare. These standards cover staff and training, activities, premises, equipment, food and drink, equal opportunities, working with parents/carers, special needs, child protection, behaviour, and health and safety.

A Childcare Inspector from OFSTED will visit schemes to assess how they perform against the standards. The inspector will make a decision whether or not to register schemes based on these visits.

Help is available for playschemes that need to register. The Children's Information Service holds regular briefing sessions explaining the National Standards and what the registration process involves. In addition, a team of play development workers can provide ongoing support to playschemes.

Playschemes that want to, can go one step further and apply for a quality assurance programme. There are a variety of schemes to choose from including the Kids Clubs Network's Aiming High Programme.

If you are running any type of care for children in the absence of their parents you should always inform OFSTED.

Useful Telephone Numbers:

Children's Information Service: 0115 854 6310

Play Development Office: 01636 670709

OFSTED: 0845 6014771

Flower Power in Notts!

Co-ordinated by the Biodiversity Action Group, a partnership of over 40 organisations involved in nature conservation across the county, Notts residents are being asked to collect records of wild primroses and cowslips, which are fast disappearing from our countryside.

Conservation is not just about protecting rare or threatened species, so we need information on our local flowers now, to ensure that they remain part of Nottinghamshire's special countryside. It is hoped that local people can help the partnership to identify new sites and populations of these characteristic species. This information will then be lodged with the Nottinghamshire Biological and Geological Records Centre. These records will provide crucial evidence to examine the status of the plants, and could prove fundamental in the protection of sites in the future.

Both cowslips and primroses used to grow all over the county at one time, in hedgerows and fields. Because they don't colonise most areas very quickly, they may point us to old, long established habitats.

Primroses favour damp places, and hedgebanks, woods, road-side verges, railway embankments and churchyards are all good places to look for them. Cowslips are found in similar areas, but are not so fond of woods, preferring a more open habitat. The name cowslip means "cow-pat", because they

grew readily in areas where cattle had fertilised the pasture. However, much of this grassland area has more recently been ploughed up and converted into arable farmland, restricting their range. The best time to spot both plants is late March to early May, when their yellow flowers will be very visible.

You can help by completing a simple survey card, showing where and when you saw the plants. Survey cards include colour photographs and other information to help you spot the plants and tell the difference between the two.

If you are interested in obtaining a survey card, please contact Beth Gardner from the Biodiversity Action Group, on 0115 977 4213.

The Chase Charity

The Chase Charity supports around 60 arts projects per year, including community arts and arts centres. They are particularly interested in charities which are taking their work to communities and groups who would not normally have access to arts; for example people living in rural areas and those who are disadvantaged by poverty or age.

The trust will also support the restoration of village churches for community use though strict criteria applies. The local community must support appeals. Those living in rural areas will be given priority, and restoration plans must take into account mobility needs.

Grants range from £1,000 to £30,000. The charity may also cover revenue costs up to a maximum of 3 years.

For further information visit the website: www.chase-charity.org.uk or Tel: 01235 820044

Nottinghamshire's Maypole Village

The village of Wellow is unique in at least one respect – it still has a splendid maypole on the village green. The current pole is the latest in a long line that stretches back to

the mid 19th century and probably beyond. Traditionally, the maypole was given by the local aristocracy (usually the Saviles at Rufford) when the village was in need of a new one. Although this was usually dictated by the age or condition of the pole, sometimes there were other reasons. In 1860 the pole was cut down during a 'drunken spree', and in 1923 the pole was replaced after some youths managed to set the top of the maypole alight with rocket fireworks after the previous Bonfire Night! Nowadays the maypole is made of steel to avoid the problem of decay. It is quite an impressive sight at over 60 feet high, spirally painted in red, white and blue, with three cross-pieces and topped by a weathervane.

The maypole tradition is still a strong feature of village life in Wellow. The May Queen is chosen by secret ballot, and maypole dancing is taught to the children for several weeks before Maypole Day itself. This takes place on the Spring Bank Holiday Monday (this year on 26 May). The celebrations begin with the procession of all the children taking part from the church onto the triangular village green. The new may queen is crowned by the retiring May Queen, who herself is then given a forget-me-not crown. After the presentation of her retinue the May Queen requests that the dancing begins. This is the highlight of the proceedings with all the children, aged from two years upwards, taking part. At Wellow nine different dances are performed, ranging from the simple 'Circling' for the little ones, to the much more complicated 'Gypsy's Tent' and 'Amo Amas'. The sight of the children, prettily dressed with matching pinafores and flowers in their hair, weaving patterns to music with red, white and blue 'ribbons' around the maypole on the picturesque village green, is such an attractive one that many people return year after year to witness it. Together with other entertainment, stalls and refreshments, Maypole Day at Wellow is well worth a visit, and is a wonderful way to help keep an important tradition alive.

Janet Carr, Wellow

Preparing For Changes To Benefit Payments

A change in the way in which benefits are paid starts this April. However, customers will still be able to collect their benefits in cash at Post OfficeTM branches.

The switch to Direct Payment, introduced by the Government, will be rolled out over the next two years. Customers will be notified by their benefit provider when the change will affect them.

Some 14 million people currently collect their benefit payments in cash at Post Office branches.

Basic bank accounts are being introduced by twelve major high street banks, allowing customers to continue to withdraw their benefits in cash at Post Offices.

Customers of Lloyds TSB, The Co-operative Bank and Alliance and Leicester can already carry out personal banking transactions at Post Offices nationwide.

Post Office Ltd will also introduce its own card account to add to the current range of services.

The new automated banking services will be introduced in all branches from April. To prepare for the change to Direct Payment, a pilot to test the range of banking services was undertaken at 259 Post Office branches in Leicestershire and Rutland. During the pilot, feedback was gathered from customers and staff, providing valuable input for the national rollout

Post Office Ltd Banking and Financial Services Director Graham Halliday said: "This pilot is a significant step in the extension of banking services and is crucial for the future of Post Office branches across the country."

If Post Office customers would like to find out more about the change to benefit

payments and the options available to them their local subpostmaster will be more than willing to offer advice.

Celebrate Summer!

To celebrate summer, Next Stage launched a festivals brochure at the Discover Nottinghamshire Day at Rufford Country Park on Sunday 13 April.

The brochure, called *Celebrate*, features a whole range of celebrations which run in the North Nottinghamshire area from May right through to August. It is part of an initiative from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) team of officers who are working to increase access to the arts in the former coalfields areas of the county.

Festivals included in the brochure are those organised by local communities and those hosted by the Arts Service and the Country Parks. Many feature professional entertainers and arts workshops programmed by the Next Stage team and together they prove that this is a summer when you won't be short of something to do!

For a copy of the brochure, please contact Next Stage on 0115 977 2991.

For more information, please contact Nicola Tompkins, Coalfields Arts Development Officer 01623 824249

Connect is just the job for 100th trainee

A local project set up to help train staff for the area's growing call centre industry has just registered its 100th success.

The Connect Project which is co-funded by the County Council and the European Social Fund, has a mission to co-ordinate Call Centre skills for the county. Last month in Mansfield it placed its 100th trainee into a full-time job.

When the Connect Project concludes at the end of this year it aims to have trained

between 450 and 500 local people looking for careers in the call centre industry.

The Project has been very popular with call centre companies in the county – currently 30 are associated with Connect and delighted to have ready access to a well-trained workforce.

Project Manager, Chris Calladine explained, "The training we provide is very much employer-led and covers all aspects of call centre work, including important items such as data protection. Connect has been particularly successful in training, and then finding jobs for, workers from some of the area's declining industries like textiles and mining. The Project has also helped enhance the area's reputation as a superb location to establish a call centre business. In Mansfield especially the financial incentives are attractive, the premises are available and a trained workforce ready and waiting."



Pictured:- WHA Regional Operations Manager, Adrian Thompson, welcomes Sharon Grumbley, the 100th Connect Trainee into work, watched by, from left; Nottinghamshire County Council Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Coun Chris Winterton; Connect Project Manager, Chris Calladine; Julie Dobb from Ashfield Centre and Rose Cook, JobCentre Plus.

For further information please contact:-

*Chris Calladine – Nottinghamshire County Council - Connect – 0115 9565 900
chris.calladine@nottscc.gov.uk
Adrian Thompson – WHA – 01623 638751
athompson@oriel-insurance.co.uk
Nick Hibberd – Mansfield District Council – 01623 463727
nhibberd@mansfield-dc.gov.uk
Jeremy Hall – SHOUT! PR – 01623 404202
jh@shoutpr.co.uk*

Rewriting History along the Trent Valley

A major £277,000 archaeological project has begun this month, which aims to travel back as far as the Ice Ages and unlock the secrets of the Trent Valley.

The Trent Valley, which runs from Staffordshire to Lincolnshire, is rich in archaeological sites and remains, many of major importance. Its landscape today is the result of 10,000 years of change and development through natural and human actions.

'Trent Valley 2002', which will be completed by March 2004, includes 11 individual schemes such as:

- mapping ancient river channels from aerial photographs;
- producing publicly available maps about archaeological sites and remains;
- adding to the Trent Valley Sites and Monuments Records maintained by local authorities in the Trent Valley.

The project will culminate in a major regional conference about the findings, which will be held in the new year.

'Trent Valley 2002', which is being co-ordinated by Nottinghamshire County Council, is being carried out by Trent Valley GeoArchaeology, a partnership of organisations involved in the study of archaeology in the Trent Valley.

The Trent Valley is one of the major past, present and future sources of aggregates in the country and, as such, is being funded by money from English Heritage's allocation of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund.

Jon Humble, the Regional English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments, said:

"For thousands of years the Trent Valley has been an economic life-line across the Midlands. Today, the Valley is under considerable pressure from development and

this project will help us to achieve a much more informed balance between the legacy of our rich past and present and future needs."

Mike Bishop, Principal Archaeological Officer for Nottinghamshire County Council and co-ordinator of Trent Valley GeoArchaeology, said:

"This project will be invaluable in consolidating and developing knowledge about the Trent Valley and delivering a common approach to its archaeology. Nottinghamshire County Council is pleased to play a part in this significant exercise between local authorities, universities, English Heritage and other archaeological organisations."

Information about the project is available on Trent Valley GeoArchaeology's website at www.tvg.org.uk. Alternatively, contact Mike Bishop at Nottinghamshire County Council on 0115 977 2116.

Girls Just Want To Have Fun – And Run For Childline!

The Flora Light Challenge for Women is a 5km run to be held for the first time in Birmingham City Centre on Sunday 14 September 2003. ChildLine is looking for women of all ages and fitness levels to join its fundraising team and help raise much needed funds for ChildLine East Midlands & East Anglia.

To qualify to run you just need to be female, have an eye for a challenge and the desire to help local children. You can join as an individual or get a team together for what will be a fantastic day out for all those taking part. Family and friends can join in the fun and cheer runners on along the route.

Every day ChildLine East Midlands & East Anglia answer about 140 calls from local children but sadly around another 180 children go unheard simply due to lack of funds. Many children need to redial several times before getting through to the help they so desperately need – tragically some

may give up altogether. ChildLine needs to raise £32 to counsel just one child. The money raised by local runners in the Flora Light Challenge for Women will go towards helping ChildLine East Midlands & East Anglia reach its goal of answering every child's call first time.

Register to take part via the Flora London Marathon office on 0207 620 4117. There is a £12 registration fee of which £5 will go to the runner's nominated charity.

If you want to run for ChildLine please contact midlands@childline.org.uk or call 0115 924 2544 to receive your sponsorship form and free t-shirt.

Your countryside needs you!

Local people have never had a better opportunity to shape the way their countryside is managed – as the County Council recruits members for a new Local Access Forum.

The County Council is calling all community groups, farmers, members of the tourist industry and other interested parties to come forward and have their say on the county's footpaths, bridleways and other public rights of way.

Members will also be responsible for advising the County Council on developing a five year Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which will seek to ensure that local rights of way:

Meet the needs of the public;

Provide adequate opportunities for exercise and open air recreation;

Are more accessible for blind or partially sighted people or those with mobility problems.

Councillor Terry Butler, Cabinet Member for Environment, said: "The new Local Access Forum will enable the County Council to listen to the views of local people with a stake or an interest in countryside access issues. We believe the Forum will benefit everyone who wants to get out and about in Nottinghamshire. So make sure your opinion is counted – it's your countryside, so have your say!"

If you are interested in joining the Forum,

Tel: 0115 977 2166 or E-mail:

countrysideaccess@nottscc.gov.uk to order your application pack now.

Street Wardens Scheme For Boughton Launched

Councillor Mrs Doreen Westmoreland, portfolio holder for Facilities Management at Newark and Sherwood District Council recently introduced two new street wardens to the residents of the Retford Road Estate in Boughton.

The scheme is to provide a highly visible Council presence for local residents. The District Council and the Neighbourhood and Street Wardens Programme, a highly successful Government initiative, jointly fund the posts.

The Wardens will provide a highly visible council presence on the estate, assist in the prevention of anti-social behaviour, liaise with other agencies to improve the environment and deal with low level neighbourhood disputes and tenancy contraventions.

Although the wardens will have a high profile on the estate they are not a replacement police force and all crimes and suspicious behaviour should still be reported to the Police directly. The Wardens will actively promote community safety and contribute to the community development.

For further information please contact: Rebecca Rance, Head of Housing Tel: 01636 650000

BURA Award Winning Redevelopment Gains further recognition

The BURA (British Urban Regeneration Association) award winning Newark Riverside Regeneration scheme has received further recognition in a recent publication entitled "Sustainable Communities in the East Midlands" (see front page for full details). The publication

identified the scheme as an example of best practice in regeneration through revitalisation and partnership working.

The publication praises the partnership approach to undertaking a range of building works and social projects on the former derelict riverside of Newark.

The document further describes how the area has been revitalised and reports that there has been a reduction in the social problems encountered amongst the young people in the area.

The scheme was a recent winner at the BURA awards ceremony being one of only five projects nationally to receive an award for Best Practice in Regeneration, and was also the overall winner of the 2002 English Partnerships Awards for Partnership in Regeneration.

*For further information please contact:
John Donaghy, Head of Economic Regeneration, Tel:
01636 655253*

Nappy Days Are Here For Parents Who Cotton-On

Nappy days are here for parents in Nottinghamshire as they stand to save up to £600 per baby as part of a brand new cotton nappy trial.

The County and City Councils are on the lookout for 16 families to get to the bottom of a problem which leads to thousands of disposable nappies being thrown away in Notts every year – enough to fill 2,500 bin lorries! When a disposable nappy is buried in the ground, it can take over 500 years to decompose.

The families, with babies ranging from 0-6 months, are needed to road-test cotton nappies for a year before reporting back on the practicalities of using cotton, cost differences, the environmental benefits and, importantly, whether their babies are happy with their nappy.

Parents who complete the trial will receive 75% towards the cost of a year's supply of modern cotton nappies, which now include a new range of easy-to-use features:

Snug new designs – shaped cotton nappies are easy to put on your baby and are an excellent fit;

Made from a breathable outer wrap with a lined inner cotton pad;

Velcro fastenings do away with the need for safety pins;

Waterproof wraps prevent unwanted leaks and spills!;

Flushable biodegradable liners help keep cleaning to a minimum;

A wide variety of shapes, sizes and colourful designs.

Research shows that parents using cotton nappies instead of disposables can save around £600 per baby from birth to potty, which can cover the cost of a cot, a child's bed and nursery furniture. This saving goes up to £800 for a second child because you can use cotton nappies again and again.

If you would like to be part of the Cotton Nappy Trial please phone 0115 977 2019 or email waste.management@nottscc.gov.uk or mike.peverill@nottinghamcity.gov.uk if you live within the City of Nottingham. For more information about using cotton nappies, please phone 0115 977 2019 or visit www.nottsnappyproject.org.uk

The Notts Nappy Project is run as a partnership with Nottinghamshire County Council, Nottingham City Council, local District Councils, Notts hospitals and day nurseries.

WaterVoice Central

The Water Bill was introduced into the House of Lords on 20 February. Among proposals are plans to update and strengthen water and sewerage consumer protection arrangements in England and Wales. The government wants an independent Consumer Council for Water, giving an effective 'One Stop Shop' for consumers, separate from and independent of Ofwat, the price regulator. Although still under Ofwat's umbrella, WaterVoice is already developing its own identity.

Ofwat has launched the next price review, to reset the level of water and sewerage bills for the five years from April 2005. WaterVoice's job is to articulate the views of 9 million people

in the Central area, served by Severn Trent Water (and South Staffordshire Water). They will endeavour to keep bills down, consistent with proper service, delivery of the statutory environmental programme and meeting European Directives.

The regulator, Ofwat, has a duty to ensure that the water and sewerage companies can finance their functions. WaterVoice's job is to represent the customer. They deal with complaints that the companies are unable themselves to satisfy and hope that complainants can resolve problems direct with their water company. Where that fails, we stand ready to assist.

WaterVoice would be delighted to answer any questions you may have. The issue of prices and tariffs looms large, but also competition, poor water pressure, supply interruptions and foul floodings are too prevalent. They supported Severn Trent's suggestion that an extra £21 million is spent, between 2003 to 2005, to deliver solutions to more householders of premises liable to flooding from sewers.

The extent to which they can do a first class job depends on them hearing from stakeholders and consumers.

*Contact: Will Dawson, Regional Manager, WaterVoice Central, 86 New Street, Birmingham B2 4BA
Tel: 0121 644 5252 Fax 0121 644 5256 or send your comments by e-mail to: central@watervoice.org.uk
<mailto:central@watervoice.org.uk>*

Use It Or Lose It!

Many readers will already be aware of the difficulties the County Council is facing in trying to maintain rural bus services. The costs of providing subsidised bus services are rising at an alarming rate – 9% in 2002/3 on a like-for-like basis. Moreover we have faced increasing numbers of cases where bus companies have withdrawn routes that previously they operated commercially because not enough people are using them. Such actions often generate strong reactions from local communities who want to see their service reinstated by the County Council with a subsidy. While in many cases the Authority has responded positively, these twin trends have put the budget for supporting local bus services under very severe pressure.

In the future Nottinghamshire County Council will unfortunately only be able to support the best performing services. Put another way, if a bus service in one area is to be reinstated, another elsewhere will probably need to be taken off to pay for it.

Making these decisions will be difficult, but to help out the County Council is developing a "performance management" framework. This will help it to get the best value for money from the services it does support. One way of measuring performance is the subsidy per passenger journey. However used on its own this would mean that rural areas would lose out, as there are fewer people to use services. The framework is therefore also likely to reflect the level of need and the main journey purpose – does the service help commuters get to work, school children get to school, elderly people get to health centres and shops, younger people get to town centres in the evenings, and so on. By ranking these, it will be possible to assign an overall value to each service, and then to create a performance league table.

Applying this framework will mean inevitably that there are winners and losers. Ultimately the services which will survive will be those which people use the most. Increasingly it will be a case of "Use it or lose it".

A number of other authorities (including our neighbours Lincolnshire) apply this sort of approach to make fairer and more transparent decisions. The proposals for Nottinghamshire are going to be the subject of discussion and consultation over the next few months, before being considered for adoption later in the year.

In the longer term we hope to develop minimum standards for bus services across the whole County, but this is still some way in the future.

Contact: Nick Brown, Environment on 0115 977 4519

EnProve Your Environment

EnProve is a social enterprise established by Groundwork Ashfield and Mansfield to tackle the problem of unemployment in our communities. One of the many Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) teams set up by EnProve is EnProve Environmental Landscapes.

These teams undertake a varied programme of both hard and soft landscaping projects. Previous projects have included the renovation and recreation of public parks and improvements to gardens in the social housing sector plus work on "Nottinghamshire's Hidden Valleys".

The teams are trained to work to the designs and specifications of landscape architects. Involved in a wide range of environmental and conservation improvement initiatives they work on many different projects including route way creation and maintenance, habitat creation and maintenance, hedgerows and fencing, countryside craft production, surveying and data input onto GIS systems. The teams are encouraged to work alongside individuals and groups from within the community to carry out this work.

By using EnProve services, not only do you get quality work carried out at competitive prices – but you also help unemployed people get back into work.

For more information please contact Operations Manager Jack Sills on 01623 666710 or E-mail: jack.sills@groundwork.org.uk

Sherwood Initiative

The Sherwood Initiative is an area partnership scheme supported by The Heritage Lottery Fund.

The Sherwood Forest Trust is co-ordinating this 5 year programme worth £5.5 m, with over 40 land owners and other organisations involved in restoring large areas of characteristic Sherwood Forest habitats and landscapes and improving public appreciation, understanding and involvement.

Sherwood Forest, Britain's 'heart of oak' is known throughout the world as the home of legends. Robin Hood and Sherwood Forest

are an essential part of the nation's heritage and for millions of people throughout the world the name conjures up visions of mighty oaks and wild forest glades. The landscape of Sherwood and its tranquillity is central to public enjoyment and the region's quality of life.

The Sherwood Initiative's programme area encompasses the ancient Sherwood Forest, stretching over 25 miles from north of Worksop down to south of Bestwood Village and from Mansfield in the west to Retford and Farnsfield in the east, covering 10 miles at its widest point. The Sherwood Initiative will:

Conserve, enhance and reduce the fragmentation of historic landscape features and characteristic habitats through sustainable land management for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Provide public access and recreational opportunities for local communities and visitors.

Raise awareness and understanding of Sherwood's cultural, historic and natural heritage.

Enable people of all ages from local communities to enjoy and be involved in the care of their natural and cultural heritage.

This will be achieved through 2 linked programmes and their associated projects:

HERITAGE LANDSCAPES & ACCESS PROGRAMME

Restoring the ancient wood pasture of Birklands, habitats and landscape of the Maun River Valley, wetland corridors and extending existing heathlands and native woodlands.

Example Projects:

Grazing Project – Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust are re-introducing traditional land management techniques with a 'flying' flock

of rare Hebridean sheep which is transported between project sites.

Archaeology Project – Nottinghamshire County Council are providing information and conservation advice on the area's archaeological resources for all aspects of the programme.

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMME

Heritage Interpretation Project
Telling the full Sherwood heritage story through linked interpretation. Joint working between tourism and leisure providers will provide a 'visitor attractions package' which holds people in the area longer and provides economic benefits for local communities.

Plans include a web site; displays interpreting and linking visitor sites; a map, guide-book and information leaflets; an audio visual show; community plays based on traditional Sherwood Forest stories and a programme of events, guided walks and talks.

A flagship visitor centre for education and interpretation will be developed in the heart of Sherwood Forest.

Heritage Education Project

Providing schools, colleges, youth and lifelong learning groups with high quality opportunities for formal and informal learning about the area's natural, cultural, and historic heritage.

The project will enhance understanding of the evolution and impact of the landscape's management and social history, including local industries such as coal mining, leading to an appreciation of opportunities for the future.

A dedicated education officer will develop links between learning groups, training providers and sites and facilitate area-wide learning material. A visit fund will enable access for those in disadvantaged areas.

Community Involvement Projects:

Sherwood Forest Community Rangers - Jobs have been created for local rangers in coalfield areas to work with their communities, increasing understanding of the importance of the Forest's natural and cultural heritage and enhancing their sense of pride and ownership by enabling active involvement in caring for their local countryside.

Sustainable Landscapes - Agricultural and other land management communities are being involved and assisted with managing the enhancement of the Forest's habitats and landscapes for the benefit of wildlife and visitors.

The Sherwood Forest Trust, established in 1995, is a partnership of local government, statutory and private land-owning and voluntary organisations, with community involvement. The Trust is responsible for the direct management of almost 8,000 ha of land in Nottinghamshire, at least two thirds of which is in the Sherwood area and partners share the common goal of restoring the heritage of Sherwood Forest for the benefit of the public.

*Contact: Norma Saunders, Programme Manager
Adam Goodall, Heritage Landscapes Programme
Co-ordinator; Jayne Pugh, Interpretation &
Community Involvement Programme Co-ordinator
Tel: 01623 758231*

Great Notts Bike Ride

This year's Great Notts Bike Ride is on Sunday 22 June 2003 consisting of 2 great cycle rides. One is 50 miles while the other is 18 miles. Application forms from County libraries or County Hall. Closing date for applications is 25 April.

Councillor joins Environmental Partnership

County Councillor Jim Napier, Mayor of Worksop has been welcomed as the new Chair of the Greenwood Partnership. Councillor Napier is delighted by the

amount of work that is happening in the community forest. He follows Councillor Gordon Skinner, who died last year following his fight with cancer.

In memory to Gordon, family, friends and colleagues recently gathered at Bramcote Residential Care Home, Chilwell Lane, Bramcote, to plant trees in a small landscaping scheme as a permanent memorial to his commitment and dedication to Greenwood, Nottinghamshire's Community Forest.

Councillor Skinner was Chair of the Greenwood Partnership Board from 1995 to 2002.

New Youth MPs for Nottinghamshire

Last month saw the election of 4 new Members of Youth Parliament (MYP) and 5 Deputies for the county of Nottinghamshire.

Representing South Nottinghamshire:

Abbie Pearce-Dyke 16 (Gedling) MYP
Robbie Windsor-Beck 15 (Newark) MYP
Phillipe Chiarella (Cotgrave) Deputy
Sean Elliott (Broxtowe) Deputy
Jessica Harley (Broxtowe) Deputy

Representing North Nottinghamshire:

Anna Broadfoot 14 (Worksop) MYP
Daniel Archer 15 (Mansfield) MYP
Sam Ellis (Retford) Deputy
Andrew Keeling (Mansfield) Deputy.

Over 120 young people attended the event at Kelham Hall which was organised by the Youth Engagement Team (part of Nottinghamshire County Council's Youth, Community and Play Service and part-funded by Connexions Services Nottinghamshire) and a working group of young people. All the young people participated in a series of workshops centred on citizenship and representation.

Vernon Coaker MP opened the event and gave an outline of the roles and responsibilities expected from Members of Youth Parliament and Deputies elected. He also helped facilitate a question and answer

workshop with candidates. Paddy Tipping MP announced election results and gave a closing speech.

Mandy Tyson, Senior Worker for the Youth Engagement Team, said: "This is a unique opportunity for the nine young people elected to represent young people from the county in getting their voice heard at both a local and national level. The Youth Engagement Team is committed to supporting these young people's personal and social development in understanding the role they have been elected to fulfil. All their manifestos were outstanding and included a range of issues from housing and education to drugs issues and youth crime."

For further information, please contact the Youth Engagement Team on 01623 860968 or Claire Geeson at Notts County Council's PR Unit on 0115 977 4214

Selston Forum in a Flap!

The Selston Festival returns to the Parish on 15 November of this year, building on the success of last year's Victorian Festival. The Selston Local Area Forum will once again be organising a market and activities during the day, followed by a music evening. The theme for this year is the Roaring 20's.

For further information, please contact Leigh Marchant on 0115 977 3334.

Worksop TravelWise Centre

Worksop TravelWise Centre closed at the end of March 2003. The staff would like to take this opportunity to thank all of their customers over the past 3 years for their support.

They are sorry that it has been necessary to close the Centre and hope that the following list of contacts will enable you to continue to find all the travel information you require.

Traveline – public transport information for buses, coaches or trains
Tel: 0870 608 2 608 (open 7.00 am to 9.00 pm)
Web: www.traveline.org.uk

National Rail enquiries – train information across the UK
Tel: 08457 48 49 50 (open 24 hours)
Web: www.nationalrail.co.uk

National Express enquiries – express coach travel
Tel: 08705 80 80 80 (open 8.00 am to 10.00 pm)
Web: www.gobycoach.com

Nottinghamshire County Council website – public transport information for the county
Web: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Other local public transport information centres are at:

Stagecoach travel office, Hardy Street
Local bus times and information, National Express coach bookings and days out or short breaks.

Worksop Library and Tourist Information Centre, Memorial Avenue
Bus and train timetables and local attractions and activities.

There are also touch screen public transport information kiosks at Bassetlaw Hospital - Reception and Outpatients, North Nottinghamshire College Student Services, the Stagecoach office and at Worksop railway station

For information on Concessionary Travel Passes call: 01909 533 533
For Community Transport and School Travel call: 0115 977 4600

For any other County Council related matters call:

Retford County Contact – 01777 713800
Mansfield County Contact – 01623 476800

County Council's new website

EVERYONE needs a makeover now and then – and our website is no exception!

But beauty is more than skin deep, and the changes to our website are far from cosmetic, as we hope you will see when you go to our new site at **www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk**.

Here, we explain the thinking behind the new site and how it signals a new approach to our use of internet publishing.

Why do we need a new website?

- providing the public with information about our services is a crucial part of the council's role. If people don't know about our services, they can't access them! Our Best Value review found that we need to make significant improvements in how the public access our services, not least on the World Wide Web
- the internet allows for much greater scrutiny of the Council and Council business. For example, minutes of council meetings can be posted on the internet as soon as they are written. Our policies, procedures and similar documents will be available on-line, for all to see. This leads to much more 'transparent' local government.
- central government requires all councils to provide electronic access to their information and services, with 100% of them being available by 2005. This is a huge task, requiring a whole new approach to how we provide services, and a cultural change across the authority. So we need to get started!
- very few people currently use government websites, or think of accessing public services electronically. There are many reasons for this, but a major factor is that government sites are often not very user friendly, and concentrate on the way the organisation thinks, not the way the public thinks.

What does it look like and how is it different?

If you've ever looked for anything on a website, you'll probably have set off with two basic questions:

What do I need to know?
How do I find it quickly?

Anything that gets in the way of this process can lead to frustration and often a strong

feeling that 'the answer must be somewhere else'. The new site has been designed very much with these issues in mind. For example, you'll be able to find information using several different routes:

Topics - our core information on services, brought together under themed headings like our environment, learning and work, social care and health, leisure, traffic and travel, business and the economy

Features - Regularly updated information with news, job vacancies, what's on. There'll also be a regular straw poll feature to gauge people's views on a variety of issues

Life events - Information brought together around important times in life - starting school, moving away, looking after someone, getting married

Interest Zones - Presenting content to a specific audience or interest group like young people, parents, researchers or visitors.

What's been happening?

The e-Content Project Team and the e-Content Forum consisting of staff from all departments, have been working on the new site structure, design and content. A brand new Home Page and set of templates provide the visual display. Information comes from our complete range of services and is arranged under 'customer-friendly' headings.

What happens next?

A website is a living thing. It requires constant development as the information it contains changes – new services start, existing services are modified, more information becomes available and so on. Technical advances also mean that the possibilities for the website are constantly changing. So initially, the website will be refined and fine-tuned. But once the public site is established, new project plans will be commissioned for its future development.

We welcome your comments – E-mail: info@nottsc.gov.uk or Tel: 0115 977 2332

Useful Information:

County Council waste hotline 0115 977 1019;
Domestic Violence 0808 8000340;
Floodline 0845 988 1188 website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

District Council Websites:

District Council website addresses are as follows:

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 addresses:

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

“How many other jobs can you do where you are thanked 40 times a day?”

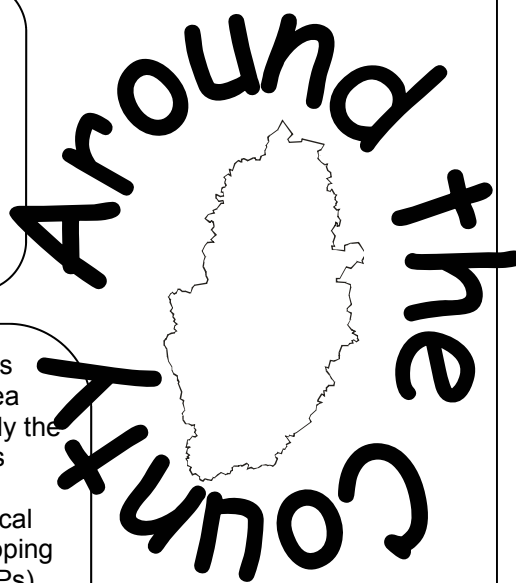
Lollipop ladies and men around the county recently helped the County Council celebrate 50 years of School Crossing Patrols (SCPs) at a lunch at County Hall. The event was attended by some of the longest serving current patrols and oldest ex-patrols from the 1950s and 60s, who have been located through an appeal in the local media. Some facts:

	1953	2003
SCPs earned per hour	Approx 6d	£5.39p
Cars on the Road	2,446,000	23,899,000 (2001 ONS)
No of SCPs	12	300

Broxtowe Borough Council is appealing for members of drama groups or individuals interested in performance to take part in a community play in the Eastwood area in July. To register an interest ring 0115 917 3695 before 18 April 2003.

Nottinghamshire County Council's Local Area Forums, and local area structures in general, are currently the subject of review by the Council's Deputy Leader, Councillor David Kirkham. He is looking at how local area forums work with the developing Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and with other partnerships and organisations, such as Local Area Committees, LSP working groups, parish councils, community action teams etc and how these arrangements might best work in the future. Councillor Kirkham is holding meetings with all 7 district councils to gain their views. Once all the meetings are completed, Councillor Kirkham will consult on his findings with other major partners, such as the PCTs and the voluntary sector, before making his final recommendations. However, at the moment it looks as though local area forums will continue across the county in some form or another.

Contact: Kath Farmer, 0115 977 3853



How do dinosaurs pay their council tax?

By tyrannosaurus cheques!!

Six local authorities have joined together to persuade council taxpayers to pay by Direct Debit.

Toybox Nursery Awarded Funds

The Social Risk Capital Fund administered by Newark and Sherwood District Council has recently awarded a £3,000 grant to the Ollerton and Boughton Women's Centre to set up a nursery.

The nursery will provide much needed childcare facilities and is open to all families within the Ollerton and Boughton area. It will provide information, support and practical help and will enable and empower children and parents to make decisions about their own lives.

The award is from the Council's Social Risk Capital Fund, which is a small locally administered fund for social enterprise community projects. The fund aims to provide small grants to local communities which can be implemented in the short term and which can provide long lasting benefit to communities within the Newark and Sherwood District.

All projects seeking assistance must provide a clear justification for the project that must be based on identifiable needs and include details of a satisfactory funding package to cover the costs of developing the project.

Contact: Julie Rushby
Economic Regeneration
Officer Social Enterprise
Telephone: 01636 655253

Welcome

Welcome to the following new clerks:

Ms B Day, Cropwell Butler Parish Council
Ms N Ward, Colwick Parish Council
Mrs A Molloy, Holbeck and Welbeck Parish Council

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

Is there an article or information in your local parish newsletter that you would like to share through the next issue of Countylink, or have you an event you would like publicising on the County Council's website? Then please contact me for details.

Barbara Worrall

Your County Council contact for:

Changes of Parish Clerk, Requests for extra copies of Countylink, Countylink in other formats, Articles for Countylink, or if you wish to add information/links/photograph of your parish to your details on the NCC Website:

BARBARA WORRALL
Regeneration Division, Policy and Resources
Department, Nottinghamshire County Council,
County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham
NG2 7QP

Tel: 0115 977 4085

Fax: 0115 977 3859

E-mail: barbara.worrall@nottscc.gov.uk

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

Deadline date for next edition is:

23 May 2003