

## Seasons Greetings

Now we are in the Christmas period, I wish everyone a very **Merry Christmas** and a very **happy and prosperous New Year**, something that seems to be more unlikely with the current economic situation, but I'll try and be as optimistic as possible. I hope everyone has an enjoyable and happy time with lots of presents and festive cheer!

As 2008 draws to a close it is time to reflect, as well as look to the future. Our Corporate Strategy came to an end in March and April 2008 saw the start of our new corporate strategy with new aims and priorities up to 2012:

- AIM 1** A District where everyone shares in an improved quality of life
- AIM 2** A clean and green District
- AIM 3** A District where business and enterprise can flourish
- AIM 4** An excellent Council that is well managed and respected by the community

Some of the highlights in 2008 include:-

- The introduction of a new Refuse & Recycling Service to over 53,000 households;
- Post office closures;
- The short listing of 'Middle Quinton' – eco town and
- The launch of the District Council's first one-stop-shop at Southam.

Over the past months there has been the economic downturn to contend with. This impacts on the Council too, with some tough decisions having to be made e.g. the decision not to go ahead with the Dene Valley Leisure facility in Wellesbourne. These hard decisions will continue to be made during these uncertain times as we move into 2009. The District Council will endeavour to keep council tax rises to a minimum but 2009 may see a reduction in services in order to achieve a budget balance.

The Council tax is among the lowest for district councils, but we rely on income to keep it that way. Significant reductions in car parking, planning application fees and land charges income have created difficulties, but coupled with the significant reduction in interest rates, the Council is facing one of the hardest budgets on record.

In 2007 the Council was awarded a 'Good' CPA rating and 2008 we end the year on a positive note being awarded the Excellence in Business 'Investors in Excellence' Award as well as featuring in The Times top 25 Council's to work for and being short listed for a Beacon Award for our Digital Challenge programme. While these show the Council is being more recognised for its work externally, we are still concentrating on how we are regarded by our residents, parishes and partners.

We will have less money next year to start new projects but we will continue to work with partners to deliver better services and projects that improve the quality of life and the environment.

As always we welcome any contributions and the deadline for the next issue of Parish Talk is 5 January with publication at the beginning of February. Thank you for your continued support, here's looking to 2009. Thank you to everyone who has sent me cards and good wishes for Christmas, they are much appreciated. This year, like many, I have decided to donate to Crisis at Christmas, what I would normally spend on Christmas Cards.

Once more Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and yours.

 Paul Lankester



Anne Hathaway's Cottage in the Snow From an original oil painting by John Corvin  
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## 2008 Year Review

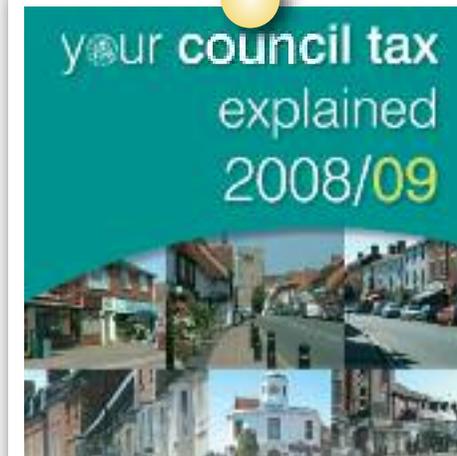
### January



Sports Awards Ceremony

- ◆ Launch of Sport Leisure Management's Everyone Active Campaign
- ◆ The District Council's Sixth Annual Sports Awards
- ◆ Council's website was ranked 16th nationally (out of 460), (9th out of English Districts and ranked top of the 38 councils in the West Midlands region. The site was assessed officially 'error free')
- ◆ Second Partnership Event held
- ◆ Retained the Disability Two Tick Symbol
- ◆ Dress Down Money raised
  - Twycross Zoo £233

### February



Information for Council Tax payers

- ◆ Budget for 2008/09 approved
- ◆ 3.5% Council Tax increase – Lowest Council Tax bill in the county and within the lowest 10% of all District Councils in the country
- ◆ New corporate strategy for 2008-2012 approved
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised -
  - Lennox Children's Cancer Fund £50
  - Talking Newspaper for the Blind £158

## 2008 Year Review

### March



Southam  
one-stop-shop

- ◆ New Road Traffic Regulations
- ◆ Stratford Town Poll held on a question on the Stratford bridge
- ◆ Southam one-stop-shop opened at Southam library
- ◆ Large fire at Moreton Hall
- ◆ An unauthorised traveller encampment at Darlingscott
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Warwick Hospital Cancer Ward Appeal £175

### April



Community  
Links

- ◆ New Corporate Strategy came into effect.
- ◆ Implementation of the new concessionary bus pass scheme.
- ◆ Community Links Social Transport – 2 years old and 96.4% of users were either very or fairly satisfied with the overall service
- ◆ Middle Quinton shortlisted as a potential eco town.

### May



Mike O'Brien MP  
at Briar Croft

- ◆ The Guardian Newspaper feature article on SDC's intergenerational projects
- ◆ Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations.
- ◆ Officer's taking part in Stratford's half marathon raising £270.
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - ILEAP £157

- ◆ Local Elections
- ◆ The pilot webcasting of the Special Council on the Eco Town proposal.
- ◆ Ministerial visit - Minister for Older People Mike O'Brien visited the Council's intergenerational project
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised -
  - Rotary Club £173

## 2008 Year Review

### June



Bike to Work Week

- ◆ Proposed closures of post offices in the District
- ◆ Launch of new Joint Area Committees with Warwickshire County Council
- ◆ Bike to Work Week
- ◆ West Midlands Member Development Charter – primary milestone achieved
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Tracey Sollis Trust £145

### July



Global Gathering Publicity

- ◆ Two post offices in the district to close, with five others receiving an outreach service.
- ◆ Joint publicity campaign with Warwickshire Police at Global Gathering
- ◆ National 2-day strike
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Redwings Equine Trust £150

### August



Helen Slatter off to the Olympics

- ◆ Launch of new Refuse & Recycling Contract
- ◆ Helen Slatter (SDC's Sports Development Manager) Team Manager of the Open Water Swimming Team at Beijing Olympics - her team winning two silvers and a bronze

are you?  
ready!

- ◆ Bull Dog Bash
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Lennox Children's Cancer Fund £50
  - Macmillan Cycle ride £700
  - Gracie's Playground charity £150

## 2008 Year Review

### September



The Times  
Best Councils

- ◆ Council 25th in The Times Best Councils to work for 2008
- ◆ Council's well-being week
- ◆ Initial recycling figures indicate the recycling rate has increased from around 43% to 55%
- ◆ New community forum meetings begin
- ◆ Quest accreditation for Sports Development Team
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Warwickshire Air Ambulance £204
  - Macmillan Cancer Care Biggest Coffee morning £214.50

### October



Shortlisted for  
Beacon Award

- ◆ Council awarded the Investors in Excellence Standard
- ◆ Council short listed for Beacon award this year in the field of Digital Inclusion.
- ◆ New national "Place Survey" for Councils.
- ◆ Stratford Mop Fair
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Jeans for Genes Day £177

## 2008 Year Review

### November



Loo  
of the Year

- ◆ Anniversary of Atherstone-on-Stour warehouse fire
- ◆ Suspension of green waste service
- ◆ Town Poll in Alcester held regarding car parking charges
- ◆ Council awarded 5 stars for Waterside and 4 stars for four other facilities in Stratford-upon-Avon at the national 'Loo Of The Year' competition
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Stratford District Tree planting scheme £174

### December



Tree Planting  
on Welcome Hills

- ◆ The big tree planting scheme
- ◆ Topping out of refurbished RSC Theatre
- ◆ Dress Down Day Money raised
  - Chairman's Charity £180

### Things to look out for in 2009....

- February** Council tax set for 2009/10
- March** Council's Your Review magazine
- April** Changes to Refuse & Recycling Service
- Completion of Bancroft Gardens
- June** European and Local County Council Elections



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