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Swindon News

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Season's Greetings



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL



An extra special cake made with Adult Social Care

Swindon Borough Council's Adult Social Care department is celebrating its recipe for two star success with a special cake made by service users.

The star-shaped cake was created by people with learning disabilities who use the council-run Upham Road Adult Training Centre, in Swindon. Kimberley Brown, aged 22, from Penhill, said: "I had never baked a cake before until I started doing this. It's great learning something different - I really enjoy it." UR Cakes is a social enterprise to help people with learning disabilities learn new skills and interact with the community.

The group makes a wide variety of cakes, scones and biscuits, which are sold on the first and third Friday every month at the Temporary Central Library, in Princes Street.

Maria Bradford, 26, from Stratton, said: "I love baking, so this is a great idea. I will be doing a food hygiene course, which means that in future I can hopefully get a job in the catering business."

This is just one of the many activities for service users at the day centre, such as swimming, computer training and day trips. Dee Maciver, an instructor, said: "The cakes are really popular - we sell more than a 100 each time and our service users feel very proud of what they have achieved."

Dee is among some 770 Adult Social Care staff who have helped the department achieve a two star rating from Government inspectors. Despite facing a harder test, Adult Social Services has been described as "good" with "promising" potential for further improvement, according to an Independent report published on Thursday, 29 November by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI). Councillor David Renard, Cabinet Member for Health, Housing and Social Care said: "Many of those people in Swindon with learning disabilities are actively involved with assessing the services they receive and are keen to help the Council to deliver further improvements. Baking cakes is one of the great activities they partake in that allows them to learn new skills and play a more active role in our community. It is really rewarding to be celebrating the Two Star rating with them and I thank them for their contribution to the inspection and their commitment to the services provided by Adult Social Care."

Leader's Column

As we head towards the end of the year, it is a great opportunity to reflect on the continued improvements that Swindon Borough Council has worked to deliver.

I would like to thank all the staff at the Council, and those of our partners and contractors, without whose work this authority would still be languishing among the ranks of England's worst. With determination and vigour, I am confident that the council will continue to improve and excel. It is also time to reflect on two new projects that I hope will serve us in the future.

Firstly, I was privileged to attend the opening of the new Swindon and Wiltshire History Centre in Chippenham. This facility is truly breathtaking, a wonderful modern building which is geared to preserving our past and making it accessible to all.



I urge everyone who has some time when in Chippenham to visit this building, as it is an indication of the standard which we wish to achieve with the regeneration of Swindon.

Secondly, progress is being made to find a preferred development partner for Wichelstowe. Here the Council will make sure that its relevant 50 Promises are honoured, that the buildings will be to a high standard with sustainability built-in from the start. I hope that over the next few years Wichelstowe will become a model for how new houses and communities ought to be built.

May I take this opportunity to wish you, in advance, a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

Roderick Bluh, Leader of the Council



Wharf Green

Swindon is about to get its very own giant TV screen in a re-vamped and much-improved part of the town centre.

The BBC Big Screen will be the first in the South West, and is a key part of the regeneration of the Wharf Green area, near House of Fraser, which is now underway. The scheme also includes new paving, street furniture, lighting and landscaping.

The screen will be attached to the side of the Brunel West car park before Christmas, and will be officially launched next April. It will broadcast a combination of live events, community content, news, sport and entertainment, and is intended to become a focal point for community events and activity.

Along with the new Central Library, the Wharf Green project - is being undertaken by The New Swindon Company on behalf of the Council - which is the first stage of the major plans to completely transform Swindon's town centre.

Recycling - a fantastic response



An amazing 40 tonnes of plastic bottles, close to a million in number, are now collected every month for recycling in Swindon.

And they make up just a fraction of the huge amounts of waste that are now being diverted from damaging, and increasingly expensive, landfill sites.

The amounts of all materials collected from the kerbside have increased dramatically - enough paper and cardboard is being recycled to fill three articulated lorries every day.

Swindon's recycling rates were already climbing before the introduction of comprehensive kerbside recycling in July and wheelie bins in November. Since then, the amount of recyclable waste collected each week has doubled.

This means that by the end of this year the total amount of waste sent from Swindon to landfill will have shrunk by 8,000 tonnes, to 42,000 tonnes.

Next year, the total is likely to fall again, as the recent waste service changes will have been in operation for longer. The council will also trial new recycling services to people living in flats, so that they can join the 83,000 households that already receive the new service.

Cllr David Wren, Cabinet member for local environment, said: "The council is on target to meet its promise to recycle at least half of Swindon's household waste by 2010. I'd like to thank all the residents who are helping us to achieve this - in short, we couldn't do it without them.

"We often receive favourable comments from the reprocessing companies who take our waste about how clean and uncontaminated it is compared to some other local authorities. This is a tribute to the efforts people are making to separate the materials in their recycling boxes before they put them out for collection."



Celebrity chef supports Council crusade for better school meals

Leading British chef Rob Rees cooked up a treat at this year's 'Transforming School Food' annual conference.

He gave a live demonstration and answered questions at STEAM railway museum as part of the Swindon Borough Council event.

Headteachers, governors, catering staff, and other school food leads from across the borough attended the conference, which celebrated and promoted the positive work taking place to improve school food in the town.

It is the role of the Council to provide advice and guidance on healthy school meals. The Government's new nutritional standards were introduced at the conference, following on from the introduction of new school food standards last year.



Library wins prestigious award

Even before construction has finished, Swindon's new Central Library has been selected as the national winner of a prestigious environmental design award.

The building, which is rapidly taking shape at Regent Circus, has been recognised by the Building Research Establishment for the wide range of 'green' features which have been incorporated into the design.

The organisation's BREEAM Award (BRE Environmental Assessment Method) was presented to a team from the Council, including Leader Cllr Roderick Bluh and Borough Architect Nic Newland, at a ceremony at Arsenal Football Club's new Emirates Stadium.

The BRE singled out the Central Library design for having natural ventilation, a rainwater collection and recycling for system for toilets and plant watering, and underfloor heating powered by efficient condensing boilers.

They were also impressed with the fact that the building, which is being constructed from environmentally-friendly materials, will have 28 separate zones to allow independent heating adjustment to give optimum temperatures with minimum energy use. The building also features solar water heating, a sophisticated lighting control system, and dedicated space for storing recyclable materials.

The BREEAM judges gave three national awards in total; the Bespoke Award (Swindon Central Library), the Ecohomes Award, won by a development in Northampton, and the Offices Award, which went to a development in Leeds.



Quality of Life Awards & Eco-Bash

Entries invited for 2008

Every year the Council's Sustainability Team are proud to host the Quality of Life Awards & Eco-Bash.

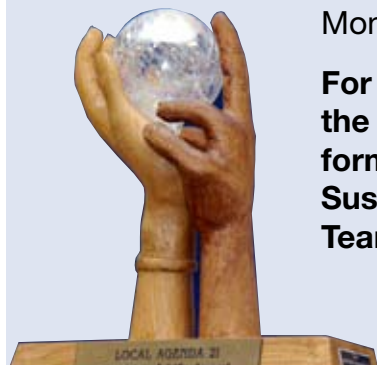
This is an award ceremony to reward schools, local businesses and voluntary and community groups who are carrying out projects that improve the environment or the quality of life within the Borough.

There are three categories for the award: schools, local businesses, community/voluntary groups. The overall winner receives the Quality of Life Trophy, which is kept for a year. Winners of each category receive a cash prize and plaque.

It will be held on Friday 12 September 2008 at the Punjabi Community Centre.

The closing date for entries is Monday 27 April 2008.

For further information about the award or an application form, please contact the Sustainable Development Team on (01793) 463180.



It's so lovely to realise that all of my family and friends are healthy these days. Perhaps it's because we all take more exercise?

Swindon's Shared Vision

If you were out and about in Swindon this summer, perhaps you recall seeing an exhibition stand with purple balloons and lots of sticky notes?

That exhibition stand was asking local people to give their views on a draft of one of the most important documents that will be produced in Swindon this year – A Shared Vision For Swindon 2008 to 2030.

The exhibition visited a wide variety of venues, including the Great Western Hospital, Highworth, Lydiard Park and Blunsdon indoor market.

Thousands of local people stopped to have their say.

Other people took part by completing an on-line questionnaire or by sending in the form at the back of the Vision booklet. Some local residents have also become stars of a new film by offering to be interviewed by roving reporters from Your Film, who also helped make sure that the consultation reached the widest possible audience.

It's great that so much of our heritage has been protected. My kids love hearing stories about the days when trains were built here.

Teenagers showcase their artwork

Colourful artwork produced by teenagers working with Swindon's Youth Offending Team (YOT) has been unveiled at a Partnership Day organised by Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Huge canvasses featuring swirls of colour in acrylic were produced over an 18-month period as part of a project for young people who have committed offences in the community. The project aimed to help the teenagers develop commitment and respect and to give them a sense of achievement and self-worth.

The canvasses, which are 5ft in height, will eventually be displayed at Swindon Borough Council's Clarence House, in Euclid Street.



So what did local people have to say about their vision for Swindon by the year 2030?

Views were varied and thoughtful. Headlines included hopes that we will improve the educational achievement of our young people, that there will be more green spaces and good, natural landscaping that make places better for people and wildlife, more activities for young people, a wider range of shops and a borough that is safer.

You can read more about the results at www.swindonsp.org.uk

All of the responses from the exhibition, filmed interviews, web surveys and the booklet have been read carefully and are being used to produce a new, final version of 'A Shared Vision for Swindon 2008 – 2030'.

As we go to print, the final draft is being agreed by Swindon Borough Council and its key partner organisations.

It will then be officially launched at the Swindon Strategic Partnership conference in early February.

So many more young people want to do further education, apprenticeships and training when they leave school.

Everyone in Swindon wants to carry on learning new things. I think that they've realised that local businesses need well-qualified, highly skilled people and that the good salaries which they pay in return are worth the effort of keeping skills and knowledge up to date.

I was so pleased to read that the number of road accidents resulting in death or injury is falling.



Festive Fitness

To get you thinking about festive fitness, here are some activities and approximately how many calories they burn per hour for our 80kg male and 60kg female.

Aerobics

Male 80kg
475 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
356 kcal/hr



Football

Male 80kg
549 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
411kcal/hr



Running

Male 80kg
792 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
594kcal/hr



Rowing Machine

Male 80kg
844 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
633 kcal/hr



RPM/Spinning

Male 80kg
559 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
419kcal/hr



Swimming

Male 80kg
707 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
530 kcal/hr



Weight Training

Male 80kg
549 kcal/hr

Female 60kg
411 kcal/hr



Get Active this Christmas with Swindon Borough Council

Christmas is extremely hectic, so finding time to exercise can be a struggle. But before crossing it off your list of things to do, consider all the festive food you are likely to be eating and where all those extra calories will go.

A traditional Christmas dinner of turkey with all the trimmings, a couple of glasses of wine, followed by Christmas pudding and brandy butter contains around 2,000 calories.

An average man weighing 80 kg (12 stone 8lbs) would need to walk 18 miles - or a woman of 60 kg (9 stone 6lbs) 24 miles - on the flat to burn off all those excess calories. And that's before taking into account any additional chocolate, nuts, cake or mince pies. It's hardly surprising that the average person puts on 5lbs in weight at Christmas, according to the British Heart Foundation. Every pound of fat contains 3,500 calories, so that's 17,500 calories to burn off.

The good news is that exercise can be fun - and people in Swindon are spoilt for choice of leisure facilities across the borough. For example, there is the Link Centre, in West Swindon, which boasts an ice rink, 25m pool, climbing wall, squash courts and gym.

The Oasis, in North Star, has some fantastic waterslides and a newly-refurbished gym featuring exercise machines with TV screens. Besides offering a gym and squash courts, The Rec, in Highworth, has a sports massage clinic. People can also make this Christmas a smash hit at the Delta Tennis Centre, in West Swindon, which has outdoor and indoor courts, in case it's snowing.

Looking ahead to the New Year, this is a busy time for gyms. If you want to beat the January rush, why not book a gym induction today - for contact details and opening hours of council leisure centres visit the website www.swindon.gov.uk/christmasopeningtimes



"I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. I will definitely be indulging in a little exercise over the festive period.

"Football is my passion and you can't beat a kick about with friends, especially now there are three new state of the art five-a-side outdoor pitches to play on at the Link Centre."

Councillor Justin Tomlinson, Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Recreation, (right) alongside Councillor Philip Young, Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Regeneration & Development.

Cancel out your Christmas calories, beat the bulge before it begins.....



Use this voucher to claim your free Gym induction in December and be one step ahead by New Year.

Available at Link Centre, Oasis Leisure Centre, Health Hydro, Highworth Recreation Centre and Broome Manor.

Conditions:

This voucher must be produced at reception of the participating sites to validate this offer. This offer is non transferable and has no monetary value. Offer available at the above sites only. Offer runs from Monday 3 December to Friday 21 December 2007.

Booking is advisable as places may be limited

Office use only: Flex Code I



Top Christmas tips

Send cards made from recycled materials or use e-cards.

Buy your fruit and veg (without packaging)

Use wrapping paper made out of recycled materials.

Make your own decorations.

Save some Christmas cards so they can be used as gift tags for next Christmas.

Remember to buy a set of rechargeable batteries for new toys and a re-charger if necessary.

Did you know?
 Nearly 3,000 tonnes of aluminium foil will be used to wrap Christmas turkeys - enough to make 52 aluminium foil paths for Santa to follow to the North Pole.



Give your unwanted clothes, books and gifts to charity shops or charity banks.

Wash plastic take-away containers and use them for packed lunches or food storage.

Composting

Compost all your fruit and vegetable peelings at home to save space in your wheelie bin.

Scrunched up cardboard and shredded paper also make excellent additions at this time of year to your compost bin.

We're dreaming of a green Christmas ...

.. with every Christmas card you recycle

Thank you



The new waste collection service using wheelie bins and Swindon Borough Council blue sacks is now well underway.

The new service will see a huge change in the way we all manage our waste, as the amount collected is now limited to the wheelie bin or a limited number of blue bags.

Early indications show that we have already seen a reduction of waste going to landfill by approx 10 per cent as a result of increased recycling, (see article on page 3 for further information).

Over the Christmas period we will all produce more rubbish, but most of this will be cardboard, paper and bottles which can all be recycled. Whilst the wheelie bin collections are fortnightly, the recycling boxes are collected every week.

Christmas recycling check list



Yes

- ✓ Wrapping paper
- ✓ Chocolate and biscuit tins
- ✓ Cardboard toy packaging (please remove any plastic)
- ✓ Christmas cards
- ✓ Wine bottles
- ✓ Drink cans
- ✓ Clean tin foil

No

- ✗ Metalised wrapping paper
- ✗ Bows, tapes, ribbons
- ✗ Plastic tubs & trays
- ✗ Polystyrene
- ✗ Tinsel
- ✗ Old plastic toys

Christmas Trees

Christmas trees can be recycled – they will be collected along with other green waste.

Please place out for collection on your normal green waste collection day in January or bring it to the Household Waste Recycling Centre.

There will be no green waste collections in December.



"To manage our waste effectively we have to recycle. We have an excellent recycling service across the Borough and over half of the average household waste can be recycled"

Waste wardens - here to help

With the wheelie bin service now underway, the role of the waste wardens will be to help residents manage their waste as effectively as possible.

This will include:

- Undertaking assessments with people who feel they can't manage their wheelie bin.
- 'Waste Audits' for larger families, to help increase recycling.
- Assisted Collections.

Special large cardboard collections

After Christmas there will be a special collection of large cardboard starting on Monday 31 December for a 2 week period ending on Friday 11 January.

During this period only, any large cardboard (it does not have to be cut up) will be collected for recycling on your normal recycling day. It will be collected in a dustcart so can be easily compacted.



Christmas Collections

There will be no refuse and recycling collections on 25 and 26 December (Christmas Day and Boxing Day).

If your refuse collection falls on Christmas Day we will collect on Saturday 22 December. If your refuse collection falls on Boxing Day we will collect on Saturday 29 December. Refuse and recycling collections will otherwise continue as normal over the Christmas period.

Remember, refuse will only be collected in your wheelie bin or blue sack. No additional black bags will be collected.

Household Waste Recycling Centre

Opening Hours

The Household Waste Recycling Centre, Cheney Manor will be closed on **Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day** and will be closing at 5.30pm on **Christmas Eve** and **New Years Eve**. For the rest of the Christmas period the opening hours will remain as normal 8am – 9.30pm seven days a week.

Old Dustbins

Both plastic and metal dustbins can be recycled at the Household Waste Recycling Centre. Dustbins will be collected from A-card holders. Please phone 01793 44 55 01 to arrange a special collection.

Electrical items and batteries

Remember to recycle any old electrical items such as toasters and televisions along with old batteries at the Household Waste Recycling Centre.



The Woodland Trust and Swindon Borough Council have teamed up for the fourth annual Christmas Card Recycling Scheme.

Thanks to public support last year, 93 million cards were collected nationwide, which is enough to enable the charity to plant 22,000 trees. You can recycle your Christmas cards by putting them in your recycling box or taking them to special bins in WH Smith, Tesco, TK Maxx and Marks and Spencer in Swindon.



Summary of Accounts 2006/07 – Part Two

The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce annual financial statements. They must comply with the recommended accounting practice for the sector, be independently audited, and the report of the external auditor included in the final published accounts.

Between the 2005/06 and 2006/07 financial years, a number of changes were made to financial reporting standards, which in turn altered the way in which the financial accounts information had to be presented. These changes are explained in the full accounts available from the Council.

The full accounts include statutory information that for many users is more than they need, so the following summary presents only the key points.

The Income and Expenditure Account (I&E) and related statements, which reconcile the I&E to the General Fund (GF) movement, shows the amounts spent on services and how that spending was funded. The service figures to the right are net after receipt of income:

Free business advice on new noise regulations

Pubs and clubs that provide live or recorded music have been receiving advice about new noise regulations from Swindon Borough Council's Environment and Health Team.

The regulations, which will be introduced in April 2008, are designed to protect workers from occupational hearing damage.

Businesses are expected to carry out risk assessments, take any action required, provide employees with hearing protection and make sure noise levels are not exceeded.

	2006/07 Net £k	2005/06 Net £k
Central Services to the Public	2,228	1,871
Corporate & Democratic Core	4,287	6,063
Non-Distributed Cost	-3,616	3,131
Court Services	219	246
Cultural	17,584	16,076
Environmental	12,749	9,813
Planning & Development	3,772	3,633
Education	2,856	95,313
Highways, Roads & Transport	9,888	6,135
Housing Services*	5,288	1,803
Social Services	53,177	46,477
Redundancy	1,766	2,003
Net Cost of Services	110,198	192,564
Corporate Income and Expenditure**	4,810	4,426
Net Operating Expenditure	115,008	196,990
Income From Collection Fund	-69,855	-64,486
General Government Grant	-7,190	-73,628
Distribution from NDR	-37,247	-60,383
I&E Deficit/surplus	716	- 1,507
Amounts included in the I&E but excluded from GF movement	-13,674	-14,200
Amounts not included in the I&E but included in GF Movement	980	3,725
Transfers to or from the GF	11,978	11,603
Net GF Movement	0	-379

HRA 06/07	£m
Income	- 42.058
Expenditure	36.551
Other Account Transfers	5.482
HRA Surplus for year	-0.025
Balance Brought Forward	-2.192
Balance Carried Forward	-2.217

Correction

In Part One, in the last edition of Swindon News, there was an error in the table of service outturn. We would like to clarify that the net cost of services was unaffected but the 'Corporate' line was overstated and should have read: Actual £9,219k and Variance (£302k). Our thanks to readers who spotted this.

The full version of Swindon Borough Council's accounts can be accessed on the Council Internet site: www.swindon.gov.uk

Comments on this summary, including any additional information that may be useful, can be sent to dstevens@swindon.gov.uk

* This includes income and expenditure on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

** This relates to expenditure that is not directly related to specific services.

The **Cashflow Statement** shows the cash movements into and out of the Council's bank account:

	£m
Bank balance 31/3/06	8.201
Cash paid in	578.368
Cash paid out	-574.739
Bank balance 31/3/07	11.830

The **Balance Sheet** shows the net worth of the Council, its assets and liabilities, and how they are financed:

	31/3/07 £m
Assets – things the Council owns and is owed	1,303
Liabilities – things the Council owes	-297
Net Assets	1,006
Capital Reserves	-1,077
Revenue Reserves	71
Net Financing	-1,006

The **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)** is a ring-fenced account that can only be used for the provision and support of housing facilities and their maintenance (see below):

How much will your next round cost you?

www.dfr.gov.uk/think

Don't Drink and Drive

Road Safety Unit
Tel: 01793 466399
www.swindon.gov.uk/roadsafety

Jonathon Porritt keynote speaker at Swindon event

Leading environmentalist and expert on sustainable development Jonathon Porritt made a presentation to 120 directors, senior managers and elected members from Swindon Borough Council and community partners in November.

He was the keynote speaker at an event designed to boost the council's performance on sustainable development.

Swindon Borough Council leader Cllr Roderick Bluh said: "The council is committed to its ultimate aim of making Swindon truly sustainable, but first we have to make sure that everyone within the authority fully understands what this will mean in practice, so we can put it at the heart of everything we do and then deliver it. No-one was better placed than Jonathon Porritt to do this."

Jonathan Porritt is co-founder and programme director for Forum for the Future, a charity with 10 years'

experience of working in partnership with the public and private sector, with the aim of showing that a sustainable future is both possible and desirable. He is also Chairman of the UK Sustainable Development Commission.

The council has been working with Forum for the Future for nearly three years, as part of a national programme offered to local authorities.

The event focused on the local and global issues facing Swindon, such as climate change, and the challenges posed by growth, waste and transport.

Cllr Bluh added: "Sustainable development is still a very new concept which is often misunderstood. It's not just about the environment – it's also about social and economic issues. We need to make sure the decisions we take balance all these things and benefit them all if we are to create a truly sustainable borough."

The council is currently developing a plan to clarify and establish key policies, systems and processes to ensure that sustainable development is an integral part of its activities.

Upholding good standards

Have you always been treated with fairness, courtesy and respect in your dealings with the council? Do you believe there are grounds to investigate serious allegations, such as fraud or corruption?

You have the right to expect the highest standards of behaviour from both our staff and elected councillors, and they are all bound by codes of conduct to help maintain public trust in the political process.

Elected councillors are held to account by the council's Standards Committee. The committee includes three independent members, including the chairman, and has a range of powers at its disposal including the ability to suspend or bar a councillor from office.

If you feel that any individual has fallen short of the required standards, then you are encouraged to contact the council's monitoring officer, Stephen Taylor, by email on staylor@swindon.gov.uk, or by telephone on (01793) 463013.

'Railway Town' is donated to STEAM

An unusual addition has been made to the museum collection at STEAM recently. It is 'Railway Town' - a painting that has been donated to the Museum by Swindon-born artist, Terry Court.

The picture gives an impressionist view of the railway works - the hub of Swindon - before its closure in 1986.



Terry Court grew up in Swindon surrounded by the railway works and the painting is based on his childhood memories. Terry decided to donate Railway Town to STEAM as he felt it was the perfect place to share it with people.

"It could not exist anywhere else", he said.

Visitors to STEAM will be able to see Terry's painting on display at the front of the exhibition hall.

Admission to STEAM: adults £6.00; concessions £4.00. Family ticket (2 adults & 2 children £16.00) and £19.00 (2 adults & 3 children). Swindoncard discounts are available on admission.

Win a 'Recycle for Swindon' Jute Shopping Bag



For a chance to win one of these environmentally friendly bags, just fill the coupon and return it to us by 20 December. We've got ten to give away. The bags are made of Jute, which has many unique properties, being renewable and recyclable, biodegradable, non toxic, and extremely strong, durable and flexible. It is estimated that 17 billion plastic bags are handed out in the UK alone. That's approximately 290 bags for every person in the country every year, but you can make a difference if you use this bag instead.

Win a 'Recycle for Swindon' Shopping Bag

Name
 Address
 Postcode
 Preferred contact number
 Email address

Return the coupon to: Readers' Offers, Swindon News, Communications Service, Civic Offices, Euclid Street, Swindon SN1 2JH

Data Protection. The Information you supply will only be used for the purposes of this offer, and will not be shared with any other departments of the Council. At the end of the offer the information you supplied will be securely disposed of.

Get Steamed up for 2008

If you're looking for that elusive Christmas gift, look no further than the STEAM 2008 Calendar.



Full of stunning black and white photographs, the calendar features social and railway scenes along the famous GWR London Paddington to Bristol Temple Meads route.

The calendar captures many magical moments from the past and is an enchanting record of some of the many changes and developments that have helped shape the line as we know it today.

You can visit www.steampicturelibrary.com to preview the images featured. Calendars cost £4.99 and are available from STEAM – Museum of the Great Western Railway on Kemble Drive, the Tourist Information Centre on Regent Street, and the Bath Road Museum and Art Gallery. Or you can call 01793 466646 to place an order.

STEAM is closed on 25 & 26 Dec, & 1 Jan. Please note that the Museum closes at 3pm on 24 December. STEAM will be closed for routine maintenance & staff training on Tuesday 8 Jan to Friday 11 Jan 2008 inclusive. There's always something fun happening at STEAM - see the website www.steam-museum.org.uk for details.

Swindon Eco-Schools – The benefits

The Eco-Schools Programme is a national campaign run by ENCAMS, which encourages schools to adopt an environmental management system. There are eight stages to the programme which aims to improve the schools' environment, raise pupils' self esteem and increase awareness.

Nine subjects are covered: litter, waste, energy, water, school grounds, biodiversity, global perspective, transport, and health. In Swindon 47 schools are already taking part and making a real difference. Policies have been put in place to control litter in the school grounds, and nature gardens and vegetable plots have been planned and created.

The creation of these areas have involved the whole community and have started to improve the bio-diversity of the vegetable plots and gardens. Pupils have also been taking part in a number of practical activities, becoming litter picking monitors and ensuring that taps, lights and electrical equipment are switched off at the end of the day.

There are a number of benefits for schools registering on the Eco-Schools Programme including:

- The generation of wildlife habitats and increased environmental awareness.
- The reduction of fuel and water bills.
- Improved links with the local community.
- Increased business support and local publicity for sustainable action.
- Children are given the opportunity to take decisions on environmental issues.
- The chance to improve global links.

To further support the programme, Swindon Schools can join the Eco-Schools Forum. The Forum meets quarterly. The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 22nd January 2007.

For further information please contact Gill Chandler, Sustainable Development Officer on 01793 463180.



A unique DVD of a very special day

A unique DVD of a fund raising golf day held at Broome Manor, hosted by Ryder Cup star David Howell, is now available.

Copies are available from the Broome Manor Golf Club website (www.bmgc.co.uk/indexdh.htm) by calling 01793 532403 or visiting the club shop at Broome Manor.

The DVD costs £5 over the counter (plus £1.50 packaging and postage if it is posted to you).

Be safe not sorry this Christmas

Members of the public who are buying fireworks for Christmas and New Year celebrations could be putting themselves and others at risk if they don't take notice of safety distances.

Swindon Borough Council Trading Standards warns anyone setting off a Category three firework should be at least 25 metres away when the firework is lit. Because of their size and power, Category three fireworks also need to be properly secured in the ground.

The sales of fireworks are allowed only between 26-31 December by a registered, licensed trader. Under legislation, they can't be set off between 11pm and 7am except on New Years Eve, 31 December when they can be set off after 11pm until 1am the next day.



Getting ready for winter

With winter well and truly upon us, the council's 4000-tonne stockpile of salt is already being put to good use to tackle icy roads and pavements right across the Borough.

Gritting teams are on round-the-clock standby to treat 230 miles of key roads and routes, split into 'A' or 'B' categories, whenever forecasts show there is a danger of snowfall or freezing surfaces. They use a special type of salt which is less corrosive to vehicles, less damaging to road surfaces and kinder to the wider environment than standard rock salt.

Drivers are warned that it can take up to six hours to treat all the listed roads, and that even when applied the salt takes time to become effective. The fact that a road is on the treatment schedule does not guarantee that it is ice-free, and extra caution should always be taken when freezing is likely.

Along with the salting teams, the Council has 200 salt bins across the Borough which residents can use. These are normally sited at hilly locations or on sharp bends.

Details of the routes and pavements which will be treated are listed on the Council's website.

Events

Things to do

The events listed are just a taster of what's on. For more information please visit the Council website or the Tourist Information Centre.

Lydiard House & Walled Garden

Country House Christmas

Saturday 1 -
Sunday 23 Dec

The State Rooms are decorated for a Victorian family Christmas with real Christmas trees & festive floral decorations.



The 12 days of Christmas

Saturday 15 Dec 07 -
Sunday 6 Jan 08

Children's activity trail through Lydiard House & Walled Garden to find the partridge in a pear tree.

Crafty Christmas

Sunday 9 & Saturday
15 December

Crafty Christmas - drop in craft activity from 1 to 4pm to make Christmas tree or table decorations.



Christmas Carols

Sunday 16 December

Christmas Carols with Swindon Choral Society performing in the main hall of Lydiard House, from 2pm.



Lydiard House & Walled Garden is open 11am - 4pm. Closed Mondays. Christmas closure from 24 - 26 December. The grounds of Lydiard Park are open daily to dusk, closed on 25 December.

Lydiard House, Lydiard Park, Lydiard Tregoze, Swindon. Tel: 01793 770401 www.lydiardpark.org.uk Normal admission to Lydiard House & Walled Garden applies.

Arts Centre

Mark Watson

Monday 14 Jan 8pm

Can I briefly talk to you about the point of life?

Tickets £13,
Swindon Card holders £12

Mark Watson embarks on a brand new national tour. Mark has made regular appearances on BBC2's 'Mock The Week' and been in his own hugely-acclaimed Radio 4 series.

The Arts Centre ticket office is open Monday to Friday 12noon - 5pm & Saturdays 10am - 1pm.

Tel: 614837



Park Bench Social Club

Thursday 17 January 8pm

Tickets £10

The Park Bench Social Club are part of a new generation of bands that mix musical genres with abandon. Traditional folk, Celtic fiddle tunes, bluegrass, gypsy jazz, bhangra and old time Americana are all standout influences.

Their energetic and exhilarating performance style is a joy to watch and, as the audience can clearly tell, a joy to perform.



Swindon Museum & Art Gallery

Resonant Forms

15 Sept 07 - 30 Aug 08

Exploring the relationship between artists' ideas & the way they structure their work, from the Swindon Collection of Modern British Art. Free admission.

Festive trail

15 Dec 07 - 5 Jan 08

Festive trail for children around the museum & art gallery. Cost: £1 per child (including small prize). Drop in activity. For further details tel: 01793 466556. Swindon Museum & Art Gallery will be closed on 24, 25 & 26 December 2007 & 1 January 2008.

Finds Service

Katie Hinds, Wiltshire's Finds Liaison Officer, from the Portable Antiquities Scheme, is available at the museum to look at archaeological finds on 19 December 2007 & 30 January 08. Times: 10am - 12.30pm & 1.30pm - 4pm. website: www.finds.org.uk

Collections audit - volunteering opportunities

We are carrying out a major audit of the museum and art gallery collections. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer with the project, please contact us for further details. Tel:01793 466556.

Have you seen the new Swindon Rangers Events Guide? A wealth of activities are listed including walks, talks and children's activities.

You can pick up copies at council owned buildings including the Link centre, the Oasis and all libraries.



Your Information

Culture Vulture



The Swindon Summer Festival is back. After a year out to recover from our Brunel 200 celebrations the team are busy programming a spectacular array of top-notch international street artists to amaze and delight you.

We are teaming up with inSwindon www.inswindon.com and the Swindon Cultural Partnership www.swindonculture.org and are really excited that we will have the newly regenerated Wharf Green plaza as a new performance space. We also have plans for the Big Screen and a whole host of ideas about how to involve the entire Swindon community.

Arts Services have co-commissioned the new show from acclaimed international street theatre company Bash Street - who wowed the 2006 crowds with their silent movie spectacle "Cliffhanger" www.bashstreet.co.uk and we are hoping to commission a very special finale that will have particular appeal to youngsters and be completely unique to our festival.

Helen Miah, Arts Services Manager

Welcome back to Culture Vulture. Whilst you are busy preparing for Christmas here in the Arts team we are busy planning a whole feast of entertainment for you to enjoy next summer!

So put the 10 – 15 June in your diary now and click onto our web pages to keep up to speed with how the programme is shaping up.

Better still, if you'd like to get involved as a volunteer, with a group, as an artist or in any other way please email Liz Lavender, Festivals and Events Officer at llavender@swindon.gov.uk or call 01793 466565.



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Customer Services

Customer Services offer a wide range of services from the One Stop Shop located at Wat Tyler House including Swindon Cards, disabled parking badges, commercial waste sacks, allotments, general enquiries, all housing related enquiries, car parking permits and all payments relating to council services.

We can also arrange collection and payment for bulky waste items as well as offering passport size photos, which can be used for the disabled parking badges and concessionary travel passes.

Concessionary travel passes are processed at Premier House (opposite the Railway Station), which also houses planning applications which are available for viewing.

You can contact us in the way that best suits you:

Visit us at Wat Tyler House, Princes Street

Telephone us on 01793 463725, Minicom 01793 436659

Email us at customerservices@swindon.gov.uk

Disabled Car Parking

If you require disabled car parking spaces there are six at the rear of Wat Tyler West, a further three spaces in the front of Civic Offices, two at the rear of Premier House and one adjacent to the Occupational Health building.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Should you wish to contact a department directly, please use some of the following numbers:-

Council Tax and Housing Benefit enquiries. 0845 8500962

Customer Services 01793 445500

Adult Services Care Line 0800 0856666

Disabled Facilities Grants SBC 01793 463927

Means tested grant to meet all or part of the cost of adaptations to the home for disabled persons.

Tourist Information Centre 01793 530328

Tourist Information, ticket sales, and what's on in Swindon.

Waste and Recycling 01793 445501

Full marks for Swindon retailers in spray paint operation

Businesses in Swindon have been given a pat on the back for refusing to sell aerosol spray paints to children in a covert operation.

Young volunteers, accompanied by Swindon Borough Council Trading Standards Officers, attempted to buy spray paints in 12 different premises and each one refused the sale.

Trading Standards urges any retailer considering selling spray paints to always ask young customers for a Proof of Age Standards Scheme (PASS) card first.

The scheme was launched to bring in a common standard, an easily recognisable identity and a robust accreditation process to help protect retailers of age-related sales, and their employees from the myriad of fake cards used throughout the country.

A range of initiatives have been launched in Swindon to stop people using spray paints and other materials for illegal purposes such as graffiti, including the use of covert surveillance cameras to catch 'taggers' in the act, and a reward scheme for information that can lead to a successful prosecution. Test purchasing was introduced as one of the measures. Residents wanting to report illegal sales of underage products such as alcohol, tobacco, fireworks, knives, solvents and spray paints should call Trading Standards on 01793 466145 or email TStandards@swindon.gov.uk.