

The NEWS

February, 2015

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WHAT'S ON: [Museum Events](#); [Sub Rooms Events](#)

WELCOME

Martin Massey	Site Officer (Tenant Services)	5 th January
Jane Golightly	Support Worker (Tenant Services)	7 th January
Jo Spain	Business Support Assistant (Finance)	21 st January
Christopher Keppie	Performance & Improvement Officer	2 nd February

FAREWELL

Robey Jenkins	HR Business Partner	22 nd January
Janet Downes	Business Support Assistant (Tenant Services)	1 st March

TRANSFERS/PROMOTIONS

Louisa Sanderson	Business Support Officer (Tenant Services)	5 th January
Lucy Powell	Principal HR Officer	19 th January
Rachael Lythgoe	Performance and Improvement Officer	19 th January
Gemma Davis	Planning Officer	26 th January



ECONOMY: *Help local people and businesses recover from the recession, grow the local economy and increase employment*

CANAL PROJECT LATEST

Lodgemore Bridge: Design work on the planned new lift bridge is well underway and we hope to have secured planning consent by the end of this week. A Sunday closure of the existing bridge will be implemented in late March to permit geotechnical investigations to be undertaken. The council has now made the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO); closing date for representations is 12th February.

Wallbridge Lower Lock: The new concrete bypass/fishpass, which will carry the flow of the Slad Brook around the outside of the lock, is over 90% complete. Work is now underway on the outfall structure and the fibreglass grids covering the fish resting pools have been installed. These are necessary to allow light into the pools. Concrete work should be finished by the end of this week. The steel intake and outlet grilles will also be installed this week. The remaining works on site comprise reinstatement – fencing, surfacing and general tidying up. We expect the contractor to be off site by the end of this month.

Dudbridge: Local company Cristom Construction has now begun repair work here shortly. The bypass channel was severely damaged by last year's floods. Essentially, the work entails the replacement of displaced 'Armorloc' blocks with concrete. We will also be taking the opportunity to bed lumps of stone into the concrete in order to reduce the water velocity. In preparation for the repairs, our Tuesday and Thursday volunteers constructed a flight of steps on the 'island' between the upper lock and the bypass channel. They have since been busy removing the estimated 800 damaged blocks, filling the large hole scoured by water and removing washed down gravel. At the request of the Environment Agency, the volunteers have also attached blocks to the fish pass channel, in order to reduce the speed of water flow and therefore facilitating the passage of fish.

Bowbridge Lock: Planned scaffolding of the towpath side of the lock will now take place next week; a pump failure having meant that the lock could not be emptied of water. With both sides of the lock scaffolded, volunteers will be able to make faster progress on brickwork repairs. Removal of the concrete dam, believed to have been built in the 1970s to retain water above the lock, is well underway. This will give access for measurement of the lock gates.

Ham Mill: Volunteers from Cotswold Canals Trust's Western Depot continue to make excellent progress here. The dredger has been used to clear silt from above the lock, which will enable a fabric 'portadam' to be used to keep the lock dry. In turn, this will allow removal of another concrete dam and allow the installation of stop planks. Purchase of the dam was a joint effort between SDC, the Cotswold Canals Trust and the Stroud Valleys Canal Company, owners of the canal. We hope to reuse this dam at other locations, such as Wallbridge Lower Lock.

Towpath: Pupils from Thomas Keble School have started work on the final length of towpath upgrade – between Gough's Orchard and Hope Mill. They are working on here on alternate Mondays, using the other Mondays to carry out tree and vegetation work along the canal.

Interpretation Panels: Volunteers have begun putting up 17 interpretation panels along the towpath between Stonehouse Ocean and Arundel Aqueduct, including one outside Ebley Mill. Another three, to the same format, will be erected at Capel's Mill by the Stroud Valleys Project. The panels explain the canal's history and place it in context with other features along the canal corridor. They were drawn up by local designer Steve Roberts and content was checked by a panel comprising the canal project team, the Cotswold Canals Trust and the Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology.

We now have 1720 users following the latest canal news on  @cotswoldcanals

Contact: [Dave Marshall](#), Canal Project Manager (754646) ([back to index](#))

TOURISM NEWS

Cotswolds phone app – spring launch

Testing of the new Cotswolds Tourism phone app is well underway to ensure it is ready for its launch this spring. Working in partnership with the other local Gloucestershire authorities, we have developed a phone app to promote the Cotswolds in a new way to visitors, as well as local residents.

Press visits

One of our most recent press visits has resulted in a colourful 4-page spread in BBC Homes & Antiques magazine. BBC Homes & Antiques Magazine recently visited Stroud, Nailsworth and Painswick to unearth some hidden treasures. In the February 2015 issue, Eleanor O'Kane discovers award-winning markets, antique shops and the vibrant vintage shopping trail.

Don't forget to visit www.visitthecotswolds.org.uk/events to find out what's on. Or follow us at www.twitter.com/DiscoverStroud - over 2300 followers.

Contacts: [Sara Chardin](#) and [Shirley Wood](#), Regeneration Officers (Tourism) (754307) ([back to index](#))

LITTLECOMBE, DURSLEY

The council's flagship redevelopment site at littlecombe is the biggest regeneration site in Gloucestershire at the moment. Asset Management's Nick Stewart has brought the latest stage of development forward and our development partners have started demolition of the remaining buildings. All the materials from the old Lister Petter and Lister Shearing sites are being carefully dismantled and separated for recycling – nothing goes to waste. Nick expects the site to be completely clear of all buildings by early March, when our development partners will start on cleaning up historic contamination on the land. A new planning application is being prepared for the last phase of Littlecombe and we have consulted widely to engage interest and ideas from the public, Dursley Town Council and Cam Parish Council. This project is beginning to show what the council can achieve with a difficult site and it is particularly exciting because it pushes the theme of supporting the area with a new community and bringing new business and life to the locality.

Contact: [Nick Stewart](#), Principal Estate Surveyor (754437) ([back to index](#))

OLDENDS LANE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, STONEHOUSE

The council took a lease in 1980 of the 9 units built under phase 1 of the development to facilitate economic regeneration by providing starter units for small businesses. As the units are fully let, the tenants well-established and plenty of industrial units are now being provided by the private sector, it has been decided that the council should relinquish its lease and cease to hold any responsibility for its management and maintenance. Accordingly agreement has been reached after lengthy negotiations with the land owner for the occupying tenants to have direct leases with them going forward. Coupled with this, the council has managed to secure a favourable settlement with the land owner over some outstanding maintenance obligations and without these in turn impacting on the tenants.

Contact: [Richard Hanman](#), Interim Agency Surveyor (754431) ([back to index](#))

BODLEY BLOCK GROUND LETTING

Asset Management are excited to announce that Bodley Block Ground has now been let to Five Valleys Physiotherapy. This letting is the culmination of six months of negotiation and has involved colleagues from: Asset Management, Facilities and Legal. Five Valleys have recently begun the conversion of the former Council offices into a state of the art clinic and rehabilitation suite enabling the council to release value from its unoccupied office space. Five Valleys have signed a ten year lease at a commercial rent that will generate an income for the General Fund and provide space for this local business to grow. Five Valleys will be open for business next month and we wish them the very best for their new venture.

Contact: [Bryony Plain-Jones](#), Graduate Surveyor, Asset Management (754323) ([back to index](#))

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: *Provide affordable, decent and social housing*

DEAR TENANT SERVICES

“Improving heating with renewable energy systems

1. Keeping warm with the cost of electricity these days is a tremendous challenge. This new air source heating system is such a positive for us I wanted to write and thank all of those involved.

2. We do not have any gas available. The new system with solar panels was installed approx 18 months ago. Since this time we have really found a positive difference in the heating of our home. We are so much warmer and our home is a far more comfortable place to live. We are finding an improvement in our electricity bill. I cannot say enough positives about the system.

3. The solar panels have produced in our opinion a fair amount of usable Kwh. Due to so many variables, i.e. weather, usage etc it does take a little while to be able to ascertain measurable results and we are just starting to see these now.

4. Our next steps are to learn to use the system and the produced Kwh as effectively as possible aligned to our needs. To this end Ed White and the new Education Officer Helen have been very helpful in providing advice and we greatly appreciate their input.

Thank you to all who have undertaken a tremendous amount of work to make these systems available. If anyone would like to come along and see our system and how it is working, they would be more than welcome.”

“Thank you for your letter, we are delighted you are pleased with your new air source heating system! We are continuing to roll out our renewable energy program and are working hard to install 300 PV solar panel systems before the end of March. We would love to know how people are getting on with these, so please write in and tell us.”

Contact: [Anna Chandler](#), Performance & Improvement Officer (754017) ([back to index](#))

ENVIRONMENT: *Help the community minimise its carbon footprint, adapt to climate change, recycle more and send as little waste to landfill as possible*

HAZARD IN SHARPNESS



An Environmental Health Private Sector housing Officer (Mark Newman) was asked to investigate housing conditions in a detached Charity owned property in Sharpness. The property was built in the 19th Century and was lived in by secure tenants who were aged 92 and 87. On inspection it was noted that the windows in the house (which were mostly originals) were in a terrible state. Some sills were completely rotten and panes in the windows were loose and liable to fall out.

The tenants had a repair obligation due to the nature of their secure tenancy and could only afford funding for UPVC replacement windows. The Charity that owned the property wanted hardwood windows, due to the age and character of the dwelling. The house

was not a listed property where UPVC windows would not be allowed.

After my inspection visit, due to there being a Category 1 hazard for “Excess cold” in the property, a formal notice was served on the Charity. A meeting was arranged soon after and this was to try and find a way forward so that this hazard was removed quickly. It was agreed at this meeting that the difference between the UPVC windows and the Hardwood windows would be funded by the Charity. New windows have been ordered and the elderly tenants will no longer have to live in a cold and draughty property.

If the property had been owner occupied, we could have offered a Healthy Homes Loan to remove the “Excess cold” hazard! See our Policy on improving private sector housing in Stroud District.

http://www.stroud.gov.uk/docs/housing/private_sector_housing.asp

Contact:: [Mark Newman](#), Principal Environmental Health Officer (754468) ([back to index](#))

RESOURCES:

Provide value for money to our taxpayers and high quality services to our customers

MUSEUM NEWS

Children handle 300,000 yr old axe

Following recent changes to the National Curriculum, the Museum’s Collections Officer and Learning Officer have been working to help teachers get to grips with the new topics by using the breadth of the collections in store, which enable us to respond to new service demands. One such topic is Stone Age Britain, for which the staff came up with the idea of a box of artefacts from the stored collection which children can handle under supervision to get a real glimpse into how people lived in Britain between 2,000 and 300,000 years ago. The box works like an archaeological dig, with each era assigned a layer – as you remove each layer so you go back through time. The layers cover the Iron Age, Bronze Age, Neolithic, Mesolithic and Palaeolithic eras and each hold hand axes, scraper tools, arrowheads and the like. The box enables users to discover each era through the tools actually used by our ancestors, and children and teachers alike have been both enthused and awed by being able to handle an axe made over 300,000 years ago – the axe is so old that in fact it was likely to have been made by *Homo Heidelbergensis* rather than *Homo Sapiens*. Looking at the tools through the layers in more detail also allows the children to see the technological advancements made by our ancestors from the very roughly shaped flints of the Palaeolithic to the exquisitely worked arrowheads from the Bronze Age. So far the box has been receiving very positive reviews from the schools using it, and it is hoped that we can continue to use the collections in store to complement the new curriculum and tell the stories of our past in this way.

Walled Garden update

The Learning Pavilion is due to be handed over to the Museum team this week. This is a very exciting time for the Museum and our users. The Garden will in time present the greatest change for the Museum and our users since it opened in 2001. Based on the support to date, we expect our annual 55,000 plus visitors to make the most of the Garden once it is fully opened. Until the entranceway part of the project is in place, only some booked learning groups will be able to access the Pavilion, and even this will need to be under control due to incomplete nature of the site and the logistics of groups getting into the Garden without the dedicated entranceway. Nevertheless, the project to bring the ‘Garden to Life’ has reached a major milestone!

Contact: [Kevin Ward](#), Museum Development Manager (763394) ([back to index](#))

PLANNING NEWS

Building Control

On 27th January, the council resolved to enter into a partnership with Gloucester City Council for the provision of a Joint Building Control Service. This alliance will result in a more efficient service to the residents of Stroud and Gloucester and the robustness to compete with the private sector, known as approved inspectors. The fine details are yet to be ironed out, but in essence the resultant team will be based in Ebley Mill, and will inspect properties in both districts. The service is largely self financing through the fees charged for the inspections, and whilst the aims of the merger is to provide a robust and competitive service for its clients, the alliance will no doubt result in efficiency savings which will reflect in the fees charged.

Local Plan Inquiry (Examination in Public)

The Planning Inspector had scheduled the re-opening of the local plan examination for 27th January 2015; however, due to illness of the Inspector this has had to be postponed. The inspector has given his blessing to the next consultation stage which he will use to inform the next stages of the inquiry.

Action in the High Court

Separately the council and the developer Gladman have launched Section 288 (of the Town and Country Planning Act) challenges to the decision of the Secretary of State. The council seeks to have the inquiry for Mankley Fields re-opened (a decision to allow the Gladman appeal), whilst Gladman wish to see the Summer Street appeal re-heard following the dismissal of that appeal.

It is understood that these reviews (similar to a Judicial Review) could be heard in the very near future.

Contact: [Phil Skill](#), Head of Planning (754345) ([back to index](#))

MAKE SURE YOU CAN VOTE!



National Voter Registration Day takes place on **Thursday 5th February** as part of a nationwide week of action to encourage and inspire people to register to vote.

Ahead of the UK Parliamentary General election and local elections taking place on **Thursday 7th May**, the elections team are urging residents and staff to get involved by registering to vote. The elections team would be proud to say that 100% of Stroud District Council staff are registered to vote, so please get in touch using the details below to make sure that you are on the register.

Since the law changed in June last year, everyone is now responsible for their own registration, rather than registering as a household. Anyone who has changed their address or is a new voter needs to make sure that they are registered. Not being on the electoral register could also affect your credit rating. Registering to vote is easy and can be done online by visiting www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. Those registering will need to provide their date of birth and national insurance number. Anyone without internet can contact the elections team.

You can register to vote at any time, but the deadlines for registration ahead of the election are:

- Last date for Registration – Monday 20th April
- Last date for Postal Vote Applications – Tuesday 21st April
- Last date for Proxy Vote Applications – Tuesday 28th April

The publication of candidates standing in the elections will be available from Thursday 9th April for the Parliamentary Election and Friday 10 April for local elections. If you would like to know more about electoral registration, or request registration forms, please contact the elections team on 01453 754886 (email elections@stroud.gov.uk) www.stroud.gov.uk/vote

Contact: [Olivia Maybank](#), Elections Officer (754353) ([back to index](#))

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN LATEST

Andy Murray - Wardens Support Self Harm Event

Wardens provided a market stall on community safety information at Rednock School, supporting a very positive event raising awareness on self harm, organised by Cam & Dursley Youth Forum.

Carol Novoth Warden - Intervention Resolves High Hedge Dispute

A high hedge dispute between neighbours at Oakridge, was resolved by Wardens sitting down with both parties and helping them to see each other's point of view. As a result, the height & width of the hedge was reduced to an agreed amount, with a plan to stick to this in the future.

Dominic Everiss - Wardens Find Vulnerable Missing Person

The Police put out an APB on an elderly, vulnerable street drinker in Stroud, after he had not been seen for several days. Using local knowledge, Wardens carried out enquiries & eventually located the Gentleman safe & well.

Pete Gleed - Keep Calm and Cross Safely

Neighbourhood Wardens continue to provide cover for School Crossing Patrols across the Stroud District. Most recently the Blue Coat School in Wotton under Edge has benefited from Warden assistance after their regular 'crosser' needed time off.

Simon Moulding - Santa's Helpers

We were asked if we could help a pregnant lady who lived on her own on a 3rd floor top flat to remove a fridge freezer for bulky collection. This we did and also arranged for the lady to have a Foodbank voucher and a Christmas Hamper from Foodbank.

Follow us on  @sdc_wardens

Contact: [Dominic Whitmarsh - Everiss](#), Neighbourhood Warden (07753 725185) ([back to index](#))

YOUTH COUNCIL NEWS

SDYC Active at Regional Youth Conference

Representatives from Stroud District Youth Council (Chair, Charlotte Bignell Vice Chair, Alex Lin Vines and Principal Member for Local Democracy, George Gooch) recently attended a regional youth conference hosted by the South West Regional Youth Work Unit and the British Youth Council (BYC). The event included taking part in a national consultation on potential changes to the electoral system and a workshop explaining how member organisations of the BYC can increase their impact locally and nationally. There were also networking opportunities for SDYC members, getting to know regional representatives from organisations such as the UK Youth Parliament and NHS Youth Forum and other youth council across the area. The consultation included questions about compulsory voting, online voting and also votes for 16 and 17-year-olds - this is an issue which SDYC has been working with for some time. SDYC is currently collecting data to give the campaign evidence to support any claims on these key issues; this will be added to the consultation to influence the BYCs flagship campaign.

Self Harm Awareness Campaign Launch

Cam and Dursley Youth Forum have recently launched their local campaign to raise awareness of the issues of self harm amongst young people – entitled 'In Need of...' the campaign aims to provide information about where to go for support, for those that need it. This complements and follows on from the work of Stroud District Youth Council on this issue which produced information leaflets for GP surgeries, health centres and schools. On going work will now take place to ensure that health organisations, teachers, parents as well as young people become more aware of this issue and how it should be tackled.

For more information on Stroud District Youth Council, please visit www.youth.stroud.gov.uk

Contact: [Steve Miles](#), Senior Youth Officer (Hear by Right) (754504) ([back to index](#))

ELECTRONIC BILLING

As we approach our annual billing exercise for 2015/16, we are encouraging our customers to sign up to receive their council tax bills by email, rather than by post.

Currently over 4,000 households have signed up to receive their bills by email and we know that nowadays many people would prefer to receive them electronically rather than by post. Receiving a bill by email will be much more convenient for many people and at the same time reduce unnecessary costs and our impact on the environment as we will be able to reduce the number of billing packs we send out in the post.

Anyone wishing to receive their bill by email should email Ebilling@stroud.gov.uk with their name and address and council tax account number if known, by 20th February and we will do the rest.

There are currently 51,562 households in the Stroud district. Figures from the Office of National Statistics for 2014 show that 84% of households in Great Britain have internet access.

Contact: [Simon Killen](#), Recovery Manager (754013) ([back to index](#))

HEALTH & WELLBEING: *Promote the health and well being of our communities and work with others to deliver the public health agenda*

DURSLEY POOL NEWS

February Membership Offer

To celebrate the final year of the Fitness Suite annual gym membership is only £99 through February.

February Half Term

We are now taking bookings for our February Half Term activities. Activities include..... synchronised swimming, trampolining and football morning. For more information please visit www.dursleypool.com or call 01453 546441.

Adult Swimming Lessons

It's never too late to learn, join us for our adult swimming lessons on Friday afternoons: 2.30pm – 3pm. If you join our Friday afternoon Adult Swimming Lessons you will be able to practise your swimming skills for FREE at any of the following swimming times....

Tuesday: 2.30pm – 3.30pm

Thursday: 10.30am -11am

Wednesday: 2.30pm - 3.30pm

Friday: 3pm - 3.45pm

For more information or to book a space please call 01453 546441.

Swimming Lessons

We have spaces on our Learn to Swim programme for children from age 4. Call us for more information on availability and times.

Little Ducks Swim School

Swimming lessons for adults and babies from birth to age 3 ½. Build your confidence and skills in the water with your baby with the help from our instructors. Also included with these lessons is a termly child first aid course to help you to feel confident if you were put in a situation where first aid was required. The first aid course will cover baby and child CPR and choking as well as other areas.

Contact: [Kelly Mackenzie](#), Duty Manager (546441) ([back to index](#))

MAIDENHILL SPORTS & DANCE CENTRE



THOMAS KEBLE SPORTS CENTRE

Maidenhill Sports and Dance Centre and Thomas Keble Sports Centre are offering a gym membership for just £20 a month via direct debit. They are both now open on a Saturday morning (9am-1pm) until the end of March. New exercise class timetables are listed below (or click [here](#))

Also available at...

OTHER FACILITIES

- Badminton Courts
- Sports Hall Hire for Football, Basketball, Cricket and more!
- Outdoor Hardcourt Training Area with Floodlights
- Dance Studio Hire
- Club bookings welcomed
- Call for prices

**MAIDENHILL
SPORTS &
DANCE CENTRE**




EXERCISE CLASSES

NEW TIMETABLE From Jan 2015

- **MONDAY:**
6.00pm - Fitball
7.15pm - Conditioning Pilates
- **TUESDAY:**
6.00pm - Circuits Extreme
6.25pm - Studio Cycle
- **WEDNESDAY:**
6.00pm - Studio Cycle
7.00pm - Studio Cycle
- **THURSDAY:**
6.15pm - Conditioning Pilates
7.30pm - Studio Cycle
- **FRIDAY:**
6.15pm - Boxercise
- **SATURDAY:**
10.00am - 30/30 (Jan-Mar only)
- **SUNDAY:**
11.00am - Zumba

NEW CLASS

£4.80 per class or 6 classes for the price of 5!

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
CONCESSION
SCHEME**

- 40% off selected pay as you go activities, including exercise classes and gym sessions
- Find out if you qualify by visiting us, calling us, or logging onto www.stroud.gov.uk/sportcentres

Also available at...

OTHER FACILITIES

- Dance Studio Hire
- Badminton Courts
- Tennis Courts (during summer months)
- Sports Hall Hire for Football, Basketball, Cricket and more!
- Gymnasium Hire
- Club bookings welcomed
- Call for prices

**THOMAS KEBLE
SPORTS CENTRE**




EXERCISE CLASSES

NEW TIMETABLE From Jan 2015

- **MONDAY:**
6.15pm - Studio Cycle
7.15pm - Beginners Studio Cycle
- **TUESDAY:**
7.00pm - Total Fitness (pay the instructor)
- **WEDNESDAY:**
6.30pm - Studio Cycle, Abs & Core
7.30pm - Zumba
- **THURSDAY:**
7.30pm - Body Blast (pay the instructor)
- **FRIDAY:**
6.15pm - Studio Cycle

£4.80 per class

**STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL
CONCESSION
SCHEME**

- 40% off selected pay as you go activities, including selected exercise classes and gym sessions
- Find out if you qualify by visiting us, calling us, or logging onto www.stroud.gov.uk/sportcentres

Contact: [Mike Towson](#), Facilities Management Officer (754336) ([back to index](#))

CORPORATE AFFAIRS

REPLACING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Employers have a duty to provide employees with personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary to do the job safely but employees have responsibilities too. You must take care of PPE; not misuse it and report any loss or defect and, of course you must use it when necessary. Some PPE, such as some respiratory protective equipment, first aid supplies and safety helmets have a shelf-life. Safety helmets usually have a circular stamp on the inside showing the month and year of manufacture. Plastic can become brittle after years of exposure to the sun so it's important to renew safety helmets according to the manufacturer's recommendations (usually after 3 to 5 years). If you need to replace any PPE contact your line manager.

Contact: [Phil Park](#), Safety Adviser (754471) ([back to index](#))

UNHAPPY? UNFULFILLED? FED UP?

February, although a very short month, can end up feeling long and hard going – the weather, the news, the credit cards, whatever negatives there are in your life, they can all seem so much worse in the latter days of winter. There is hope – spring is just around the corner, and until the daffodils pop their heads above ground to brighten the horizon, there are lots of things provided by your employer to help you through even the toughest of days.....

The **NHS Let's talk** range of courses offer support to people on a wide range of topics including : stress & anxiety, low mood, anger management and sleeping problems. These courses are free for all our employees, to find out more information, pick up a Let's talk leaflet from the Flexible Learning Centre.

The **Bike purchase scheme** could be just the thing for you – cycling gives you a great sense of freedom, much more so than driving, and even the shortest cycle route can help you get fitter and feel better. Why not think about getting on your bike in 2015?

A **Back and shoulders massage** in your lunch break will only take 20 minutes or so, is available at Ebley Mill and will only set you back £13.. A great way to relieve tension and leave you feeling energised! Contact Julie Browning for details.

A **Mentor** can help you overcome difficulties and help keep you motivated to achieve your personal goals. If you would like a mentor, or would like to get involved in workplace mentoring, please contact Fiona Hammond. New mentors all receive some basic training, and are invited to join the SDC Mentor Network Group which meet once a quarter.

A **Coach** can help you reflect on your personal goals and help you find your own solutions to workplace issues that arise. It is a process that creates many positive outcomes. SDC is a member of the South West Coaching Pool, and also has a number of qualified internal coaches. Please contact Fiona Hammond if you would like more information about being coached.

If you “**do good**”, you “**feel good**” – there are many charitable events planned for 2015, with Comic Relief just around the corner, getting involve can raise a smile, and raise some much needed cash for good causes. You don't actually have to part with your hard earned money to get the feel good factor – try giving your umbrella away to someone who needs it more than you, or donating your clothes to a charity shop instead of selling them on ebay. The simplest of gestures can improve our mood and outlook on life. The **Volunteering Policy** allows us to take up to 3 days of work time to “do good” to “feel good” – see the employee handbook for details.

In 2015, the “**First Care Health Checks**” will be available to staff once again. This is a chance for you to have a consultation with a qualified nurse to discuss issues such as weight control, blood pressure, cholesterol, asthma etc. Please contact Carol Telling for more information.

Mindfulness is one of the latest techniques that has been adopted to deal with the stresses and strains of everyday life. A great course is available from the Let's Talk Service (see above) and we have our own mental wellbeing trail in and around Ebley Mill, with additional ideas about how to visit Dursley Pool and practice “mindful exercise”. To receive your copy, email human.resources@stroud.gov.uk The Flexible Learning Library offers a wide range of books and leaflets providing information to support academic study and personal development, as well as a free DVD library. Reading is known to reduce blood pressure and combat stress – take some time out to visit the centre on long block ground floor.

If reading isn't for you, why not **take a break and take a quick snap**? Photography is a great mindful activity that can help you relax, regain focus and re-energise. You don't need any fancy equipment or high level of skill to take a good photo – often the best snap shots are those that were taken without much thought or equipment. Your camera phone will produce great results when you make an effort to get out and about from your desk. The photography competition will continue to run with this season's topic being “out in the district”. You never know, you might win!

If it's fitness that you're after, a number of reduced gym membership deals are available at Stratford Park Leisure Centre, Fifth Dimension and Dursley Pool & Sports Centre – please contact each centre

for further details. Regular exercise has a wide range of mental and physical health benefits - including releasing endorphins and making you feel good.

Contact: [Fiona Hammond](#), Learning and Development Officer (754320) ([back to index](#))

SYSTEM THINKING

In November 2013, 21 members of staff all of whom had been put forward by their Manager, underwent system thinking training so that we could increase our capacity to perform more system thinking reviews across the council.

System thinking is an approach that challenges traditional management thinking and the way work is designed and managed in organisations. This should lead to an improved service for our customer by cutting out any waste in a system and making it more efficient. When the training was complete Corporate Team met with the new System Thinkers to select some potential projects to start their challenge. The identified projects were ranked in order of priority and split into two phases. Most of the Phase 1 projects were underway in February 2014. These included a review of Reducing SDC postage, Recruitment, Housing Repairs, Tenant and Customer Services interaction, Tree Conservation and Creditor Payments. All of the projects, except for Creditor Payments review which is now in phase 2, have been completed.

There have been presentations at POS by the team working on Reducing SDC Postage and Recruitment. Presentations for the Tenant & Customer Services interaction, Repairs and Tree Conservation projects are planned to take place in March.

Phase 2 projects are starting now. These include business support in Planning, Tenant Services, Environmental Health and Legal Services. The aim is to produce reports from all the projects and put these on the Hub for everyone to see. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the System Thinkers for their time and hard work so far in completing their phase 1 project. I hope their phase 2 project goes well.

Contact: [Joanne Jordan](#), Strategic Head of Customer Services (754005) ([back to index](#))

SDC INTER-SERVICE BAKE OFF

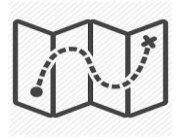
Following on from the success of the first Ebley Bake off a year ago we are having the Annual Inter-service bake off on Wednesday 18th February. This time we have teams from our external sites too! All proceeds will go to a charity that I passionately support, [The Okwir Foundation](#).

The format is simple bakers from different service units participate by baking cakes and savouries to be sold at £1 a piece in the Restaurant at Ebley Mill and our external sites at Dursley Pool, Sub Rooms and the Museum. I am grateful to colleagues who are baking cakes on the day to support the fundraising. I invite you to come and support The Okwir Foundation on the day.

There will be two prizes for Best baker, bottle of Prosecco and runners up, premium chocolates! The idea is it to be competitive and fun at the same time for a worthy cause. To help put it into perspective, £25 takes care of one whole year's education and materials for one child! Look forward to seeing you on the day and thanks again for your support. Thanks also to the SDC Charity team for their guidance and support.

Contact: [Shobhan Sen](#), Customer Services Manager (754700) ([back to index](#))

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TRAINING



Friday 13th February - Half day PM session (9:30am – 12pm)

Aimed at those supporting projects, not needing a detailed view OR the very experienced just wanting to adapt to SDC process. All managers and members of support services who take part in projects should attend this as a minimum, to ensure they know what is expected.

Tuesday 17th February and Friday 24th February - Full Day PM session (9:30am - 4:30pm)

For project managers and those wanting to develop those skills more fully. We take the half day session and expand the learning with more detail at each stage and its decision points, further discussion and exercises.

Contact: [Darren Skinner](#), Business Projects Manager (754399) ([back to index](#))

NEW FAMILY FRIENDLY RIGHTS

The Family Friendly Policies (Section 2.3 of the Employee Handbook) is in the process of being updated in line with the Children and Families Act 2014. The main changes introduced by the Act, which affect staff are:

- Extension of right to request flexible working
- Time off for partners to attend ante-natal appointments
- Shared parental leave and pay for babies due after 5th April
- Parental leave extended to parents of a child under 18 from April

Right to request flexible working

This right was extended in June but just to remind you - any employee having at least 26 weeks' service can now request flexible working, not just parents. This request may be for a reduction in hours or a change of work pattern and can be for any reason. The Council will consider all requests and subject to it not having an adverse impact on service delivery, will endeavour to meet the request.

Time off for partners to attend ante-natal appointments

Partners, for example, the spouse or civil partner of the pregnant woman, are entitled to unpaid time off to attend up to two ante-natal appointments such as doctor or midwife appointments, scans or other hospital appointments.

Shared parental leave and pay

Shared parental leave, or SPL, is a new entitlement for parents (subject to certain eligibility criteria) of babies due, or children placed for adoption, on or after 5 April. SPL enables parents to share the caring responsibilities for the child for the first year after to birth or adoption in a flexible way. Key points are:

- Mothers must opt out of maternity leave to opt in to SPL
- SPL and possibly pan can be divided between working parents
- Parents can take leave in separate blocks, or at the same time, overlap etc.

Whilst the new policy sets out the eligibility criteria and notification requirements, and contains more information regarding shared parental pay, employees considering taking SPL are advised to talk to Human Resources in the first instance. An online calculator: www.gov.uk/sharedparentalleave has been developed to help prospective parents establish their eligibility and work out what their leave and pay entitlements are.

Parental Leave

Unpaid parental leave has been available from 2001 to all those with parental responsibilities, including foster parents, grandparents with a significant caring role and step parents, who want to take time off to look after a child under the age of 8. From April, this is extended to children up to the age of 18.

We hope that the amended Family Friendly policies will be available on the Hub within the next few weeks but if you would like more information regarding any of these entitlements, please don't hesitate to speak to Human Resources.

Contact: [Amanda Edge](#), Interim HR Consultant (754278) ([back to index](#))

WHAT'S ON

MUSEUM IN THE PARK EVENTS

until Sunday 1st March **Exhibition in Gallery One: WYCINANKI: ART OF POLISH PAPER CUTS**
'Wycinanki' or paper cuts are a traditional Polish folk art. They first appeared in the 19th century, when they decorated the inside walls of rural homes. New paper cuts were put up every year at Easter. After the Second World War, the communist regime promoted folk arts and wycinanki became fashionable among city dwellers and foreign tourists. Although paper cuts are no longer used in the original way, there are still practitioners of the craft and traditional motifs often inspire modern artists. They are made almost exclusively by women, who use sheep shearing scissors to cut detailed designs. The examples on display are from two regions known for their traditional crafts. Kurpie produces plain paper cuts and Łowicz specialises in multicoloured designs. *A Horniman Museum and Gardens Touring Exhibition*
www.horniman.ac.uk

until Sunday 1st March **Gallery One Showcase: 'CUTS A FINE FIGURE' by Yasemin Wigglesworth**
Yasemin Wigglesworth is a local paper cut artist. Each of her pieces is unique and entire, cut by hand from a single sheet of paper. She is inspired by nature, the Arts & Crafts movement, East Asian woodblock prints and tapestries, and having grown up in Istanbul, by Iznik ceramic designs. This small but stunning collection showcases examples of her delicate and delightful creations.

until Sunday 1st March **Exhibition in Gallery Two: 'FOUND IN THE FIELDS'**
An exhibition of artist's prints by Carry Akroyd. This exhibition shows a series of hand-drawn lithographs which incorporate quotations from the poems of John Clare, the nineteenth century 'Peasant Poet'. [Carry Akroyd](#) is a painter and printmaker whose images examine the relationship between wildlife and the farming landscape, but are just as much about colour and composition. *Gallery Two opening hours vary from day to day. Please call ahead before making a special visit.*

until Sunday 29th March **Foyer Showcase: WORLD WAR ONE**
Throughout the period 2014-2018 our foyer case shows a series of mini exhibitions looking at World War One and its local impact. For 2015 we will be exploring the theme of innovation and technology during the war. During March, look out for 'Echoes in Enamel', a new interpretation of the Museum's photographs of the Munitions Workers at the TJ Daniels factory, presented by Gloucestershire artist Sue Brown.

Thursday 12th February, 2pm **Talk with Ian Mackintosh: 'LIFE AND TIMES AT LONGFORDS MILL'**
Making Stroud cloth is about more than spinning and weaving as this new talk makes clear. More than anything mills are about people – for example the pickers and burlers and many others who worked there. This talk includes photographs of many workers in the hope that names can be found for some of them. *Booking necessary. 2pm | £5 (£3 MIP Friends)*

Saturday 14th February, 11am – 3.30pm **PAPER HEARTS FOR VALENTINES DAY**
Drop in Family Workshop. Use simple paper cutting techniques to create bold and colourful hearts inspired by folk art motifs found in Polish paper cuts. A family drop in workshop for families with children aged 5+. £1 per child, accompanying adults free

Tuesday 17th – Sunday 22nd February **VERY VICTORIAN DRESSING UP BOX**
Find our dressing up box in the staircase hall and enjoy dressing up as a Victorian Lady or Gent. Fun for all ages! Free.

Tuesday 17th – Sunday 22nd February **FOSSIL RUBBINGS IN THE GEOLOGY GALLERY**
Artist Julie Fowler created some beautiful fossil and dinosaur tiles for families to enjoy at the Museum. Drop in and create some wax crayon rubbings to take home. All ages welcome. Free

Tuesday 17th – Saturday 21st February, 11am – 3.30pm **PAPERCUT MAGIC**

Drop in Family Workshop. Join us as we draw on the fabulous folk art motifs in the exhibition and create our own magical papercut designs. This workshop is for families with children aged 5+. £1 per child, accompanying adults free.

Wednesday 18th February, 2pm – 4pm **MEET THE CURATOR**

Drop in and meet our Curator and see more treasures from our stores! This time things are getting curiouser and curiouser ... All welcome. Free.

Thursday 26th February, 2pm **'CHILDHOOD EMPLOYMENT IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE'**

Local historian John Loosley looks at an almost forgotten, hidden history – that of the countless children who had to work from an early age in order to survive. He compares the Stroud area with the Forest of Dean. *Booking necessary.* £5 (£3 MIP Friends)

Saturday 28th February, 2pm **WILLIAM MORRIS AND THE INSPIRATION OF THE COTSWOLDS**

Lecture with Mary Greensted. William Morris – designer, writer, businessman and socialist – was one of the outstanding figures of the 19th century. His ideas continue to resonate today with contemporary artists, designers, politicians and campaigners. In 1871 he rented Kelmscott Manor, near Lechlade. The surrounding countryside, its flora and fauna, the small towns and villages and their traditional buildings, inspired different aspects of Morris's work. His example attracted the next generation of Arts and Crafts designer-makers and helped to establish the strong craft tradition that thrives today. *Organised by the Museum Friends. Booking necessary.* £8 (£5 MIP Friends)

www.museuminthepark.org.uk

www.twitter.com/museuminthepark

www.facebook.com/TheMuseuminthePark

Museum admission free, donations appreciated

Winter Opening Hours:

Tuesday to Friday 10am – 4pm

Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm

Closed on Mondays

Contact: [Abigail Large](#), Museum Administrator (763394) ([back to index](#))



FEBRUARY EVENTS AT THE SUBSCRIPTION ROOMS

Friday 6th February 8pm **ALL-STAR COMEDY SHOW**

Three of the top UK based comedians performing cutting edge stand-up. Get ready for some unforgettable comedy from multi award winning New Zealander Sully O'Sullivan. Sully won Canada's Master's of the Universe Improv Competition, and featured on Australian TV's The Comedy Channel. Headlining the show with *Blisteringly funny songs* will be comedy rock legend Christian Reilly who won the Perrier Award in 2001 alongside Rich Hall. The hilarious Pat Gallagher will also be performing as MC. £10 adv £14 door (Buy 10 advance tickets for the price of 9 & get a table reserved for your party)

Saturday 7th February 7.30pm **VIRTUOSI GUS BAND**

Thousands have applauded the band in concert over the years, and the Midlanders have dented the Northern pride of Yorkshire and Lancashire, traditionally the home of brass bands, by winning no less than six national titles, the British Open Championships and being proclaimed World Champions. Now the band is celebrating over 80 years of outstanding music making and a story which had its beginning in a small Northamptonshire shoe factory. £10 (£8 concs) £5 under 18

Thursday 12th February 5pm **Dot to Dot Drama presents: PUSS IN BOOTS**

Stroud and Gloucester Schools' Drama Festival. A 'just for fun' drama festival for primary schools in the Stroud and Glos area. Schools are invited to present their unique interpretation of a section of the Puss in Boots story and dovetail in with the work of neighbouring schools. A one off performance which comes together for the first time when the curtain rises! Come and watch this witty, wily feline in Lynn Brittney's comic caper this autumn. Brought to the Subscription Rooms Stage by local children, the Stroud and Gloucester Schools' Drama festival is purrrfect family entertainment! £10 (concs £5)

Friday 13th February 8pm **LEVERET**

Featuring three of England's finest musicians in an exciting new collaboration. Andy Cutting, Sam Sweeney and Rob Harbron are each regarded as masters of their instruments and are involved in collaborations with a huge range of artists. Andy Cutting is a unique melodeon player, known for his work with Martin Simpson, Blowzabella, Chris Wood, June Tabor and Kate Rusby. Sam Sweeney, fiddle player for Bellowhead, works with Jon Boden and The Remnant Kings, The Full English, Fay Hield and the Hurricane Party, and his own project Made in the Great War. Rob Harbron has practically reinvented the English concertina and is known for his work with The Full English, Jon Boden and the Remnant Kings, Fay Hield, Emma Reid and the English Acoustic Collective. £12 adv £14 door

Saturday 14th February 8pm **George Session FLUFFED UP**

with Jonny Fluffypunk, Angie Belcher & Out To Lunch + Open Mic*. A Spectacular 'Dress to Frill' Valentines' Cabaret of Sparkling Comedy, Live Music & Dazzling Spoken Word +Open Mike with Johnny Fluffypunk. Fresh from his acclaimed 'Man Up Jonny Fluffypunk' show. Jonny mixes political disillusionment and surreal whimsy with intricate humour, sharp irony and wit and England's most pretentious moustache. Angie Belcher, Hot on the heels of her hysterical one-woman Edinburgh show 'Settle Down', expect dirty stanzas and hysterical observations about approaching 40, angry computers and puppies. Pam Ayres with attitude and an adult audience. Crispin Thomas, still right at the cutting-edge of fluff and Stroud's maverick Performance/ Ironing Poet melding heart-tugging words with off-the-wall humour. Bless! Plus Out To Lunch, a Car-Bootful of Roots, Blues and nonsense with Crispin Thomas, Jeff The Fuse and Rufus Fry of Thee Ones.~ *Open Mike ('Love/Fluff Theme') call Crispin on 01453 757376 www.ctmuk.com/outtolunch £8 (£7 CONCS) ADV £10 (£8 CONCS) DOOR

Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd February 2pm **THE GUARDIAN OF THE THRESHOLD**

Rudolf Steiner's Third Mystery Drama. A Mystery Centre decides to open up its doors to the public; a group of characters undergo crises, tragedy and spiritual trials; finally, as they overcome these trials, the mystery centre itself is transformed. A community production – by the Stroud Mystery Drama Group. This extraordinary and profound play lasts for five hours, takes place in different realms of existence, and includes drama, music and eurhythmy. Directed by Richard Ramsbotham. Set by Pauline Brown. £20 (£15 concs)

Thursday 26th February 2.30pm **YOUR MUSICAL MEMORIES**

Hosted by Trevor T Smith. Relive your musical memories at these monthly afternoon concerts; enjoy classical pieces that have always lived in your heart, hear songs from musicals and arias from operas that have always been yours to cherish. Trevor presides over a feast of talent from local performers and gifted young artists. The themed community singing which always concludes each concert will lift your spirits. Our Coffee House and Bar will be serving tea, coffee and cakes in the ballroom before the performance and you can catch up with friends, old and new, after the show downstairs in Mr Twitchett's. £6.

Thursday 26th February 8pm **George Session GRAVESIDE MANNER**

written and performed by Bill Jones. After his sell-out shows in the Stroud Theatre Festival, Bill Jones returns to the George Room as Stroud's most depressed poet. In a one-man show that's positively brimming with gloom, Bill will entertain us once more with humorous poems about death, despair and loss and excerpts from appallingly disheartening novels. He'll also not forget to update us on the continuing aftermath of his disastrous love affair with Mavis Wright as well as doling out the sort of desperate banter that has led at least one audience member to say "I had tears running down my face". Expect to leave with a heart several pounds heavier than when you came. This is a new extended hour-long version of Graveside Manner containing twice as much misery, hopelessness and despair and more heartbreak than anyone could possibly want on a Thursday evening. www.hawkerspot.com
Tickets £8 (£6 concs)

Friday 27th February 8.30pm **JIVE DANCE**

A great atmosphere and great dance floor. Dance the night away to top swing and jive music. www.justjive.com £8 (£7 members)

Saturday 28th February 8pm **ELVIS MCGONAGALL with support Crispin Thomas**

Stand-up poet, armchair revolutionary and recumbent rocker, Elvis McGonagall is the sole resident of The Graceland Caravan Park where he scribbles verse whilst drinking malt whisky and listening to Johnny Cash. Elvis is the 2006 World Slam Champion, the compere of the notorious Blue Suede Sporrans Club and a regular guest of BBC Radio 4's Saturday Live. *'funny, angry and tightly written... McGonagall combines anger, polish and carefully crafted verse in a way which recalls John Cooper Clarke'* 4-star The Scotsman. *'side-splittingly funny'* The Reading Rant. www.elvismcgonagall.co.uk £10

Workshops & Classes

Saturday 11th & Sunday 12th April 10am – 4pm **WORKSHOP WEEKEND**

Booking Now All workshops £70. Booking essential contact the Subscription Rooms on 01453 760900

TWO DAY MOSAIC WORKSHOP with Robin James

Create a decorative mosaic panel full of character and texture. A broad range of mosaic materials will be available at a cost of approximately £15 per person. Bring your own bits of tile, crockery, pebbles etc to add your own personality. This is a relaxed day where you can get help with your own piece or get inspiration from Robin. All tools and basic materials are provided. Suitable for beginners and more advanced mosaic artists. www.robinjames.com or for info call 07974 674 985

TWO DAY STAINED GLASS WORKSHOP with Caroline Lambert

Create something stunning for your garden with Stained Glass. With a simple approach to design and using traditional and contemporary techniques, all you need to bring is your imagination and enthusiasm. Materials can be bought at a cost of approximately £40.

TWO DAY PASTEL PORTRAIT WORKSHOP with Katherine Bryan-Merrett

This is an intensive two day workshop about using pastels in portraiture. Katherine shows you some of the techniques she uses to create pastel portraits and tonal studies. On Day one you will be looking at tonal studies using charcoal and chalk pastels. You will need sketch books, charcoal and chalk pastels. On Day two you will be looking at the colours in portraiture using chalk pastels. The technique involves layering and blending pastels directly onto MDF board. You will need clothes you don't mind getting messy, a variety of pastels including (cheaper pastels are better for this technique - inscribe are ideal) and a large sheet of MDF 2ftx2ft or 2ftx3ft. www.katherinebryan-merrett.com

Café Bar



A warm welcome awaits you in Mr Twitchett's Coffee House and Bar. Named after a former caretaker of the Subscription Rooms, this cosy little bar offers light meals, delicious coffee and a selection of teas and other hot drinks. We also have beers, wines and spirits, including local ale and lager from Stroud Brewery. There is regular live entertainment, featuring

the best of local acoustic and electronic artists, actors and poets, and the bar is the social hub of the theatre and folk festivals for artists and customers alike. For sports fans, all free to air major sporting events will be shown on our 40" screen. The main door to the Mr Twitchett's is on the lane between Bedford Street and Kendrick Street, or you can come in through the Sub Rooms front doors. We're here from 10am Monday to Friday and 9am on Saturday. The bar is also open before and after all our performances and in the evenings on Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday.

Contact: [Paul McLaughlin](mailto:Paul.McLaughlin@subscriptionrooms.co.uk), General Manager (760991) ([back to index](#))

**Deadline for the March edition –
Thursday, 26th February. Please email [Dave Marshall](mailto:dave.marshall@subscriptionrooms.co.uk)**