NEW OFFICES FOR ENTERPRISING PROJECT

Enterprising Communities – recently awarded funding by the Phoenix Fund for its innovation in enterprise development – has changed both its name and its premises.

They are now:

incredit
1st Floor
Saffron Ground
Ditchmore Lane
Stevenage
SG1 3LJ

Tel: 07985 236805
e mail: sue.lawton@incredit.org.uk

An Eye on the Future

Pin Green businesses have launched a partnership to address crime reduction and environmental issues for their area. One of the first actions of the partnership has been to sign up to Business Watch.

Business Watch signs are now around the Industrial Estate letting potential vandals and criminals know that businesses are in close contact with the police and can work together through Ringmaster (an automated telephone tree) to stamp out vandalism.

Businesses and employees are feeling the benefit already with the Wedgwood Way bus shelter staying in good condition. Business like having an identifiable voice in the Stevenage community, so they can tackle other nuisance problems like flying tipping.

Full membership of Pin Green Business Partnership is open to representatives of any company located in the Pin Green Industrial area, and is supported by Hertfordshire Constabulary, the Chamber of Commerce and Stevenage Borough Council. Contact Sarah Bissett Scott at the Council's Economic Development Unit for more details on01438 2422177.

Published by the Economic Development Unit
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Daneshill House, Danestrete,
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Tel: 01438 242242
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Web: www.stevenage.co.uk

Help to Celebrate!!!

Celebrate!!! is what it says – a celebration: of culture and achievement in Stevenage's black and minority ethnic communities and families through music, song, crafts, poetry, food and expressive arts.

Celebrate!!! is a high-profile season of events – the highlight of which will be the show at the Gordon Craig on Sunday September 26th 2004 – featuring performers and artists from all cultural backgrounds.

(left to right) Steve Griffith, Michael Benfield, Don Griffith, Valerie Benfield, Ann Griffith (now Ann Reis) - all still resident in Stevenage.

Celebrate!!! will feature:

- Guest celebrity compères
- School workshops on mask, dance and ethnic music and food
- The Campbell-Younge Award for outstanding contribution to the community
- Visual arts and music
- Workshops andVideo diaries

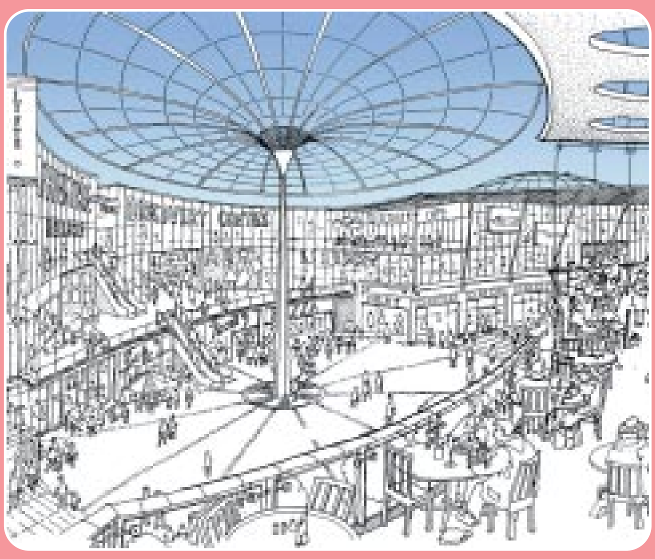
Along with North Herts College, Hertfordshire County Council, local primary and secondary schools, Stevenage Borough Council and the Town Centre Management Company as well as celebrities whose work is linked to Black and Minority Ethnic Communities, we are looking to businesses to help out with sponsorship through your logo on leaflets and posters, or by supporting an award.

If you think your business can help, or you would like to support Celebrate!!!, phone Sarah Bissett Scott at Stevenage Borough Council, on 01438 242177 for more details.

YOUR TOWN YOUR SAY

Work towards the regeneration of Stevenage town centre is continuing apace following February's announcement that ING Real Estate and Stanhope have been selected as preferred developers'.

ING and Stanhope have hit the ground running and June will be the public's first opportunity to fine tune their proposals as consultation will take place over a number of weeks in the town centre. The events will be a chance to see more detailed plans for a department store, a new shopping street, a new bus station and town centre apartments. There will also be opportunities to meet with the developers' team and talk about what kind of scheme you would like to see.



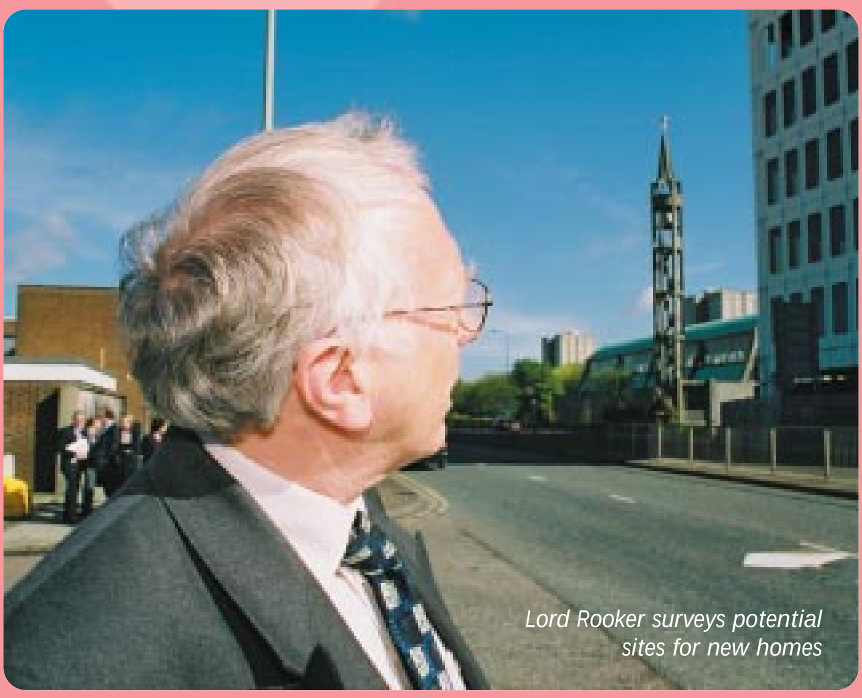
And later in the summer, Stevenage Borough Council will be reviewing its planning framework in response to the developers' proposals and this again will be open for the public to have a say.

Keep an eye out for what is going on in the local media and on www.stevenage.co.uk/towncentre. In the mean time please contact Jonathan Entwistle on 01438 242891 for more information.

Stevenage Economic Bulletin

June-July 2004

£5m GRANT TO AID GROWTH AND PROVIDE NEW HOMES



Lord Rooker surveys potential sites for new homes

In April, the Government announced that Stevenage Borough Council has been awarded £5 million as part of its 'Sustainable Communities Plan'.

In February, the Government added Stevenage to its list of growth areas enlarging the growth potential in the London-Stanstead-Cambridge regions. The £5 million grant will enable Stevenage to develop and reach its growth potential by revitalising areas in the town creating new affordable homes and contributing to the overall development of a thriving and prosperous community.

The Borough Council in conjunction with partners such as English Partnerships and a registered social landlord would hope to provide a total of ninety-five homes on the Manulife and adjacent site. There will be a mix of homes including affordable and key worker housing.

£2.33 million will go towards the redevelopment of the Ridgemond Park former school buildings. This will relocate the current training centre elsewhere in Stevenage and create improved facilities. Ninety new homes will be built on the site, thirty-five of which will be affordable. The Ridgemond Park's former playing fields will remain as open space.

Working in partnership with the Hightown Praetorian Housing Association, the Borough Council will use £800,000 to develop a small neighbourhood centre at Austen Paths in the Chells area. The scheme will redevelop its vacant commercial and housing properties and provide twenty-four new affordable homes for people in Stevenage.

Executive Councillor for Environment, John Gardner said: "We are delighted that we have been successful in our bid for £5 million towards infrastructure improvements and new housing and in particular affordable homes."
"This grant will improve several areas which are in need of regeneration and improve specific valued facilities in the town."

"Stevenage is in desperate need of affordable housing and the three areas planned for development will help alleviate some of the towns shortage problems. However, to meet Stevenage's growing housing needs of both affordable and private housing requires the early commencement of the planned urban extension to the West of Stevenage."

The Regeneration Minister, Lord Rooker, visited Stevenage later in April to see where the funding will be spent. He was given a guided tour of the projects, accompanied by MP Barbara Follett and the Council's Chief Executive Ian Paske. He also received a presentation from Director of Environmental Services, Nick Parry on other ways in which the government could assist growth in Stevenage, including the widening of the A1(M) and support for the Council's case for further sustainable growth of the town to provide new homes catering for the needs of the region and the local area.

For further information contact Adrian Knight, Project manager, Strategic Development on 01438 242284 or **Adrian.knight@stevenage.gov.uk**

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It's Official Stevenage is a Good Council

Back in January, a team of Comprehensive Performance Assessment, (CPA) inspectors visited Stevenage to consider how well the Council is performing. Five months later and they have concluded that Stevenage is a 'good' Council with a great deal to be proud of.

CPA is part of the Government's agenda to improve services for local people by freeing the better Councils from central Government controls and restrictions and providing those Councils who do less well in the assessment with more help and support. Each Council has been awarded a rating: - poor, weak, fair, good, and excellent.

The Borough Council's 'good' rating from the CPA inspection confirms that its staff and elected Members are doing a great deal of good work for the local community. It also shows that the Council is moving in the right direction to improve services for the residents of Stevenage.

The report highlights many 'good' points about the Council and provides valuable advice on areas for improvement.

The inspectors said that the Council has able and committed members and officers and the capacity to improve services. It understands the needs of local people, provides a range of good quality services and acts to sort out problems within services. They also said that the Borough Council is a strong community leader that is ambitious for the town and works effectively with partners on social, economic and environmental initiatives.

Stevenage's local authority was also described as having good financial management and strong achievements in the areas of regeneration, neighbourhood renewal, community safety and services to the homeless and to young people.

The Council is very pleased with the inspector's report. It highlights the Council's many good points and provides helpful advice on how to improve further. These suggested areas for improvement include embedding a performance management culture and making further progress in some service areas such as housing. In addition, the Council will need to make a concerted effort in continuing to develop its equalities and diversity programme.

For further information contact the Corporate Policy Unit on 01438 242388 or email policy.unit@stevenage.gov.uk

Business Advice in Local Community Centres

(left to right) Philip Gould, Senior Business Advisor, Val Taylor, Business Advisor, with Doug King, Chief Executive

For those with the ambition of starting their own business or becoming self-employed, free and confidential business advice is now available at selected local community centres.

Stevenage Business Initiative (SBI) now provides free business advice at Bedwell Community Centre on Wednesday mornings. For the last year, SBI has been providing a similar business advice service at the Hyde Out Community Resource Centre and new businesses have been started and supported. SBI will now continue at the Hyde Out on Tuesday mornings.

Outreach business advice to the community is popular and is attracting significant usage by local residents. SBI provides free and confidential business advice on all matters relating to your new enterprise.

Your questions can be discussed in private with an experienced advisor. Up to an hour can be made available to answer any points relating to business including marketing, sales, accounts, tax, employing staff, property, legal matters.

SBI are also providing advice to potential new businesses and those considering self employment at the Jobcentres in Stevenage and Hitchin on Tuesday and Thursday respectively.

SBI is currently celebrating its 21st Anniversary year. Started 21 years ago as a result of Stevenage Borough Councils determination to encourage local enterprise, SBI has a record of achievement second to none.

More than 1,800 businesses have been successfully launched with SBI's assistance and nearly 15,000 advisory sessions have been conducted.

In consequence of their practical advice, SBI continues to contribute to the development of small businesses and the creation of many local job opportunities.

So drop in for a chat!

For further details contact Stevenage Business Initiative tel: 01438 315733 www.sbi-herts.co.uk

Gunnels Wood Initiative – stakeholder bulletin

Following the successful launch event that was held on 16th October 2003 at Fujitsu Services' site in the Gunnels Wood industrial area, the Council proposed that all stakeholders with an interest in the project be kept up-to-date with the progress of the Initiative through a regular bulletin. This is the first one.

Significant progress has been made on getting the initiative off the ground with the initiation of a number of projects that will bring about improvements to the area. Key actions taken so far have included:

- The setting up of a partnership (the Gunnels Wood Initiative Working Group) between stakeholders to co-ordinate the Initiative – membership currently consists of representatives from MBDA, Intrinsica Technology, Vincent & Gorbing, Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Hertfordshire Business Incubation Centre, English Partnerships and Stevenage Borough Council;
- The formation of three focus groups of stakeholders to concentrate on addressing issues relating to transport, environment and image and identity;
- The preparation of a draft 10-year strategy for the future of the area; and
- Consultation with stakeholders on changing the name of the area to help create a more modern and relevant image.

Over the coming months the draft 10-year strategy for the area will be published for consultation with all stakeholders. The strategy will set out the proposals and actions for addressing the issues and problems identified at the launch event and through other consultations as well as setting out a vision for the area's future. Other short-term projects that are planned include:

- New signage, particularly at the main gateways (after a decision has been made on the area's new name);
- Commencement of a free business waste materials recycling service initiated by Employers for the Environment (E4E);
- A seminar to inform businesses within Gunnels Wood about Business Improvement Districts (BIDs);
- Research to identify baseline employment, transport and environmental information about the Gunnels Wood area to help justify the delivery of longer term improvements e.g. an accurate profile of the number and characteristics of businesses in the area, an appraisal of the area's natural environment and information about workers' travel patterns; and
- The establishment of a website to host information about the industrial area and its businesses.

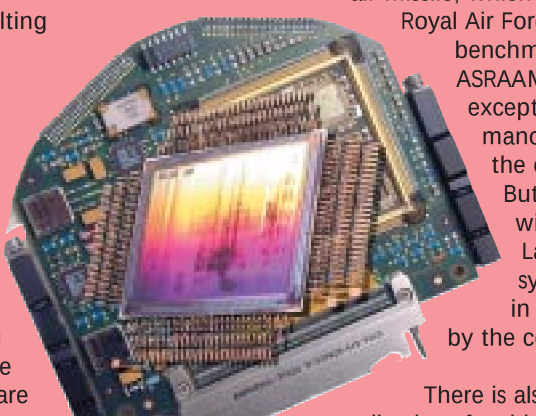
For more information on the Gunnels Wood Initiative, please contact Lauren Strange on 01438 242495 or e-mail lauren.strange@stevenage.gov.uk.

Six Hills Underpass: Before and after scenarios, showing potential impact of additional planting.

MBDA WINS QUEEN'S AWARD FOR ENTERPRISE 2004

A revolutionary development in computing technology has been recognised in the recent announcement of the Queen's Awards for Enterprise 2004. As a result this year's Award, in the Innovation category, has been conferred on MBDA, a world leading Stevenage-based missile systems company, for its development and industrial application of the "Butler Chip".

The highly prestigious Queen's Awards for Enterprise are presented each year to a select few, in recognition of commercial success resulting from outstanding innovative achievements by businesses in the UK.



The Butler Chip, developed at MBDA's Stevenage Research and Development facility for integration in some of the world's most advanced guided weapon systems, provides a function within an ASIC (Application Specific Integrated Circuit) or silicon chip. Typical computers rely on an operating system to enable the software/hardware interface. However, operating systems are slow, use up computing power and introduce unwanted complexity with software having to queue multiple inputs to be dealt with one at a time. The unique and groundbreaking Butler Chip provides hardware support to replace a conventional computer software operating system. The main advantages provided by the Butler Chip are a more efficient and predictable software implementation for systems dependent on real time processing, the reduction of power consumption and aiding the proving of safety critical functions during system development.

Commenting on MBDA's success, Steve Wadey, Managing Director of MBDA UK, said: "Winning the Queen's Award is a great honour for MBDA and its highly skilled and dedicated workforce. It is also a recognition of the environment of technological creativity and innovation that has been fostered and firmly established within the company".

The Butler Chip is used within MBDA's new ASRAAM air-to-air missile, which since entering service with the Royal Air Force in 2002 has set the international benchmark for air combat weapons. ASRAAM's unmatched features, including exceptional speed, accuracy and rapid manoeuvrability, combine to make it the out and out leader in its class. The Butler Chip has also been integrated within the Royal Navy's Vertical Launch Seawolf naval air-defence system and will be a key technology in future guided weapons developed by the company.

There is also a wide range of potential applications for this kind of technology in non-defence related industry where real-time safety related mechanisms are called for. MBDA has already demonstrated the technology within the nose wheel steering system of a commercial airliner. The Butler Chip could also provide the answer to the inherent dangers posed by the movement of heavy autonomous robots within a modern factory environment.

SEARCH FOR GRANTS AND FUNDING ONLINE ON STEVENAGE COUNCILS WEBSITE

Organisations in Stevenage can now search online for potential sources of funding via Grantnet, a new free to use search facility on Stevenage Councils website www.stevenage.gov.uk

Grantnet is a user-friendly service which has been devised to empower organisations by assisting them to identify the funding sources available for specific projects. All users need to do is answer a few simple questions about their organisation and the project which they wish to undertake; Grantnet will then provide an overview of all the schemes available.

If users require more detailed information they can contact John Pye who will provide an in depth search for them, with detailed information on the appropriate schemes, in many cases including the grant application forms. This is a free service for single enquiries.

To start using the free service visit www.stevenage.gov.uk and follow the link to Grantnet.

For further information contact:

John Pye, External Funding Officer
Tel: 01438 242822 email john.pye@stevenage.gov.uk

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