JOBS FAIR RETURNS

Businesses recruiting on the day

18 March

Industries include engineering, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, IT, business, professional and many more

SKILLS FESTIVAL

Partnership for Careers

19 March

Youth unemployment down by over 50%

Offering hands on experiences and careers advice from 40 major employers in the area

For more information and to pre-register visit: www.telfordjobbox.co.uk

BOYZONE

SATURDAY JUNE 27 2015
TOWN PARK ARENA
TELFORD

Tickets: www.theplacetelford.com
TLC early bird offer: £10 off all tickets
By arrangement with Solo
www.boyzonenetwork.com

MoD Donnington: Council’s bid success see page 2
Recycling rates go up

The new recycling service in Telford and Wrekin, managed by Veolia, has now been in operation for ten months.

Residents across the borough are now adding 100 tonnes of plastic bottles a month to their purple topped bins. That equates to two million plastic bottles which would have gone to landfill.

Residents in the Telford and Wrekin area have also been issued with a recycling collection day calendar which gives information of when their bins should be put out.

Compared to the same six month period last year, an additional 1,700 tonnes has been sent for recycling – saving the Council more than £150,000 in landfill costs.

The new purple top bins have, in the first six months, seen household recycling rates increase almost 14% - the biggest increase for many years, saving thousands in landfill tax costs.

Increase in household recycling rates

14%
Leader’s view: We’ve achieved a lot

This is the last Your Voice before elections of this Council so I want to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and reflect on the past four years and some of what we have together achieved to show how Telford and Wrekin is on the up.

Firstly, there’s the wonderful news that the Ministry of Defence has chosen Donnington as the location of its Defence Fulfilment Centre, as it seeks to centralise and streamline its logistics operation.

This is massive news for Telford and was a Council led initiative so I would like to say a big well done to all the staff who worked so hard to make this a reality.

On a similar theme, I am delighted to say that economic growth here has outstripped that of the West Midlands and England over the past three years by almost 50%.

We made it our priority to tackle the unacceptably high rate of youth unemployment here. We launched the Job Box, bringing together employment and skills services to ensure that anyone needing support in their job search gets the help they need.

In 12 months, the youth unemployment figure in Telford and Wrekin has reduced by more than half – a remarkable achievement.

Regeneration continues across the borough towns and district centres and details of the various projects can be found on page 8 and 9.

The Southwater development has proved a huge success from the start. It has created a new night-time economy, making it a destination that attracts visitors. We also have a refurbished ice rink, made many improvements to the town park and have created much needed new jobs.

Telford Shopping Centre is committing to invest £200m and create another 2,000 new jobs. Works to make the Box Road safer will finish very soon, transforming the town centre.

We are investing £13.8m this year and next in the borough in our Pride In Your Community (see page 14).

We’ve opened three new libraries in the last three years. Our leisure centres are offering quality facilities, with free swimming for under 16s and from next month will offer free swimming for over 50s.

We’re rebuilding or refurbishing all of our secondary schools through the £200m Building Schools for the Future project. We’ve already opened new schools at Abraham Darby, Phoenix, and Ercall Wood, with more opening this year and next.

Our Telford Loyalty Card has been a huge success. More than 68,000 people have a registered card.

We’ve launched a new kerbside recycling scheme (see opposite page). All of this has been achieved despite cuts in our budget of £70m since 2010 and losing over 1,200 posts.

We recognise the financial pressures people face and will be freezing Council Tax until 2017.

We also remain committed to fighting to retain full 24 hour accident and emergency services at Telford’s Princess Royal Hospital.

Your Voice survey

Your Voice is for local residents to help keep you informed and in touch with what your council is doing for you.

It’s very important that we hear your views. Tell us what you think of Your Voice. Your feedback will help us to further improve the publication.

Every response will be entered into a prize draw to win family skating passes (two adults and four junior) for Telford Ice Rink.

Please send us the form below or even better send us your views online www.telford.gov.uk/yourvoicesurvey

Please circle your answers

How do you rate Your Voice for:

Overall look?
Good Average Poor
Variety of articles?
Good Average Poor
Quality of articles?
Good Average Poor
Ease of reading?
Agree Neither Disagree

How satisfied are you that Your Voice covers:

Local event and activities?
Satisfied Average Unsatisfied
Council services and benefits?
Satisfied Average Unsatisfied
How we spend your money?
Satisfied Average Unsatisfied
How to access and contact service?
Satisfied Average Unsatisfied

Overall how would you rate Your Voice?
Good OK Poor

Name ..........................................................
Postcode ......................................................
Email ........................................................
or phone number ........................................
Age group: 0-18 18-25 26-39 40-64 65+
Closing date April 5 2015
For terms and conditions visit www.telford.gov.uk/yourvoice

Send this form (no stamp needed) to Freepost RTKJ-KGJA-ASXU
Your Voice survey, Telford & Wrekin Council, Darby House, Telford TF3 4JA
Free Jobs Fair and Skills Festival - 18/19 March

Telford and Wrekin’s Partnership for Jobs fair returns on Wednesday 18 March at The International Centre followed on the next day by Partnership for Careers’ Skills Festival.

The first Partnership for Jobs Fair, held last year, attracted around 4,000 job seekers and over 100 businesses.

The event will highlight opportunities and support services for local people looking for employment and apprenticeships, as well as assisting local employers who are looking to recruit.

In addition to the jobs fair on 18 March, this year there will also be an employer led Partnership for Careers event the following day, on Thursday 19 March, for young people to find out more about career paths.

There will be a range of interactive activities for those attending the Partnership for Careers’ Skills Festival on 19 March to try out to give a flavour of the various careers on offer.

It will be attended by local and national employers from a range of skill sectors including engineering, retail, hospitality, manufacturing, IT, business, professional and many more.

The skills festival is a great opportunity for students from local schools and colleges to find out about future career options, routes into employment and talk to people who are already in the jobs.

Last year the Council launched the Job Box, which pulls together a range of education, training and employment support.

The Council has invested £1.3m in a two year programme which is working to reducing high youth unemployment levels in the borough. As a result of the measures taken by the Council, youth unemployment in Telford and Wrekin has fallen by over 50 per cent in the last year.

The two events will highlight opportunities and support services for local people looking for employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities.

The Partnership for Jobs Fair is open 11am – 7pm on Wednesday 18 March 2015 at The International Centre, Telford. The Partnership for Careers’ Skills Festival is open 10am – 7pm on Thursday 19 March also at the TIC.

More information on both events and details on how to pre-register to beat the queues (and be in with a chance of winning a prize!) are here: www.telfordjobbox.co.uk For the latest news from The Job Box, make sure to like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

/TelfordJobBox  @telfordjobbox
Are you registered to vote?

Elections are being held on Thursday 7 May 2015

- Parliamentary elections are being held for the Telford and Wrekin constituencies
- All 30 borough council wards and 54 seats will be up for election
- All 27 parish councils and 289 seats will be up for election
- Your polling card will arrive early in April, telling you where you need to go to cast your vote. If you are registered as a postal voter your card will explain this
- Ward boundaries have been reviewed and, as a result, some changes have been made to the electoral boundaries within the borough.
- Check your polling card when it arrives as it will tell you where you need to go to cast your vote. Your polling station may have changed.
- There are 27 parish councils in the borough. A number of changes have been made to parish wards. Check your polling card for details of the elections taking place in your area.

How can I register to vote?

The way we register to vote changed last summer, everyone now needs to register individually rather than by household.

To register go to www.gov.uk/registertovote. You will need to provide your Date of Birth and National Insurance Number. If you have recently moved address or changed your name you will need to re-register with your new details.

Why register?

It's your opportunity to decide who runs the country and who runs the Borough and Parish councils. Have your say on National, Borough and Parish issues.

You may find it difficult to obtain a mortgage, customer account or credit contract if you are not registered to vote as it can affect your credit score.

When should I register?

You need to be registered by Monday 20 April. If you are not on the register by this date you will not be able to vote in these elections. We recommend you register as soon as possible.

If you require a postal vote or a proxy vote (appointing someone to vote on your behalf), you should go to www.aboutmyvote.co.uk/how-do-i-vote to print off the form and post to us, or call 01952 383206.

The deadline for applying for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 21 April and the deadline for applying for a proxy vote is 5pm on Tuesday 28 April.

Residents who choose to vote by post will receive their ballot paper from Tuesday 21 April.

### Borough Wards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Seats</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admaston &amp; Bratton</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apley Castle</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arleston</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brookside</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Aston &amp; Lilleshall</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawley &amp; Aqueduct</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donnington</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dothill</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edgmond &amp; Ercall Magna</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ercall</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadley &amp; Leegomery</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haygate</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsehay &amp; Lightmoor</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ironbridge Gorge</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ketley &amp; Overdale</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeley &amp; Sutton Hill</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malinslee &amp; Dawley Bank</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muxton</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newport North &amp; West</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newport South &amp; East</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakengates &amp; Ketley Bank</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorslee</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawbirch</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Georges</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Nedge</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodside</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrockwardine</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrockwardine Wood &amp; Trench</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>54</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Care Act

From next month if you receive care or are a carer, there are a number of changes in care and support that you might benefit from.

The new Care Act, which comes into force in April, will help to make care and support more consistent across the country.

‘Care and support’ is the help some adults need to live as well as possible with any illness or disability they may have.

Care and support can include help with things like washing, dressing, eating, getting out and about and keeping in touch with friends or family.

Whether a person is receiving support at home or living in a care home, the Care Act is designed to put the individual in control and make it easier to make plans for care and support now, and in the future.

For more information about the Care Act, including an online form for people to give their views, is at @ www.telford.gov.uk/careact

A range of voluntary and social care advocacy groups are also helping to spread the word about the Care Act in the borough to people and carers who use their services.

Stabilising Jackfield

Telford & Wrekin Council is continuing with its work to stabilise land in Jackfield to manage land instability in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site.

The project has a budget of £17.6m with a contribution from the Council of £5.6m. The work is well under way and approximately 75% of the 2,000 piles needed to stabilise the hillside have been installed.

This has allowed the contractor to move the temporary road crossing the site on to a stabilised area.

This road continues to link the community of Jackfield and gives access to two pubs and a craft centre, in addition to a number of residential properties.

The piling work will allow a new road to be built which will run between the end of Jackfield Tile Museum to near Maws Craft Centre. This will replace the existing road.

It was necessary to fell trees across the site before the works could start. Once the works are complete and the road has been constructed, the site will be fully landscaped.

This will include footpaths, a picnic and viewing area and an extension to the Severn Valley Way as well as the planting of hundreds of trees and shrubs.

Local businesses are continuing to trade as the work progresses and a temporary road has been put in place to enable access.

The complex project is being delivered in Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire and on land in many different ownerships.

In order to ensure information is shared regularly the Council has formed a stakeholder group which meets monthly.

This group includes representatives from residents, Ironbridge Gorge Parish Council, Broseley Town Council, Shropshire Council, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Severn Gorge Countryside trust, local businesses, land owners and Telford & Wrekin Council’s project delivery and planning teams.

This is supplemented with a monthly newsletter delivered to each address in the area and with regular updates on @ www.telford.gov.uk/jackfieldstabilisationproject

While land instability remains an issue throughout the Gorge and residents are regularly kept informed, this work in Jackfield addresses the area where the risk is highest.
COUNCIL TAX FREEZE until 2017!

The Council budget for next year will freeze council tax, already one of the lowest in the region.

As well as freezing council tax until 2017, there’s also a number of new investments and one-off initiatives including:

- **£1m FUND** to boost high streets and district centres
- **£1m** swimming for residents over 50 at council pools
- **£650k EXTRA** to support regeneration in St Georges inc. Gower Street Youth Centre
- **£250k** to support events to attract more visitors
- **£270k** Offer an alternative to pay day loans and support the food bank
- **ALMOST £4m** to help roll out superfast broadband
- **£750k EXTRA** to boost the Pride in Your Community programme
- **£3.25m EXTRA** to protect Adult Social Care and Children’s Safeguarding

In addition to the above we will also be:

- Continuing the work of Parish Environmental Action Teams until 2017
- Continuing support for Telford Crisis Network’s foodbank

You can make a big difference What could you do?

Six simple steps you can take to save or make nearly £4m a year to help protect key services.

**RECYCLING**

If each home recycled just 1kg more of any recycled material (equivalent to two empty glass wine bottles or ten newspapers) and 1kg more of green waste per collection, saving

- **£210k**

**OLDER PEOPLE**

Help older people stay independent and live in their homes for as long as possible. Helping 100 people this way would save

- **£1.3m**

**FLYTIPPING**

Report flytips using the website or Everyday Telford app to help us prosecute the culprits. Halving the number of flytip or litter incidents would save

- **£175k**

**THEATRE**

See just one of the great variety of shows on offer at Oakengates Theatre. If every show at the theatre sold four of every five seats, this would bring in

- **£315k**

**EVERYDAY TELFORD**

A contact in person can cost around £8.62, a phone call £2.83. Contact via the website or app costs just 15p - this would save

- **£580k**

**LEISURE**

If everyone in the borough used a recently refurbished council leisure facility and/or Telford Ice Rink, once more a year, it would bring in an extra

- **£1.2m**

www.telford.gov.uk/budget

#TFbudget
Brookside: Community Centre set to open
The new Brookside Community Centre – part of the broader £6m regeneration of the estate – is just weeks from completion.

The regeneration will significantly improve the area with a new car park already completed and work on construction of 18 new bungalows already under way.

The community centre is due to be completed on 30 March although works on the external landscaping will continue for a couple more weeks in April.

In addition to the regeneration works, landscaping improvements have also been made in nearby streets and public car parking.

Hollinswood: Major regeneration
Hollinswood’s £2.5m regeneration scheme has seen the demolition of the Woodcutter pub.

Existing shops and flats will be demolished and new shops built and it is expected this work will begin at the end of March.

Work will also start on the construction of a new Activity Hub for adults with learning difficulties.

The new Activity Hub for adults with learning difficulties will combine some of the services currently offered at other locations such as The Bridges, Halesfield 22, Lakeside and The Severns.

The Community Centre will also receive some minor upgrades and some internal refurbishment works. The contract has now been awarded to Paveaways who will start construction the week commencing 23 March.

There will be further public consultation that week at the Community Centre where people can comment on the materials and finishes to be used for the public realm spaces and elements of the buildings.

St Georges: Funding for Gower Street
Telford & Wrekin Council is to spend £650,000 to support regeneration in St Georges.

This will include refurbishing the former youth centre building on Gower Street.

The former Youth club in Gower Street was saved from demolition last year.

It is expected that work on the site will start later this year.

There will be other investments to support the regeneration of the centre of St Georges.

The Council will be working with stakeholders including Gower Heritage and Enterprise Group, St Georges Partnership Board and the Parish Council.
Wellington: Next stage of regeneration

Plans for the next stage of regeneration of the centre of Wellington were kickstarted when Wellington Town Council commissioned a report which set out a vision for the town’s future.

This led to a formal collaboration with Telford & Wrekin Council to put some of the ideas to improve Wellington’s future prosperity into action.

Since a £14.5m regeneration which included highways improvements was completed in 2013, Telford & Wrekin Council has raised approximately £2.6m through the sale of various property assets in Wellington. As a result, 65 new houses are being delivered and 21,000 sq ft of office space brought back into use.

A Project Board has been set up comprising Town Council representatives and Telford & Wrekin Council officers to look at how to make the vision a reality.

The study identified:
- Demand and support for more quality independent shops in Wellington Centre
- Residential development should be encouraged in the centre of Wellington
- Leisure and hospitality will be an important part of a revived Wellington

Wellington Town Council is providing £25,000 over the next 18 months to support delivery which is being matched by Telford & Wrekin Council in officer time.

Hadley: Second phase completed

The second phase of the £2.3m regeneration of Hadley Centre has now been completed.

The second phase has seen the delivery of a new state of art replacement veterinary practice for Gladstone Veterinary Clinic together with a new Wrekin Housing Trust Shop and an additional retail unit.

Upon completion of the second phase construction, the site has been further transformed with the demolition of the old vets and retail unit which will clear the way for a new housing development.

The public realm has been improved with new paving and access to the bridge crossing over Britannia Way. The transformation of the centre has seen not only improved retail facilities but a significant increase in users to the centre.

Priorslee: Work starts on access to new academy

Works to provide vehicle and pedestrian access to the new Holy Trinity Academy site in Priorslee are under way.

It is part of Telford & Wrekin Council’s £200m Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.

Holy Trinity Academy will include a secondary school and sixth form in an area where no such facilities currently exist. The Academy will incorporate the current Blessed Robert Johnson College.

Construction work began on the new academy site last spring and is progressing well. The facility is on target to open in September this year.

The latest infrastructure works comprise of:
- Improvements to Teece Drive, including new carriageway, new footways, retaining wall along Wesley Brook, new drainage and street lighting.
- Improvements at the junction of Priorslee Avenue and Castle Farm Way.
- New pedestrian crossing on Priorslee Avenue. New footpath link from Priorslee Avenue to the underpass at Teece Drive.

The work is programmed to last for 15 weeks until approximately 18 May. There will be no public access during this period, from the junction with Pitchcroft Drive down to the Boat Club Access.
Full-time

Part-time

Higher Education

Apprenticeships

Under16

A variety of courses available for you to choose from

Call Learner Services on 01952 642237
e-mail: studserv@tcat.ac.uk   website: www.tcat.ac.uk
Coming Soon - University Centre Telford

The University of Wolverhampton is to open a new centre at the new multi-million pound Southwater complex.

University Centre Telford will be based on the top floor of Southwater One and will provide a range of courses, include an advice and information centre for prospective students and a business support function.

The University will be delivering courses with Telford College of Arts and Technology in an exciting new partnership.

The centre further reinforces the University’s presence in the town adding to the Telford Innovation Campus at Priorslee.

Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, Professor Geoff Layer, said: “We’re delighted to be expanding our offering in Telford having been in the town for 20 years this year. Over the last six months or so we’ve been looking at expanding the work we do and services we provide across the region as part of our community approach to enhancing skills, raising employability levels and generating economic growth.

“This has seen us initially open a centre in Stafford and now we are extending a similar approach into Telford. This will complement our campus at Priorslee by offering a central location at the heart of the new Southwater development for the public and students.

“Next year we expect to be able to start offering a range of courses based around foundation courses, work place learning, continuous professional development and education and commercial training.

“As part of this we have worked closely with Telford and Wrekin Council and are excited to be part of Southwater. We have also struck up a new partnership with Telford College and are looking forward to building a strong relationship with them. As a University we want to provide opportunities to an ever widening audience as well as acting as an anchor and driver of economic growth.”

Telford College principal Chris Scott described the partnership with the University of Wolverhampton at Southwater as ‘incredibly exciting’.

“This is a great opportunity which enhances the fact that Telford College caters not just for learners on level two or three courses, but also those aspiring onto higher education. It hammers home the message that we deliver a wider spectrum of higher education courses than ever.”

Councillor Richard Overton, Telford & Wrekin Council’s deputy leader, said: “We are delighted to welcome the University to Southwater and this is the final piece of the jigsaw of Phase One of the development.

“University Centre Telford is a perfect fit for the Southwater development and ties in with the council’s commitment to raise skills and aspirations with the ultimate aim of creating more and better jobs for local people and consequently improving the economy.”

The University will join the new library and the council’s main community contact centre in the building. The new centre is due to open before the end of March.
Residents aged 50 and over will be able to take advantage of free swimming at all of Telford and Wrekin’s pools from April.

Over 50s will need to produce a registered Telford Loyalty Card to be allowed to swim free.

The initiative means that more than half of the borough’s residents will have access to free swimming as under 16s already swim for free.

Research has shown that swimming would be the most popular activity among those who are currently inactive but would like to exercise.

The council already offers reduced price admission for concessionary groups but evidence points to a reduction in sports participation with increasing age.

It is intended to increase the physical activity levels among those aged over 50 and bring about health related benefits.

Good financial management means the council has already made most of the savings it must find by 2016. Free swimming for over 50s will be funded for four years at a cost of £50,000 per year.

Superfast broadband

Telford & Wrekin Council and BDUK are jointly funding a £4m superfast broadband programme for the borough.

Contracts are due to be signed this spring, following which a plan will be drawn up to identify the delivery phases across the borough.

It is expected the work to begin this autumn and to be complete by mid 2017, by which time it is hoped that around 96% of homes and businesses will have the infrastructure in place to access superfast broadband services.

The Council is committed to improving the coverage of broadband for its residents and businesses and this programme is the first big step towards achieving that aim.
A total of 37 schemes across Telford and Wrekin are benefiting from cash from a community projects pot.

The Community Pride Fund is a £1.26m pot of funding being delivered as part of the £13.8m Pride In Your Community programme to support regeneration across the borough. It was launched last year and drew a fantastic response with more than 60 applications borough-wide.

Grants are for capital projects only, such as new builds or improvements to existing buildings or purchasing equipment. The scheme was open to businesses, voluntary sector and public sector organisations.

The £1.26m has been allocated across 37 projects including some which will have a borough wide benefit.

Examples of projects that are being funded in Telford and Wrekin include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improvements to the car park and area outside Longdon upon Tern Village Hall</td>
<td>£24,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Replacement windows for Belmont Community Hall</td>
<td>£5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a new Trench Tots nursery to enable existing facility to relocate</td>
<td>£100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase and installation of a botanical greenhouse at Wombridge Primary School</td>
<td>£60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refurbishing a building to enable the delivery of woodwork skills training at Newport Men’s Shed</td>
<td>£8,464</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Credit union loan scheme

A new scheme instigated by Telford & Wrekin Council will see a local credit union given a six figure grant to run an ethical short term loan scheme for residents.

The aim is to prevent the financially vulnerable in the community falling prey to the extortionate interest rates typically charged by payday and door step lenders.

Charities nationally have reported that increasing numbers of people have had problems with payday loans with a particular growth in the number of people with five or more – such loans carry an APR ranging from 1,300% to 7,000%.

The council has set aside £100,000 to be used as a grant to fund a local credit union to run the loans scheme.

The scheme would mirror some of the benefits of the payday loans concept but at significantly lower charges.

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The scheme would mirror some of the benefits of the payday loans concept but at significantly lower charges.

There are currently limited affordable alternatives to payday and other short term loans, although Telford & Wrekin Council has prevented access to payday loan sites from public access computers.

The council invited bids for the £100,000 funding earlier this year. Just Credit Union Ltd was the successful bidder.

More information can be found on their website @ www.justcreditunion.org or call 01743 252325

Could you volunteer?

Not only will it be positive for someone else or for your community it will also help you to gain new skills, make new friends and make you feel good.

Volunteering can give you the skills and experience to get a job, get a university placement or just help others and make new friends. Whatever the reason there’s sure to be something available to suit you on a new online portal that offers a range of volunteering roles.

Potential volunteers can apply at www.volunteertelford.co.uk

Opportunities on this site range from stewarding at one-off events, being a ‘befriender’ to a young person leaving care or supporting an adult with a learning difficulty to learn new skills in woodwork or craft. For most roles you don’t need to have experience, training will be given and new skills will be learned while you are doing the role.

Currently there are opportunities to volunteer for a number of organisations, including Telford & Wrekin Council, Telford Crisis Network and the Citizen’s Advice Bureau.

More opportunities are becoming available all the time and you can set up an email alert which lets you know when more roles become available.

Volunteering does not have to be time consuming and you could really help make a difference to someone else’s life.
**Dog Fouling**

Are you picking up after your pooch? Know someone who doesn't? We've brought in extra eyes to make sure you stop and think before you walk away!

Police Community Support Officers carry out extra patrols in areas where there are reports of dog fouling. These coupled with campaign posters already show signs of working as reports of dog fouling have gone down in targeted areas.

There are also thousands of free poop scoop bags to be given away. Head to your local library, leisure centre or First Point or find out where you can collect yours at www.telford.gov.uk/dogbags

**Litter Bins**

The Council spends over a £1m a year on picking up litter, so it is important we do what we can to prevent it in the first place.

Residents have been given the opportunity to report litter bins which need emptying more frequently and suggest sites for new bins.

This helps make areas much tidier and nicer to be around and helps save thousands in litter picking. The borough's 3,000 litter bins can also be used to drop off poop scoop.

**Cleaner and Greener**

As we step into spring, the borough’s nine Parish Environmental Teams in partnership with the Parishes will carry on with their programme on tidying local areas and carrying local environmental improvements.

In addition, since April 2014, the Council has provided six further dedicated estate teams. These help to keep our larger housing estates litter free and also undertake local improvement works including footpath clearing and sweeping, minor shrub and tree works and additional bin emptying.

In areas where there are untidy pieces of land, there is a team which solves issues and sort out overgrowing trees, broken fences or neglected open spaces.

If your garden needs brightening up this spring then from 23 March you can pop along to your First Point, library or leisure centre to collect your seeds or alternatively download the Everyday Telford app to request them (seeds are subject to availability).

**Street Champions**

Street Champions act as the eyes and ears for the council, looking out for litter, dog fouling, street light problems and more. As well as reporting issues, they also get given their own tools to help keep litter off the streets and be responsible for their local area.

The Junior Street Champions Accreditation Scheme was launched last month and gives schools the chance to make a difference. In partnership with Veolia, the scheme is open to schools and will be teaching children social responsibility for their local environment.

The schools carry out three different workshops; one being Telford and Wrekin’s Your Streets and the other two can be decided by the school themselves covering recycling, compost, food waste and more.

Find out more about the Street Champions at www.telford.gov.uk/streetchampions
Solar farm up and running

Telford and Wrekin’s solar farm has been switched on and is making electricity!

The solar farm at Wheat Leasows is only the second council-owned project of its type in the UK.

IZEN energy systems were awarded the contract to build the borough’s first publicly funded solar farm in September.

IZEN energy systems has a subsidiary in Staffordshire and 27 years of experience in the renewable energy sector.

Construction was completed on the site at the end of last year (2014) – on time and on budget. In fact, it’s taken less than 18 months since initial plans were proposed for the solar farm.

The solar farm forms a part of the Council’s wider energy strategy to aid a reduction in its carbon footprint which includes improving energy efficiency in Council buildings.

The money generated from the solar farm will help to secure funding for future services at a time when the Government grant to council’s is continuing to be cut.

Solar farm facts:
- £150K surplus generated in first year
- 4MW capacity
- 11.7 hectares
- Can supply 800+ homes
- 15,000+ solar panels
- 12 months from initial plan to signing contract
- 12 weeks to construct
- 2nd council-owned solar farm in the country
- 100 tons of CO2 saved
- Bird and bat boxes

Young People’s Forum: a member’s view

I’m Callam, I’m 18 years old and I’ve been going to the Young People’s Forum (YPF) for just over two years.

I’m passionate about politics, technology and the issues that face young people. YPF is a group where young people can come and have their say on a range of issues that affect them.

To me, grammar schools embody everything that state education should be about. They foster aspiration, creativity, wit, and a work ethic that is lifelong.

They allow the smartest students from the poorest backgrounds to compete for a place in the world and its best universities and industries with not only each other, but also those who are privileged enough to have attended private school.

By selecting the brightest students at the age of 11, and allowing them to learn in an environment that is supportive of education and self-improvement, we give everyone the chance to make the very best of their lives.

Some people will say that we should abolish both private schools and grammar schools. But where is the good in that? We should be pulling those at the bottom of the ladder up it, not kicking those at the top down.

In my opinion, if we want children of all backgrounds to have the best chance to realise their potential, we must defend these institutions of excellence. They equip their students with a strong thirst for knowledge and a desire to further explore every spark of creative thought they have.

The YPF meets fortnightly on a Wednesday in Oakengates from 5-7pm. For more information, contact Sarah at ypf@telford.gov.uk or call 01952 385114.
Entertainment 2015

Oakengates Theatre @ The Place has lined up a wide variety of shows this season. Take a look, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

- Thu 26 Mar: Roy Chubby Brown
- Fri 10 Apr: Shappi Khorsandi
- Sat 11 Apr: Showaddywaddy
- Sat 18 Apr: Nathan Carter
- Fri 24 Apr: Dirty Dusting
- Fri 1 May: Jasper Carrott
- Sat 2 May: Gervase Phinn
- Thu 14 May: Derek Owen
- Sat 16 May: Tree Fu Tom
- Fri 29 May: Sex in Suburbia
- Thu 4 Jun: Milton Jones
- Fri 12 Jun: Toyah Wilcox

Tickets available from:
- www.thefplacetelford.com
- 01952 382382
- Southwater One
- The Box Office

*Offer limited to the first 250 people who sign up.