

FLU KILLS!

Protect yourself, service users and your family by getting vaccinated.

You are eligible for a free flu vaccine if you:

- are over 65
- are pregnant
- are aged 2-8 years*
- are a health and social care worker**
- have a long term health condition
- live in a long stay care home
- are the main carer of an older or disabled person
- live with someone with a weakened immune system

Please contact your GP or visit your local pharmacy to arrange your free flu vaccination.



*Children aged 2-8 years are usually offered the nasal spray vaccination by their GP or in school.
**All health and social care workers should be offered a flu vaccination by their employer.

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk



Keep in touch

Keep up to date with everything that's going on in Blacon by joining the Avenue Services mailing list. All you have to do is visit avenueservices.org/contact and fill in the form.

Website: www.avenueservices.org www.facebook.com/MyBlacon @Avenue_Services



MyBlacon

Autumn 2017



What's inside

- Plan your Christmas fun
- Adventure Playground revamp
- Job Fair success



Welcome to the autumn edition of your new-look MyBlacon



Christmas is on the horizon and there are plenty of exciting events taking place in Blacon over the next few weeks to keep the whole family entertained.

Kicking the festive fun off is the popular Christmas Fair on 18 November, after which we have the traditional lights switch-on taking place on Thursday 7 December and featuring a performance from Theatre in the Quarter.

It is a busy time of year for everyone but it would be great to see you if you are able to come along.

You can find out more about these events as well as everything else happening between now and Christmas, and into 2018, on page 7.

As we come to the end of 2017, it is timely to look

back on a successful 12 months for Avenue Services.

This past year has seen us invest heavily in facilities throughout Blacon, including the Adventure Playground and four separate play areas (more of which on pages 4 and 5) as well as the installation of a new pump track.

As ever, the annual Blacon Festival was superbly supported by thousands of families and this summer the weather was kind to us!

Hot on the heels of that was the Blacon Awards, which was another opportunity to recognise the talented and dedicated people we have within our community.

I am looking forward to more good news stories in 2018 so may I wish both

you and your families a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Paul Knight

Paul Knight – Head of Avenue Services

What is Avenue Services?

Avenue Services is a joint venture between Sanctuary Group, a not-for-profit housing and care provider, and Cheshire West and Chester Council. Set up in 2012 and based at the Parade Enterprise Centre, it provides services such as grass cutting, caretaking and cleaning, housing management, youth services, neighbourhood planning and management of Blacon Adventure Playground. Any surplus generated by Avenue Services is reinvested in Blacon for the benefit of the local community.

THANKS TO OUR COVER STARS: Ellie Pennington and Kate Brinklow from the Mini Makery (more on page 9).

Job Fair success

For the third year running, Avenue Services hosted a successful job fair at the Parade Enterprise Centre in Blacon.

Around 20 employers attended the event to showcase vacancies and talk to people about employment opportunities.

In the past this has proved to be a successful route into work for a number of people with Asda, Debenhams and Morrisons among those on hand this year to discuss potential careers.

Residents were also able to get income and debt advice from specialist advisers.

Paul Knight, Head of Avenue Services, said: "This was an excellent chance for people to find out about local employment opportunities to hopefully boost their career prospects."



SEARCH: Patrick Hignett learns more about job opportunities



INTEREST: Jade Chesworth from Debenhams speaks to Adam Picken.



FOCUS: Helen Hallmark and Pauleen Hand from Asda promote careers with the supermarket.

New-look Adventure Playground taking shape

Over the past few months, work has been carried out modernising facilities at Blacon Adventure Playground.

The main building at the Kipling Road site has been completely refurbished as well as the office, kitchen and toilets, with a group of volunteers giving their time in September to break the back of the project.

There is still some work to be done but it won't be long before everything is complete.

Activities are continuing as normal and staff are looking forward to offering even more in the future for children and their families to enjoy all year round.

It is the final stage of the playground's redevelopment following installation of new outdoor play equipment and structures.

Playground manager Sandra Hewitt said: "A lot of work has gone into giving the main building a much-needed makeover and we are really excited about how the refurbishment is going."



FRESH LOOK: Gary Miller and Glen Murphy in the new office



ON TRACK: The main activities room at the Adventure Playground is nearly complete.

Play areas to get makeover

Four play areas across Blacon are to benefit from an exciting new programme of improvements to make sure facilities are maintained for everyone to enjoy.

Avenue Services, in conjunction with Cheshire West and Chester Council, is installing new play equipment for younger and older children, carrying out landscaping, erecting fencing, laying new paths and refurbishing football pitches.

Work at King George V Playing Fields and Meynell Place started last month and is scheduled to start at Canterbury Road and Graham Road in the near future.

Public consultations were held for all four sites and the feedback, which was extremely positive, has been incorporated into the development plans.

This included speaking to pupils from local school near to Canterbury Road to see what they would like included at the site.

These works have been made possible because of money set aside by Cheshire West and Chester Council under a section 106 agreement - funds contributed by various developers in the area as part of planning agreements.

Funds have been specifically allocated for the improvement of play areas in Blacon and cannot be used for any other purpose.



TAKING SHAPE: Work is underway at Meynell Place playground.

Meet our new play workers

We are delighted to welcome Cerys Toms and Alan Deurden to the staff at the Adventure Playground. Here they are pictured with one of our rabbits from the urban farm.

Our urban farm has a variety of animals for you to meet, including sheep, goats and donkeys.

Have fun with computer coding

An exciting new computer programming facility is getting ready to open at Blacon Library.

The new Makerspace, which aims to inspire people of all ages to 'create, invent and learn' launches at the library, at the Parade Enterprise Centre, this month.

It features a suite of eight Raspberry Pi computers, which are small devices designed to teach basic computer science.

Users will be able to try their hand at writing in computer languages such as Python and create hacks for popular video game Minecraft, which will already be loaded on to each Raspberry Pi.

They will also be able to programme their own computer games and code their own music.

Anyone interested can call the library on 01244 976030.



DATES FOR THE DIARY

18 NOVEMBER – Christmas Fair at the Parade Enterprise Centre, 1.30pm to 4pm.

There will be crafts, carols and toys as well as a performance by Theatre in the Quarter's Rewind youth group. Refreshments are being provided by the Blacon Butterflies WI.

7 DECEMBER – Christmas lights switch-on at the Parade, 5pm

20 DECEMBER – Hospice of the Good Shepherd coffee morning and mince pies, Parade Enterprise Centre, 10am to noon. Includes a performance by Theatre in the Quarter's Rewind youth group

21 DECEMBER – Pantomime performance of Snow White and the Seven Dwarves, Blacon Adventure Playground



Blacon Library

Craft lovers will be able to get creative at a number of workshops at Blacon Library in the lead-up to Christmas.

There will be opportunity for you to make your own Christmas wreath and also upcycle one of the library's old, well-loved books into a beautiful festive ornament.

Wreath making costs £5 and the book crafts £1 with sessions, which include refreshments, suitable for beginners upwards.

For more details on dates and times, please visit the Blacon Library website or call **01244 976030**.



Drink Less, Enjoy More

Cheshire West and Chester Council are supporting an initiative to reduce drunkenness in the area.

The 'Drink Less Enjoy More' campaign is encouraging 18 to 30-year-olds to cut back on how much they drink at home before going out – so-called 'pre-loading' – as well as how much they consume when visiting bars, pubs and clubs.

Buying alcohol for a friend who is clearly drunk or serving someone alcohol who is drunk could lead to a fine of up to £1,000. Bars can also lose their licence if they serve someone who is clearly drunk.

The council is raising awareness of these laws and encouraging people to drink sensibly and enjoy a safe night out.

Drunkenness can also have immediate health consequences such as alcohol poisoning and can contribute to sexual violence, accidents and violent crimes. It places a large burden on health, police and other public services.

The message is:

“Drink sensibly, enjoy your night out and stay safe.”

For more information, visit www.drinklessenjoymore.co.uk, find the campaign on Facebook, follow @drinkless_enjoy on Twitter or use #DrinkLessEnjoyMore



Inspiring children to keep healthy

Getting children to eat healthily can be a challenge for even the most patient of parents.

But two local businesswomen have found the perfect solution to transforming children's relationships with nourishing foods through play and creativity. Ellie Pennington and Kate Brinklow (pictured below) run the Mini Makery, where they inspire schoolchildren to become more adventurous eaters through creative food workshops.

They create healthy food art with children by making edible scenes and magical drinkable potions. Working in partnership with Avenue Services, they are now bringing their exciting workshops to Blacon.

Born from a shared passion of art and crafts, health foods, and first-hand experience of fussy eaters, Ellie and Kate's ideas aim to encourage healthy habits from a young age.

They said: “We really see the importance of playing with your food. Our workshops engage children in a fun way, which not only sparks their imaginations and creativity, but they are fantastic for their health too.

“Obesity, diabetes, poor dental health and low body confidence are real issues for the children of today. Attitudes towards food play a crucial role in fixing these issues and impacting health problems in the future.”

School workshops have been met with enthusiasm from both pupils and teachers with more children requesting a wider variety of fruits and vegetables at break and lunch times.

Ellie and Kate have also taken their idea around the country, hosting alternative birthday parties and entertaining children at events.

For details on where workshops are taking place, please contact Chris Leicester on **01244 305455**.



Ever thought about becoming a foster carer?

Cheshire West and Chester Council is urgently seeking more foster carers in the West Cheshire area.

With 480 children in need of fostering and only 170 approved foster carers, it's so important to recruit more carers so that children can stay close to their home area. If you're over 21, fit and able to care for children, and have a spare room, then you could foster.

You don't need to own your own home and your sexual orientation, job or being single does not rule you out of becoming a foster carer. What matters is the care and support you can offer a young person or child.

The children in the council's care come from a variety of backgrounds and have different needs but each one requires stability and a safe place to call home.

They need to recruit foster carers from a variety of backgrounds with different life experiences, skills and qualities.

All of the council's carers and their families are offered training, ongoing support and a competitive financial package with fees plus allowances of up to £422 per week per foster child.

Every child deserves the best start in life, so why not take the first step on your fostering journey by completing the online enquiry form at fosteringwestcheshire.co.uk or by calling on **01244 972222**.

If you'd prefer to speak to someone face to face, then come along to the council's next drop-in information event at Ellesmere Port Library on Thursday 7 December from 4pm to 6pm.



STAY WELL THIS WINTER

If you are not eligible for the free flu vaccination, there are many pharmacies now offering a private vaccination service for a small fee.



Pregnant Women

All pregnant women should have the free, seasonal flu vaccine to protect themselves and their baby. It also helps provide immunity to their baby in his or her first few months.

Children aged 2-8 years

Children in this age group are also eligible for the free flu vaccination (usually in the form of a nasal spray). Children of school age will have the opportunity to get the vaccination at school.

Free flu vaccinations are available to many groups of people every year and having one plays an important role in helping you to stay well this winter.

By getting the flu vaccine, you not only reduce the risk of getting flu yourself, you'll help to protect your family and friends and help reduce the pressure on GP and health services.

The adult flu vaccine is offered free to all people in groups at particular risk of infection and complications from flu.

This includes those who:

- are aged 65 or over
- are pregnant
- have a long-term health condition
- live in a long-stay care home
- are the main carer of an older or disabled person
- live with someone who has a weakened immune system

Please contact your local GP or pharmacy to arrange a flu vaccination.

www.nhs.uk/staywell

The NHS 'Stay Well This Winter' campaign urges the public to:

- Make sure you get your flu jab if eligible.
- Keep yourself warm - heat your home to at least 18 degrees Celsius or (65F) if you can.
- If you start to feel unwell, even if it's just a cough or a cold, get help from your pharmacist quickly before it gets more serious.
- Make sure you get your prescription medicines before pharmacies close on Christmas Eve and always take your prescribed medicines as directed.
- Look out for other people who may need a bit of extra help this winter.