

H A R R O W

people

www.harrow.gov.uk December 2009

Keeping you better informed
about Harrow Council

Christmas Market

Harrow Town Centre
goes festive

Healthy living

Inside Harrow's
new health clinics



Get your skates on
and win tickets for
London's best day out!

Harrow COUNCIL
LONDON

Are you missing out?

It's your money!

Difficulty paying your rent?

Behind with your Council Tax payments?

You don't have to be unemployed or a pensioner to get it!

Housing and Council Tax benefits are intended to help people on low income meet their housing costs.

You will be aware that the Government has been taking a number of steps to ensure that the economic downturn has the minimum possible effect on those with low income. As part of this initiative we want to make sure you are not missing out on any of the help you are entitled to with Council Tax and or your housing costs.

If you are a pensioner and you get Pension Credit guarantee credit, you are likely to be entitled to Council Tax Benefit if you are liable for Council Tax. This means you may pay less Council Tax. You could even get it backdated for up to three months. But you must make a claim to get it.

And if you rent your home, you may be able to get help with your rent by claiming Housing Benefit.

Are you getting what you should?

To find out if you qualify, visit www.harrow.gov.uk and check our benefit calculator.

How to claim

For more information call us on 0208 424 1644.

If you would an application form to claim Council Tax or Housing Benefit, please ring us on 0208 424 1644.



We can arrange a Home Visit for you

One of our experienced visiting officers will visit you at your home to help you with your application form.

A home visit will be arranged for you if you fall in one of these categories.

- Housebound
- Disabled
- Elderly
- Long term ill

If you would like assistance with completing the claim form, please ring us on 0208 424 1644. One of our visiting officers will get in touch with you to arrange a convenient and suitable time to visit you at your home.



Welfare Benefit health check

We have a Welfare Benefit take up service. This initiative is aimed to make sure that Harrow residents receive all the welfare benefits they are entitled to. We can assess your eligibility for any welfare benefits and help you complete any relevant forms.

For an appointment please call 020 8424 7636.

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Caring for our carers

Leader of the Council

Councillor
David Ashton



With Christmas nearly here, budgets are on everyone's mind - whether you are a household braced for big bills or a business gearing up for the New Year.

While finalising the council's budget, I went out for the day in Harrow town centre to ask residents what our spending priorities should be.

This issue of Harrow People reveals your answers - and without giving the story away, you may not be surprised to learn that clean streets and supporting the vulnerable are high on your list.

With spending in mind, read about how our trading standards department is protecting Christmas shoppers against potential cons. On a happier note, I hope you visit and enjoy the Christmas market taking place for the first time in the town centre.

In whatever way you are spending the festive period, can I extend best wishes on behalf of the council.

If you have any story ideas, please email the Editor at angela.hart@harrow.gov.uk or call 020 8424 7504

For editorial and advertising enquiries contact:

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Please recycle this copy of Harrow People when you have finished or pass it to a friend.

THE MJ
2009
Achievement Awards
FINALIST

Harrow Council has been recognised as one of the best performing local authorities in the country in the prestigious Municipal Journal (MJ) Best Achieving Council award.

7am, morning mist, Harrow Recreation Ground



Have your
say



Class act at Stanburn!

A school in Harrow is the first in London to have been rated as 'Outstanding' after the school inspection body Ofsted introduced new tougher criteria.

Stanburn First school in Stanmore, has been awarded top marks after its recent inspection, where it was described as an 'excellent school which embraced new developments to ensure pupils receive the highest quality learning experiences'.

A striking example of the school's innovative teaching is the history lessons held in the school's very own 'Blast Shelter', where pupils are taught in small groups about life

during World War II.

Anne Drakeford, headteacher at Stanburn for the last 20 years, said: "Credit goes to all those involved - children, parents, staff and governors."

Cllr Anjana Patel, portfolio holder for schools and children's development, said: "I am very pleased with the results of this inspection. For any school to inspire such praise from both from Ofsted and from parents is an excellent achievement. The team at Stanburn First school is providing the best education for its pupils and should be proud of itself."

A redevelopment project on a Pinner estate has been given the green light following a secret ballot by residents.

Residents voted overwhelmingly in favour of transferring the ownership and management of Mill Farm Estate to Catalyst Communities Housing Association in a secret ballot last month – which encouraged residents to get involved in the decision about the future of their estate.

You said: Eighty-eight per cent of the tenants who voted in the ballot were in favour of the transfer and 100 per cent of the leaseholder voters were also in favour of the vote.

We did: Subject to planning approval and the Secretary of State approving the plans, the redevelopment of the estate is likely to take place next year. The redevelopment will involve replacing the existing buildings to provide modern, high-quality homes and building new homes for rent and sale.

Cllr Barry Macleod-Cullinane, portfolio holder for adults and housing, said:

"With such an overwhelming majority this is a fantastic outcome and opportunity for all involved.

"The challenge now is to make sure it happens in the timescales we have agreed with residents and I am confident we can achieve this through the excellent partnerships we have built with the residents and Catalyst Communities Housing Association."

Harrow's streets get a new seal of approval!

We have blast off! Harrow Council has begun a brand new treatment which "seals" streets against the plague of dropped chewing gum, oil stains and other pollutants by blasting them with water - then layering them with a protective coating.

One of Harrow Council's top priorities is to deliver cleaner and safer streets, and four popular shopping centres and two tube stations in the borough are on the list for the deep clean treatment.





Young people takeover the council!

Amel Rahmoune, 20, took over chief executive, Michael Lockwood's role at Harrow Council as part of Youth Takeover Day. She said: "The role of chief executive on this youth take over day involved me choosing, researching and presenting a subject of my particular interest to the 'real' chief executive and if he likes my suggestions I might soon see a change in anti-social behaviour."

It was a chance for young people in the borough to have their say on how council services are run and to put forward creative ideas as to how the services can be improved, particularly for young people in the borough. For more information on young people's events in Harrow visit www.harrowyouth.co.uk

Have your say

The council is drawing up a new plan for the borough called the Local Development Framework (LDF). Included in this is the Core Strategy which sets out how population, housing and economic growth in the borough is to be accommodated over a 15-year period.

The Core Strategy Preferred Option document is now out for public consultation for anyone to comment on. This runs until 11th January 2010. The council will be holding a series of workshops during December. These workshops will offer residents the chance to discuss the options with planning officers as well as any other issues you think we need to address.

For details of the workshops or to view the documents email ldfconsultation@harrow.gov.uk or www.harrow-consult.limehouse.co.uk

All change for Freedom passes

Harrow's older and disabled Freedom Pass holders should renew their passes in the new year so they can continue to enjoy free travel across the borough.

The Freedom Pass allows Londoners aged 60 and over, plus eligible disabled residents, to travel for free on buses, trains and the underground.

For additional security, the new passes will include a photograph of the owner on the card itself rather than on a separate photocard as is currently the case.

For more information on renewal go www.freedompass.org or call 0845 275 7054.



Sea scouts joined war veterans as they marched through Harrow at a ceremony to honour Britain's heroes. The annual Remembrance Day ceremony honours those who have lost their lives in conflicts since the start of the First World War. More than 500 people gathered to watch the procession.

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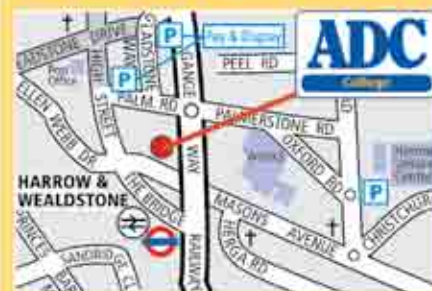
* Provided you meet the Government criteria of being a British or European citizen or a resident in the UK for at least 3 years if you are from outside Europe.



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Swami comes to Harrow

A well-known Hindu Swami visited Harrow Council to announce the opening of a new temple, for which Harrow's Gujarati community raised funds.

Mahant Swami Dharmanandan Dasji, who is the Head of Swaminarayan Temple in the Gujarat city of Bhuj, met with councillors, staff and members of the Hindu community at a special reception to announce that the new temple will be open in Bhuj in May 2010.

A total of £1.25m was raised by the Hindu community in the UK after the Swaminarayan temple was destroyed in the earthquake that struck the city in 2001.



Turning the tables

An inspirational Radio DJing course has helped some Harrow youngsters to turn the tables on anti-social behaviour on an estate in Pinner.

The teenagers from the Pinner Hill estate have transformed their lives after joining the three-month Radio Production and Broadcast course, organised by Harrow Council's youth

participation team.

Margo Cash, 10, who lives on the estate, and has just completed the Radio Broadcasting training, said: "Being on the radio course has made me proud of myself, and it keeps me out of trouble and stops me walking around the streets. You never know what I'll be in the future now."



Black History in focus

Voluntary organisation BTWSC (*Beyond the Will Smith Challenge*) held its African History Month event, called *In Search Of Achievers Closer To Home*, at the Council Chamber, in October. Harrow Mayor Cllr Eric Silver and the Mayoress Mrs Evelyn Silver were special guests at the event which highlighted the contribution of British African male and female achievers in various fields, including academia, business, civil rights, education, law, politics, the sciences and the voluntary sector.

The event, which was funded by BTWSC, was organised with students on BTWSC's OCN accredited Event

Planning course, and also raised funds for the Mayor's chosen charity Easy Riders Wheelchairs.

Those who attended described the event as inspiring and motivational, and welcomed the diversity of fields the achievers came from.

"I thought the session was well put together and informative, and I really liked the focus on black British history," said Patrick O'Dwyer, Harrow Council's Senior School Improvement Professional.

Event co-ordinator Kwaku said: "Too often we seem to be more aware of African American achievers, than those

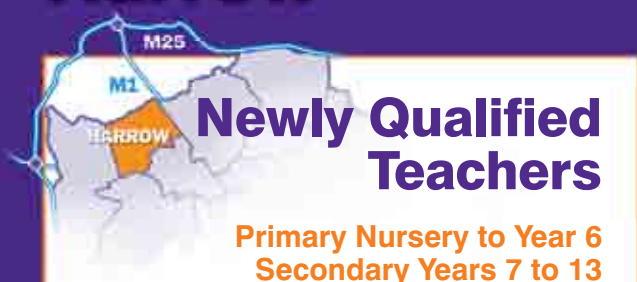
closer to home."

"For example, when you ask about civil rights, most people think of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, but few are aware of the likes of community activist Paul Stephenson and the Bristol Bus Boycott, which ended on the same day Martin Luther King delivered his 'I Have A Dream' speech in 1963." For further information on BTWSC go to www.btwsc.com



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You said:

Nearly 650 people answered questions on the budget, with **93%** agreeing that **Cleaner and Safer streets** should be regarded as a priority, while **84%** think **Support for Vulnerable People** should receive priority funding. Nearly **60%** support the priority **Build Stronger Communities**. The support for all three of the council's suggested priorities was higher this year than in 2008.

Have your
say

on how the council should spend your money

As the council prepares to draw up its spending plans Cllr David Ashton, leader of the council, took to the streets to find out how residents want to see their money spent next year.

The responses will be used to influence the decisions the council is making and ensure it allocates its resources in the way residents would like.

This year, the council focused funding on three key areas: delivering cleaner and safer streets, improving support for vulnerable people and building stronger communities, where millions of pounds have been invested.

Cllr David Ashton, leader of the council and portfolio holder for finance, said: "It was great to get out on the street and gauge what residents think about how the council is progressing.

"I am always pleased to hear the thoughts of those using the services and encourage everyone to get in touch with the council if they have an opinion on what next year's tax money should be spent on."

Here is what some of the residents had to say:

Owen and Jill Cock (right) from Pinner, said: "Supporting vulnerable people has to be the most important priority of the council. Also it frustrates me that the council have to pay so much money to keep the streets clean, when this can be done by residents themselves. I think it would be great to encourage more people in the borough to volunteer – this really contributes to building a stronger community."



Wendy Dearborne (left) from LA, said: "I used to live in Harrow but moved to Los Angeles 17 years ago. I have seen a lot of changes in the borough and the town centre is really nice."



PC Kotze and PC Pindolia (left) from the town centre police team, said: "The borough's town centre has definitely seen a marked improvement since I lived here five years ago. Residents say they feel safer and it's a lot cleaner. Knowing that we have the support of our partners, like the council, is really important and I think it makes a real difference to residents."



Further information

You can email your comments and questions on council services to david.ashton@harrow.gov.uk

Could you be Neighbourhood



Harrow Council has announced plans to deliver cleaner and safer streets through a new Neighbourhood Champions programme.

Working in partnership with the police, the scheme will launch in the New Year with volunteers from Harrow's established and very successful Neighbourhood Watch scheme. It will be extended in Spring 2010 when all Harrow residents will be invited to join the programme.

The scheme will see us recruit a network of volunteers, who will help keep us informed about local problems or issues that can arise.

The scheme has overwhelming support with nearly 90 per cent of you thinking that Neighbourhood Champions are a good idea*.

Cllr Susan Hall, deputy leader and portfolio holder for the environment, said: "We would like our Neighbourhood Champions to help us to look after the streets of Harrow, acting as our eyes and ears, and alerting us to problems they think we should know about. This isn't about being a nosy neighbour, quite simply, it's about having the input of somebody who is proud of their street and wants to improve life for their friends and neighbours."



"I welcome the Neighbourhood Champion scheme. Harrow's Neighbourhood Watch is one of the largest in London and plays an important role working alongside the police to fight crime and enhance community cohesion throughout Harrow. I look forward to seeing the Neighbourhood Champion scheme becoming just as successful.."

*Inspector Dave Burgum,
Harrow Police*





a

Neighbourhood Champion?

So what does a Neighbourhood Champion do?

The most important part of the Champion's role is to communicate with the council, ideally via our website www.harrow.gov.uk, highlighting the issues we can help with.

Typically the key role of volunteers will be to contact the council with problems arising from street issues, such as

- Street cleaning
- Broken street lights
- Fly-tipping
- Graffiti
- Abandoned vehicles
- Noise nuisance
- Petty vandalism
- General anti-social behaviour

We are looking forward to the champions helping to create the kinds of neighbourhood we'd all like to live in, and hope that you'll support the scheme by either becoming a Neighbourhood Champion yourself, or by working with your local Champion to make Harrow streets cleaner and safer for all.

Q&A

Q With all these stories about councils spying on their residents, should you be doing this?

A This is definitely not a licence to "snoop". All the council is doing is creating a system that will allow a Neighbourhood Champion to report street level nuisances. These are problems that, as before, it is down to the police and the council to fix. Nobody wants or expects the Neighbourhood Champions to act as vigilantes!

Q When can I sign up?

A The scheme will launch in the New Year with the recruitment of Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators. From Spring 2010 all residents will be invited to join. If you are interested in becoming a Neighbourhood Champion, please register your interest (see below). We will then contact you in the Spring with further details.

Q How many do you want to sign up? And how long for?

A The plan is to sign up 2,000 by the end of two years. We will assess the success of the scheme in 2011 to see whether the council and police want to extend it further.

Q Do Neighbourhood Champions get paid? Do they receive any form of expenses?

A No - this is a volunteering initiative. Neighbourhood Champions take part because they want to help deliver cleaner and safer streets for all residents.

Further information

The Neighbourhood Champions scheme is your opportunity to get involved in making Harrow a better place to live, work and play. If you are interested in becoming a Neighbourhood Champion or would like to know more, please complete the below form and send to: Divisional Director of Environment, Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2XF. Alternatively, you can email neighbourhoodchampions@harrow.gov.uk

Name:

Address:

Email Address:

cut here

12 scams of Christmas

12 Twelve Phishers phishing
Typically, you're directed to a fake website with a tempting offer. But once you fill in your personal details your information can be sold to identity thieves. Always use your credit card for purchases over £100.

11 Eleven fraudsters calling
Watch out for fraudsters threatening to cut off your BT phone line unless you pay arrears using your credit card. Always check by calling the number on your phone bill.

9 Nine scammers scamming
Charity scammers may pose as representatives of real charities or ones that sound real. Be VERY wary of high-pressure pitches. Always ask for ID and never give out credit card details.

6 Six cheap plonk drinking
Cheap drink can include dangerous levels of ingredients such as methanol. Always check carefully anything that is suspiciously cheap.

5 Five fake friends
You may receive an e-card email from an unnamed "friend" which can be viewed by clicking on a link. But the link may unleash anything from spyware and pop-up ads to viruses and Trojans.

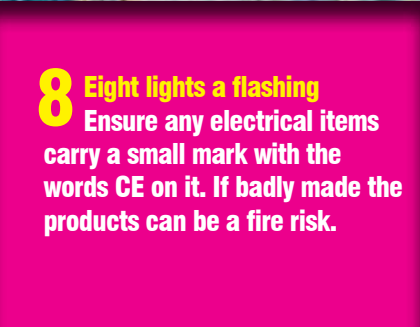
3 Three cardboard tubes
A two or three metre roll of Christmas wrapping paper offered by a street vendor at a cheap price turns out to be nothing more than a cardboard tube with a narrow strip of paper on it.

mas

To help you avoid getting caught out Harrow Council has drawn up the 12 scams of Christmas to keep you on your guard.



10 Ten brand names faking
Watch out for counterfeit batteries which may leak and will not last long. All counterfeit goods are sold at bargain prices and are often of shoddy quality and fall apart in days.



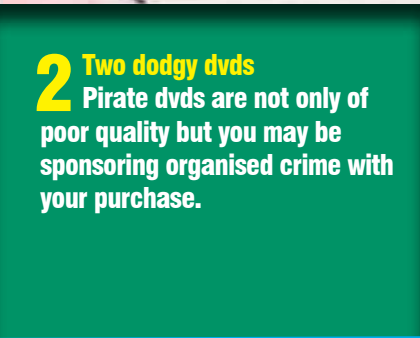
8 Eight lights a flashing
Ensure any electrical items carry a small mark with the words CE on it. If badly made the products can be a fire risk.



7 Seven food goods perishing
Check the recommended best before date on perishable items is not before Christmas Day.



4 Four cheap perfumes
Copies of brand perfumes are heavily diluted and the scent wears off in minutes. The contents can also cause allergic skin reactions.



2 Two dodgy dvds
Pirate dvds are not only of poor quality but you may be sponsoring organised crime with your purchase.



**And a hole
in your back
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Further information

For further information contact Harrow and Brent Trading Standards on 020 8937 5555 or Consumer Direct on 0845 404 0506 www.consumerdirect.gov.uk

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We wish you a very happy festive season

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10.30am - 12.30pm

Sales training for those new to running their own business

Marketing your Company Thurs 21 Jan 2010
10.30am - 12.30pm

Get yourself noticed and identify new customers

Bookkeeping made Simple Fri 22 Jan 2010
12.30pm - 3pm

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Dreaming of a

green Christmas...

It is estimated that every person in the UK throws away their own weight in rubbish every seven weeks. During the festive period, belts have a habit of widening, and our bins get fatter too. This Christmas, up to 1 billion Christmas cards will end up in bins (that's 17 per person) and the UK will produce 83 sq km of wrapping paper, enough to wrap up Guernsey and give it as a Christmas present.

But there are a number of things we can do over Christmas to keep our bins slim while we still have a good time.

5 green things to do this Christmas

1 Shop 'til you drop. But take old bags! And use public transport if you can.

2 Christmas wishes. Many charities produce a range of beautiful Christmas cards and wrapping paper from recycled paper. After Christmas you can throw cards and wrapping paper in your blue bin to be taken away by the council for recycling.

3 Christmas Dinner. The main event of Christmas day, when the kitchen piles up with pans and baking tins and the room boils from simmering pots and a baking oven. Using a small hob ring on a high heat instead of a large

ring on low, and only opening the oven door when absolutely necessary, will help keep your kitchen cool as well as saving energy.

4 Saving water. Having worked up a sweat from lugging the tree, not to mention those enormous presents, into the sitting room, take a shower instead of a bath. It uses half as much water. Recycle all empty bottles, glass or plastic in your blue bin.

5 The Tree. A real tree is traditional, just make sure that after Christmas, you either chop it up and put it your brown bin (max 10cm in diameter), or take it to the Recycling Centre in Forward Drive, Wealdstone.

Christmas Collection Calendar

Please leave your rubbish for collection on the revised collection days named in the calendar. If two days are given, please put your rubbish out on the first day. If it is not collected on this day, it will be collected on the following day.

Usual collection day	Christmas week	New Year week
Monday	Mon 21 Dec	Tues 29 Dec
Tuesday	Mon 21 Dec or Tues 22 Dec	Tues 29 Dec or Wed 30 Dec
Wednesday	Tues 22 Dec or Wed 23 Dec	Wed 30 Dec or Thurs 31 Dec
Thursday	Wed 23 Dec or Thurs 24 Dec	Thurs 31 Dec or Sat 2 Jan
Friday	Thurs 24 Dec	Sat 2 Jan

Further information

If you have any questions, or wish to report a missed collection, please go to www.harrow.gov.uk/recycling or call the council's refuse and recycling centre on 020 8424 1770.



Keeping you safe

Anti-social behaviour doesn't just make life unpleasant. It creates an environment where more serious crime can take hold. It has a negative effect on many people's lives, and Harrow Council is committed to tackling it. A new team of anti-social behaviour ward officers, dedicated to addressing local issues in Harrow, have now been recruited.

Neil Watson – one of the three new ward officers – says that he gets into work never knowing what he will have to deal with, but that - in essence - is why he enjoys his new role at Harrow Council so much.

Harrow Council has employed a new team to work closely with the police, the fire brigade and housing associations to get to the bottom of anti-social behaviour – and so far, the results have shown it has been a great success.

Neil has recently been dealing with one family who have proven to be nightmare neighbours at their worst using racial abuse, intimidation, littering and harassment to make fellow residents' lives a misery.

He added: "Issuing injunctions, anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) or Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) can help to minimise anti-social behaviour but sometimes it is just a case of helping them see what

their actions are doing to others which stops them from behaving in this way."

For example, a panel made up of officers across a number of agencies has been set up to work with young people who have been linked with anti-social behaviour offences. The Early Intervention Panel aims to stop people under the age of 18 from re-offending, by giving them one-to-one mentoring, putting them into work placements and offering parents a training course to help prevent these offences from happening.

The panel is made up of a number of services, including children's services, the council's youth offending team, the police and family intervention services.

Cllr Susan Hall, deputy leader and portfolio holder for Environmental Services, said: "Anti-social behaviour is a national

problem which could easily spiral out of control. Although we don't have a big problem, we do not tolerate anti-social behaviour in Harrow and will do everything we can to stop these offences from happening.

"This is all linked to the work we are doing to build a stronger community in the borough and ensure Harrow remains one of the safest boroughs in London."

Further information

If you need any advice on coping with anti-social behaviour, call one of the team or go to www.harrow.gov.uk/asb or call 0845 371 4110



Meet the team...

Neil Watson

Wards: Harrow Weald, Hatch End, Pinner, Pinner South, Rayners Lane, Roxeth, Roxbourne

"Many people think anti-social behaviour always involves young people, but it's more than that – it could be a dispute between neighbours, an out of control dog, racial abuse or littering."

Janice Noble

Wards: Greenhill, Harrow on the Hill, Headstone North, Headstone South, Marlborough, Wealdstone, West Harrow

"Now there is a team of us working closely with the police to tackle anti-social behaviour in Harrow, we hope we will be able to make changes to all those people affected by these crimes."

Sarah Harris

Wards: Belmont, Canons, Edgware, Kenton East, Kenton West, Queensbury, Stanmore Park

"Anti-social behaviour can be one of a number of things which can make their victim's lives a misery. We want to urge more people to report these crimes to ourselves or the police. That way, we can help stamp it out for good."

Ian Cartmell - ASB Co-ordinator Team Manager

"My specially trained officers will do everything they can to make the residents of Harrow live safer, and stop offenders affecting people's daily quality of life so they can live without fear of others."

Contact the team on 0845 371 4110.



case study

Last year, a resident of Harrow received a five-year ASBO for conducting a five-year campaign of misery against her neighbours which included throwing sanitary towels into their garden.

The ordeal of the victims included verbal abuse, their garden being flooded, rubbish being thrown into

Nuisance neighbour receives five year asbo

their garden and trespassing. It only ended after Harrow Council's anti-social behaviour team worked with the police for 12 months to put a case together, with evidence including 143 DVDs of CCTV footage and a statement from former neighbours who suffered similar nuisance behaviour.

The perpetrator, was given a five year ASBO at Harrow magistrates in November 2008 after the court heard the catalogue of incidents against the victims. The court was told that the perpetrator's behaviour was so bad the victims felt unable to go on holiday for fear of what they would return to.

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www.ideal dentalcare.co.uk



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Photograph courtesy of the MPS

Community and Police Working together

Come to the meetings of **The Harrow Police & Community Consultative Group** to

- Voice your concerns
- Hear updates on crime prevention
- Question senior Harrow Police and Council officers on safety.

For further information call **020 8424 1785** or visit www.hpccg.org.uk



Tony McNulty MP for Harrow East



Advice Surgeries are held regularly on Saturday mornings from 11 am by appointment at his constituency office - Harrow East Labour Centre, 18, Byron Road, Wealdstone, Harrow, HA3 7ST

Please ring **020 7219 4108** for an appointment.

Accommodation wanted

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For further information contact Sheena on 01895 678053

SOLO – singles opportunities for lodgings in Harrow, Hillingdon, Ealing and Brent

THE PARADIGM HOUSING GROUP
43/45 High Street, Ruislip, Middx HA4 7BD
Email: Sheena.Singh@paradigmhousing.co.uk

Accommodation wanted

Could you be a foster carer?

Harrow Childrens Services are looking for a range of foster carers as diverse as our children.

We have children of all ages, including disabled children who are waiting for people just like you to welcome them into your home

We offer a package of training, support and allowances to enable you to meet the challenge of this task.

You will never be bored! Can you offer a helping hand – if so call 0800 064 1000 or visit www.harrow.gov.uk or e-mail fpu.duty@harrow.gov.uk

We hold regular information evenings on the last Thursday of every month at the Harrow Civic Centre at 6.45 p.m.





A day in the life

Caring for carers

Allie Brice is Harrow Council's voice for carers in the borough and spends much of her time ensuring they get the support they need.

Many people in the borough care for an elderly relative, a sick friend or a disabled family member. They do it unpaid and often without any support, despite there being plenty of help available. Allie says: "We are here to help improve the lives of carers by providing information, advice and support and by ensuring they are aware of the financial help available to them."

"Carers make a valuable contribution to Harrow in the care and support that they provide. However, it is so important that people who care for others get a break from what can be a very rewarding role, but one that is also very tiring and stressful."

"If someone makes contact with me, one of the first things I'll do is a carer's assessment, then we can draw up a care plan for them, talk about what breaks they may need, look at the health needs of the carer and make sure they get any financial support they need."

Christine Couch (*above right*), who lives in Stanmore is the sole carer for her

28-year-old daughter Natasha who has a learning disability and impaired hearing. Christine said: "I had been caring for my disabled daughter without support for a long time and I was getting quite desperate. It was so isolating because I couldn't get out of the house to see anybody."

"Now I get respite care one weekend a month which means I get a much-needed break. I am free to go out or stay in and sit and do nothing if I want to!"

"With help from the council I am now able to use direct payments to pay for transport for my daughter to be dropped off and collected from her day centre. For the first time in years I can go out to work. I now have a role working in the café at Byron Neighbourhood Resource Centre. I absolutely love being able to go to work."

"If it wasn't for the council I would not have known how much help was available for carers."

Top five steps... to getting support

Step one: Recognise you're a carer!

Many of us do not see ourselves as carers straight away. We are simply doing what anyone would - caring unpaid for a loved one or friend.

Step two: Contact your council for help. Adult Services are part of your local council and provide a range of services to carers and people with disabilities. As a carer, you are entitled to a carer's assessment, which looks at your needs and how you, as a carer, can be supported. They can look at flexible options which best suit you and support you in your caring role.

Step three: Tell your GP.

Although there isn't a national register for carers, make sure you tell your GP you are a carer, and ask them if they will provide an annual healthcheck.

Step four: Talk to your family and friends. It is important that you do not try to cope alone, as this can impact on your own health.

Step five: Claim your entitlements.

Remember that the benefits system is there to help and you are entitled to claim. Call Harrow Carers on 020 8868 5224 for advice.

FACTS

Carers can receive information about support available to them and meet other carers at the borough's three Neighbourhood Resource Centres on the first Monday of every month.


For information on your nearest centre to www.harrow.gov.uk/nrc

Further information

If you are a carer call 0208 424 1726 or email allison.brice@harrow.gov.uk for details of help and support you can receive.



NHS Harrow



A&E / 999	life-threatening injuries or illnesses
Walk-in centre	cuts, sprains, rashes, infections, fever
GP	aches and pains, infections, rashes, fever, diarrhoea
Pharmacist	cold symptoms, over-the-counter medication, health advice
NHS Direct	many minor illnesses or injuries
Self-care	sore throat, cough, headache

NHS
Harrow

NHS Harrow and Harrow Council are working together to bring you this new feature in Harrow People, so that you can find out more about your local NHS – what we do, the services available to you and how you can get involved in shaping the future of healthcare in Harrow.

In these pages, starting with the next issue, you'll find a regular interactive feature called Ask Your Doctor, where you can write in with your questions for Harrow's Director of Public Health, Dr. Andrew Howe. We'll also tell you about public consultations and give you tips on how you can live a healthier lifestyle.

Send your questions about any health related concerns to doctor@harrowpct.nhs.uk and Andrew will answer them in the next issue.



What is NHS Harrow?

We are responsible for paying for all local NHS services on your behalf, managing their performance and overseeing them to ensure the quality of care you receive is always improving. We manage all NHS services provided by GPs, pharmacists, dentists and opticians in the borough. We also pay for hospital care on behalf of patients registered with Harrow GPs, care for mental health patients, prescriptions and community healthcare like health visitors and district nurses.

We're your local healthcare watchdog. That's why we rely on you to get involved and give us your views on local NHS services, as well as your NHS experiences in hospitals.

You can do this through our Patients Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 8966 1090 or by emailing pals.office@harrowpct.nhs.uk.

We also give you a way to check the best GP services in the area through our GP Scorecard, which rates local practices according to their patients' views of them, using criteria like ease of access, range of services and how well they act on patient feedback. There's a national website (www.nhs.uk) where you can leave feedback about your GP experiences, see what others have said and comment on any hospital treatment you receive.

You can find the scorecard on our website www.harrowpct.nhs.uk.

Sarah Crowther, Chief Executive PCT

Better care, closer to home

Our aim is to bring you better healthcare, closer to where you live. To do this, we're putting more services in local health centres that are open on evenings and weekends, every day of the year. Some of these services, such as physiotherapy and heart tests, have previously only been available in hospitals.

You've told us that you need easier access to our services, so we've been working hard to make sure this happens. As well as three new walk-in centres open from 8am to 8pm every day, 80 per cent of our GPs now offer longer opening hours.

In addition to your own GP, you now have the choice of visiting two types of health centres – a polyclinic or a GP-led health centre. These centres have local GPs and many other services and are open from 8am to 8pm every day of the year. Harrow's first polyclinic, at Alexandra Avenue Health and Social Care Centre (near Rayners Lane and South Harrow), is also one of the first in London. Our first GP-led health centre, The Pinn Medical Centre (Love Lane, Pinner), has also opened recently and another, Harness Harrow

Medical Centre, is set to open on Mollison Way (East Harrow) in January.

At these centres, you can walk in and be seen by a GP without an appointment even if you're not registered there. You might like to register if you find the opening hours more convenient, particularly if you work or have young children. Your own GP should always be your first point of contact for medical care, but you can go to **Alexandra Avenue, The Pinn or Harness Harrow** when you need urgent access to health advice or treatment during evenings and weekends, when your own GP surgery might be closed.

People often go to accident and emergency departments at their local hospital with minor illnesses or injuries that could have been treated locally. The new centres were designed as a way of giving you an easier option, closer to home, where you will be seen more quickly. You can use them for minor illnesses and injuries that you may otherwise have gone to an accident and emergency department with, like minor cuts or wounds that need dressing, sprains, rashes, bites, urine infections, earache, thrush or fever.



Further information

Alexandra Avenue Health and Social Care Centre

275 Alexandra Avenue, Rayners Lane HA2 9DX

Tel: 020 8966 6300 Email: xxxx@xxxxxxxxx.xxx.xx

The Pinn Medical Centre

37 Love Lane, Pinner HA5 3EE

Tel: 020 8866 5766 Website: www.thepinn.co.uk

Private Fostering Arrangements

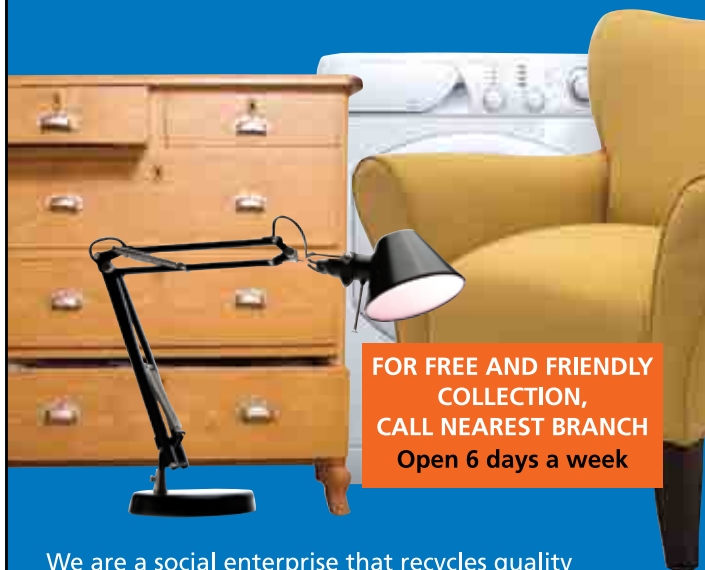
Harrow council is committed to safeguarding children and young people living in the borough. At times children are unable to live with their birth parents for many different reasons. A child who lives with a family friend, a great aunt or cousin for more than 28 days is referred to under the law as a **Private fostering Arrangement**. Children under the age of 16 (18 if disabled) can be privately fostered. If you know of a child that is living in such an arrangement please inform us as soon as possible. If in doubt, please contact the **Duty and Assessment Team on 020 8736 6942**.



For advice and information about Private Fostering Arrangements please contact the **Family Placement Team 020 8736 6971**



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London Evening Standard



WEMBLEY STADIUM

STADIUM



This is the amount of litter dropped on the streets of Harrow town centre in just 24 hours.

Despite there being around 145 bins dotted around the centre of the town it seems a minority of people would rather throw rubbish on the floor.

Street cleaners responsible for keeping Harrow tidy piled up more than 20 bags of rubbish they had collected over 24 hours, including crisp packets, chocolate wrappers and drinks cans, in the hope of making people think twice about dropping litter.

The huge pile of trash left passers-by shocked, with many stopping to stare and find out where the rubbish had come from.

Residents in Harrow have said cleaner and safer streets are the biggest issue for them which has resulted in Harrow Council investing an extra one million pounds into street cleaning.

Cllr Susan Hall, deputy leader and portfolio holder for environment services, said: "The hope is that this pile of rubbish may shock some of those people who don't think twice about dropping rubbish on the floor into mending their ways."

"The council is committed to providing cleaner and safer streets but we need residents to do their bit as well."



Rebecca Wigley-Smith:
"This is pretty bad. I had no idea how much rubbish the street cleaners have to clean up."



Pauline McDaide:
"It's disgusting actually, young people need it drummed into them when they're at school."



Brian McDaide:
"People will buy fast food, stand right beside a bin when they eat it and then chuck the wrappers on the floor! It's not rocket science is it - throw it in the bin that's right next to you!"

Further information

If you want to report flytipping, please contact
www.harrow.gov.uk/flytipping or 020 8424 1770.

Christmas market

comes to Harrow town centre



Sleigh bells will be ringing in Harrow this year, as the borough is hosting its first ever Christmas market selling everything from arts and crafts to bratwurst sausages.

Fourteen German-style chalets will line St Ann's Road in the town centre to give an extra special Christmas feel to the borough. The market began trading on Saturday 28th November and will open seven days a week up until 27th December, excluding Christmas day.

The European-style market, which has been organised by Harrow Council in partnership with major town centre retailers, will be sampling a range of

Christmas gift ideas like crafts, jewellery and ceramics. There will also be stalls selling German bratwurst sausages, steak sandwiches, Belgian waffles, mulled wine and German beer.

Cllr Marilyn Ashton, portfolio holder for planning, development and enterprise, said: "After a difficult year, we are very aware of the importance of this Christmas for our town centre retailers and businesses, and it is for this reason, that we have decided to stage the market.

"By transforming St Ann's Road into a festive winter village, we also hope that our residents will visit the market and support the shops and local businesses that are right here on their doorstep."

For more details call the Regeneration Officer on 0208 736 6084.



Shop happy in Harrow town centre this Christmas

To help your festive season really sparkle, Harrow town centre retailers are offering an amazing prize draw worth over £700. Complete your details below and return the tear off slip before 12pm, 15th December, to the competition boxes in either Debenhams or Marks and Spencer in Harrow town centre.

Prizes:

- 1st prize: £250 Debenhams shopping trip
- 2nd prize: £250 Marks & Spencer gift vouchers
- 3rd prize: Two digital photo frames courtesy of Currys
- 4th prize: £50 H & M gift voucher
- 5th prize: £50 H & M gift voucher
- 6th prize: £50 TK Maxx gift voucher

Name:

Postcode:

Telephone:

E-mail:



DEBENHAMS

Seasonal events

Chanukah:

Menorah Lighting Ceremony.
Sunday 13th December.
4.30pm - 5.30pm.
Candle lighting at 4.50pm.
Junction of The Broadway and
Dennis Lane, Stanmore.
Menorah lighting ceremony to celebrate
Chanukah. Call 020 8736 6084.

Bjorn the Polar Bear Meet & Greet and Creative Workshop – 5th December.

Amazingly realistic! Learn about this wonderful creature and join in our free workshop at the St Ann's Shopping Centre (11.30am, 1pm & 2.30pm).

Carol Singing Quartet

at St Ann's Shopping Centre –
6th December.
Enjoy a performance of traditional carols
(11am – 4pm).

Father Christmas and Candy Cane giveaway –

12th, 13th, 19th, 20th December.
Father Christmas returns to the St Ann's Centre with more candy canes to give away while stocks last between 11am – 4pm*. Plus be entertained by Elf Buzz on Sunday 13th December.



Win tickets to the largest outdoor ice rink in central London at Hyde Park's Winter Wonderland. London's largest and most dazzling winter event returns to the heart of the capital for six whole weeks of festive fun.

The event is open from 10am to 10pm Saturday, 21st November 2009 to Sunday, 3rd January 2010. **See www.hydeparkwinterwonderland.com for more details.**

For a chance to win family tickets to the event on December 19th, send your name, address and daytime telephone number to: The Editor, Harrow People, Civic Centre, Station Road, Harrow, HA1 2XF before December 14th.

Cinderella at the Harrow Arts Centre – 18th-23th December

Make sure you don't miss Harrow Art's Centre's fantastic community Pantomime. The classic story of overcoming obstacles and finding true love will be brought to life by talented local people. Ages 5+.
Tickets £8 / £6 concessions. Family tickets £23. Call 020 8416 8989 or go to harrowarts.com

Christmas Tree Carols

Come and join us in singing carols and traditional Christmas songs.
Saturday 12th December.
3.30pm onwards. Everyone welcome
Corner of Station Road and St Ann's Road (Next to Katie's Statue).
E-mail community.development@harrow.gov.uk or call 020 8416 8328.

Traditional pantomime Cinderella

Arrow Players present the St Edmund's Parish Pantomime Cinderella. At St Edmund's Hall, Pinner Road, Northwood Hills, HA6 1QS.
On January 2010 - 9th @ 2-30pm & 6pm, 10th @ 3pm, 13th, 14th, 15th @ 7-45pm, 16th @ 2.30pm & 7.45pm.
Tickets £7, some concessions £5. Call the box office on 020 8868 7785 or go to www.arrowplayers.org.uk

Black History Month forum

A meeting of the Black History Month Forum will take place on Thursday 10th December 2009 at Harrow Civic Centre, from 6.30pm-8.30pm which everyone is welcome to attend. For more information visit www.btwsc.com

Eid-ul-Adha

Date: 5th December.
Time: 2pm-6pm.
Venue: Harrow High School, Gayton Road, Harrow, HA1 2JG
Entrance: By ticket only. Call 020 8416 8328. Celebration in respect of Eid-ul-Adha, also known as 'The festival of sacrifice'. Activities to include talks, a cultural display of costumes, musical entertainment, children's quiz and DVD presentation.

Carol Service

Date: 14th December
Time 6pm - 7.30pm
Venue: Council Chamber/Members Lounge, Civic Centre.
Entrance: Free. Everyone welcome.
Carols and readings and a Nativity in the Council Chamber will be followed by light refreshments in the members lounge. Mayor of Harrow will be present. Call 020 8416 8328.

Mayor's New Year's Day Parade

This year's parade kicks off at 12pm with Harrow's contribution organised around a model Bi-Plane, built by students at Nower Hill, High School, highlighting the exploits of Harrow's own, World War One fighter Ace, Leefe Robinson. Call 020 8416 8328.



Getting the best

start

Want to find out about services for families in your local area? Harrow Council's Sure Start children's centres are a great place to start. We focus on Gange Children's Centre in Marlborough

Harrow Council is introducing 16 new children's centres by March 2011 – but do parents know what they have to offer?

In the past few months several children's centres have been opened across the borough offering a wide range of services to parents and their toddlers. Other than providing childcare to all children under five, either onsite or via a linked pre-school or childminder, they provide services ranging from ante-natal to classes on parenting skills.

You can discover sessions like messy play, music or access specialist services like health visitors, speech and language therapy and receive advice on healthy eating and finance.



Currently, there are 10 sites up and running in Harrow Weald, Edgware, Marlborough, West Harrow, Harrow on the Hill, Kenton East, Pinner, Stanmore and Wealdstone, and there are plans for six more – set to be ready by March 2011.

One parent, Ketan Dattani (pictured left), has been attending a fathers' group with his 16-month-old son, Shailen, at the Gange Children's Centre in Canning Road for about 11 months and says the Saturday meetings have

been invaluable to him.

The 36-year-old said: "It has been incredibly helpful. Not only does it give me a great chance to bond with Shailen because often he is asleep when I leave or come back from work, but it has given me a great opportunity to speak to other dads and swap advice.

"I have made some great friends and Shailen is interacting and enjoying playing with all the toys.

"At the centre, you can get all the help you need under one roof – whether it's working out your tax and other finances or looking for employment."

Further information

There are more than 3,000 children's centres in England. The centres offer childcare, family support, health services, plus employment and training support. To find out more visit www.childrenatthecentre.org

Marlborough



David Gawn
020 8248 5865
david.gawn@harrow.gov.uk

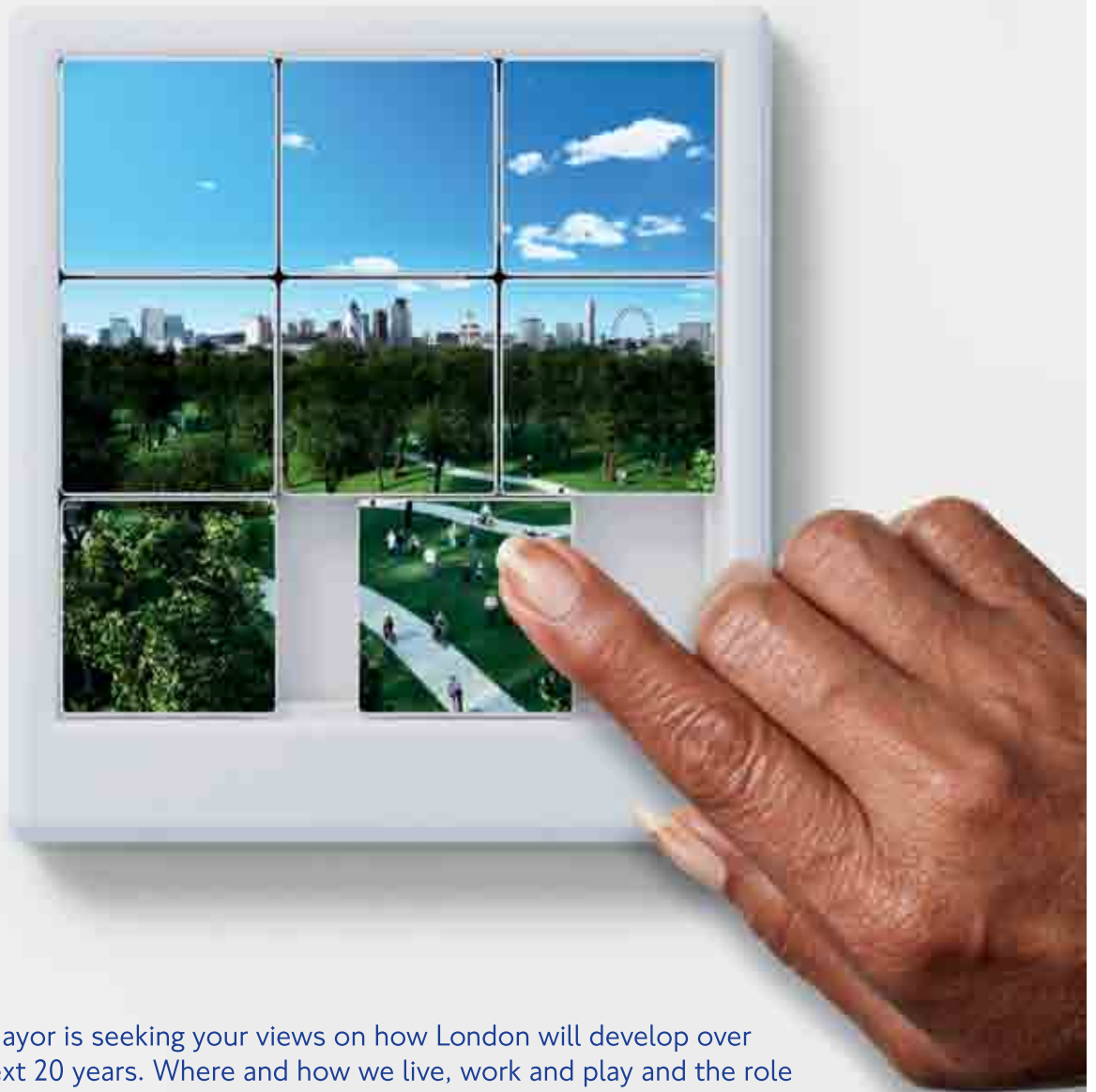


Krishna James
07769 837623
krishna.james@harrow.gov.uk



David Perry
020 8424 1897
david.perry@harrow.gov.uk

Help shape London's future



The Mayor is seeking your views on how London will develop over the next 20 years. Where and how we live, work and play and the role of transport are key elements of the Mayor's plans to deliver a better life for people in London.

For more information on how to have your say and to find a roadshow near you, which will help explain these proposals, visit **london.gov.uk/shaping-london** or call **0800 093 5808**.

Consultations close on 12 January 2010.

A limited **hardship fund** has been released to help our small businesses in Harrow.

Not entitled? don't forget you may be eligible for

- Small Business Rate Relief (SBRR)
- Central Government Deferral Scheme
- London Borough of Harrow scheme to extend payments to March 2010.



Don't let these opportunities go down the drain apply today!

Applications and criteria are available at www.harrow.gov.uk

For details of all of these schemes, see www.harrow.gov.uk, www.businesslink.gov.uk or www.realhelpnow.gov.uk or contact the team on **020 8424 1412**.