

Staffordshire Newsletter

SPECIAL EDITION

TYRES "EXHAUSTS" BATTERIES



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65p Thursday, December 31, 2009

INSIDE

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IN THE LAKE DISTRICT**



**NEWS AND SPORT
REVIEWS
OF THE YEAR**




Wildlife blow to wind farm plans

By Liz Pegg

CAMPAIGNERS battling plans for a wind farm at Aston by Stone are celebrating after being given "extra ammunition" for their fight by conservationists.

Land at Aston Hall Farm, adjacent to a site earmarked for three turbines by Severn Trent Water, has been classified as a Site of Biological Importance (SBI) following surveys carried out by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust.

The designation means the site is now officially recognised as one of the most important semi-natural habitats in the county - which could offer it protection from development plans.

Paul Shaw, chairman of Stop (Stone and Trent Valley) Oppose Severn Trent Water, said: "We're absolutely delighted by this news. The SBI is only about 30 metres away from where Severn Trent wants to put one of the turbines.

"The designation basically gives us extra ammunition, because we would argue that the development of a wind farm would cause a lot of disturbance to the SBI and the wildlife there.

"The local authority has already turned down the application for a test mast, so I can't see that they would ever approve the actual turbines, and they'd be unlikely to allow anything that would adversely affect an SBI."

Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's conservation manager Sue Lawley said: "Aston Hall Farm has been designated an SBI because of the wet grassland habitat there.

"Although the designation offers no legal protection from development, it will be taken into consideration during the planning process."

No-one from Severn Trent Water was available for comment.

Tribute to driver

TRIBUTES have been paid to Michelle Oskoui, pictured, who died in a crash on the A513 near Shugborough on December 18. A second driver, William Bolas, from Rugeley also died.

Miss Oskoui, 36, of Longdon, near Rugeley, worked at the Shugborough Estate, overseeing conservation. Liz Carruthers, from the estate, said: "Michelle's knowledge of conservation was phenomenal and she made friends instantly with everyone at Shugborough and always had a wide smile and a ready laugh. She was a treasured colleague. The estate is in mourning and our thoughts go out to her family and friends."

For a full report on the crash, turn to page 3.



HAPPY NEW YEAR: Lucie Hulme and Cecilia Baker receive hampers from Scarlett Hutton, 10, and Jessica Brown, nine, from Rising Brook Baptist Church. Chantale Lemaitre

Youngsters bring cheer

ELDERLY residents of a Stafford estate are set to enjoy a bountiful start to 2010 thanks to local youngsters.

Younger members of

Rising Brook Baptist Church dropped into the Highfields Signpost Centre to treat older centre users.

During last week's visit

they handed over hampers of goodies, including sweets and tinned food, specially wrapped up for the occasion, and sang for the recipients.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS!

Visit **your** Open Evenings

Jan 11, 12 & 13
Stafford College
6.00pm - 8.30pm

Have a look at **your...** advert on page 14 for more information.


