

Energy-saving ideas for the whole family

IT'S official – the Credit Crunch has now turned into a recession.

Most of us are having to tighten the purse strings and look for ways to cut household bills and there are hundreds of websites carrying cost-cutting and energy-saving ideas.

The Big Green Switch, winner of the New Media awards 'Campaign for Change 2008' title not only offers advice on how to get a greener lifestyle, but can show you how you can cut your bills by hundreds of pounds a year.

Whether it's cutting back on our energy usage, conserving water or recycling unwanted items and rubbish the Big Green Switch has plenty of ideas on how to improve our lifestyles and boost our bank balances into the bargain.

Unusually, it doesn't demand we give up our cars, become vegetarian or ban all holidays further afield than Dorset,



Festival goers find a greener way to charge their mobiles on specially adapted bikes

but instead offers quick and easy ways to scale down most family's probably extensive carbon footprint.

Log on to www.biggreenswitch.co.uk and see how getting your loft and external walls insulated is much cheaper than you think. It could reduce your carbon footprint by 1.5 tonnes a year and cut over £300 from your annual heating bills!



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Your Hampshire Families coordinator and support worker are Caroline Keith and Sharon Flint.

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Children's centres plan moves into next phase

ALL children and families in Hampshire will soon be able to access services more easily as the Phase 3 Children's Centres plan gets underway.

As with the earlier centres, the new phase will also offer a range of services from information about childcare services, family support, employment

advice and parental outreach. To date Hampshire County Council has created 60 children's centres currently serving around 70 per cent of

under fives. Phase 3 will ensure all 72,570 of the county's pre-school children have access to centres by 2010.
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News from your co-ordinator



WE HAVE recently undergone a reorganisation within Hampshire Families in the North of the county. Caroline Keith is now the Co-ordinator for the Hart and

Rushmoor areas, while I have recently been appointed as a support worker to assist Caroline. As you will see from an article within this newsletter, it is an exciting time for the Hart area with seven new phase 3 children's centres in the pipeline for 2010.

Also, our recent survey indicated that newsletters seem to be a real source of information to parents and carers. In the Hart District alone 5,000 copies are sent out each term through primary schools, pre-schools and parent and toddler groups to name but a few. Practitioners working with children are also sent copies. We try and ensure the information is up to date and useful.

Log onto www.hampshirefamilies.org.uk to find out details of the schools, toddler groups, pre-schools and nurseries in your area. We also have details of a variety of other classes and activities that may interest families and we have an events page for each area which is regularly updated. If you run a group or organisation whose details you would like to have included on our database, please email your contact information to me at hart@hampshirefamilies.org.uk and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

Sharon Flint

FUN AT COURTMOOR

COURT MOOR Centre for Community Learning is pleased to offer a comprehensive range of courses for Adults, Children and Families.

Their Adult programme includes Arts & Crafts, Languages, Computing, Health & Beauty, Yoga, and Cookery courses.

Families can enjoy a special learning experience by joining one of the many activities on offer, some of which take place in the school holidays.

For full details of their Spring and Summer programmes please contact them on 01252 617602 or at Court Moor Centre for Community Learning, Spring Woods, Fleet.



Early Education
& Childcare Unit



Help in taxing times...

MANY families are feeling the strain as the cost of living continues to rise. You could be missing out on financial assistance by not applying for tax credits.

Tax credits are 'top-up' payments from the government to support families in accessing high quality childcare and early education services, as well as supporting the general needs of families.

Child Tax Credit

If you have children up to age 16 (19 if a child is in full time education) you could receive Child Tax Credit if your household income is £58,000 or less per annum. The amount you will receive depends on your household income.

Working Tax Credit

If you are aged 25 years or over and working 30 hours a week or more or are disabled, **but without children**, you may be entitled to some 'top-up' payments if you earn less than £16,000 per annum.

The childcare element of Working Tax Credit

If you are responsible for a child or qualifying young person you may be eligible for the **childcare element** of Working Tax Credit (if you are aged 16 or over and work 16 hours or more a week). To be eligible for this additional financial support you need to be using Ofsted registered childcare to look after your child or children while you are at work. Some families could receive financial help for up to 80% of their weekly childcare costs (£140 pw for one child, £240 pw for two or more children).

To find Ofsted registered childcare contact the Hampshire Children's Information Service on 0845 603 5620 or email:

childcare@hants.gov.uk. There is also a range of information available online:

www.hants.gov.uk/childcare. To find out if you qualify for **Tax Credits** contact HM Revenue & Customs on 0845 300 3900 or visit

www.hmrc.gov.uk/taxcredits/index.htm.



DO YOU NEED A CONNEXION?



CONNEXIONS is a modern public service provided for 13-19 year olds who want advice or guidance on getting to where they want to be in life.

Connexions Personal Advisers can give information, advice and practical help with all sort

of things that might be affecting young people at school, college, work or in their personal or family life. From help with job hunting, CVs, apprenticeships, colleges to housing and personal issues.

Advisors can be seen at schools, colleges or E2E

providers or at one of the following drop-in sessions:

MON 2- 4.30 pm The Point
TUE 2- 4 pm Hart Neighbourhood Centre, Hook
THUR 3.30- 5.15pm Youth Suite, Yateley Town Council Office
FRI 2- 4 pm The Point

FREE FAMILY FUN DAY IN YATELEY

YATELEYS COMMUNITY LEARNING is holding a free family fun day on Saturday 28 March 2009. The fun-packed day will be sure to entertain, stimulate and pamper the whole family with a wide range of activities, within a safe and relaxed environment.

Advance booking is essential as it is anticipated to be a popular event. Please book on 01252 877190 or email community@yateleys.com.

Makaton Signing for 0-3 year olds starts on 28 February 2009 at Yateley School and runs for six weeks from 10-11.15 am. Together with your child you learn up to a 100 signs and symbols and have fun practising them in songs, games and activities. The costs of this is only £15.

In addition, Yateleys Community



Learning also provide a full programme of exciting courses for all the family. Courses include robot building, aquatots, swimming clubs, gymnastics, language clubs, arts and crafts and a wide range of dance, sport and fitness classes.

For full programme details please visit www.yateleys.com or contact 01252 877190. Opening Times (term time):

9.00am - 4.00pm Monday - Friday
6.30pm - 9.00pm Monday - Wednesday
9.00am - 1.00pm Saturday



PHASE 3...

CONTINUED FROM p1

PHASE 3 will see the opening of seven new children's centres serving the whole of the Hart area. These will be the first centres in the district.

Consultation has been carried out with local communities to help determine what services may be needed at each of the new centres to help meet local community needs. Services will be provided in partnership with private, voluntary, independent and statutory agencies.

New online directory is ContactPoint for professionals

CONTACTPOINT aims to make services better for children and young people. It is a contacts list for people who work with children and young people (for example, headteacher, GP or social worker). It will provide them with a quick way to

find out who else is working with the same child, making it easier for them to work as a team and deliver more coordinated support.

ContactPoint is part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' Every Child Matters

plan, which all councils follow. It will be introduced across England from spring 2009. Please contact Helen.s.armstrong@hants.gov.uk for further information or take a look at the Every Child Matters website at <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/delivering-services/contactpoint/>

CRECHE FACILITIES IN HART

MANY PARENTS feel a little apprehensive leaving their children in a crèche for the first time. Hart District Council runs two crèches, Frogmore Leisure Centre in Yateley and Hart Leisure Centre in Fleet. Both sites are OFSTED registered and are run by fully qualified and friendly staff that are screened by the Criminal Records Bureau prior to employment by Hart District Council.

crafts; giving you the opportunity to make new friends, get fit or just enjoy some well deserved 'me' time.

For further information or to alleviate any concerns please feel free to visit one of the sites and talk with a qualified member of staff or call them on: Frogmore Leisure Centre: 01252 873454 or Hart Leisure Centre 01252 629974

At the crèches your child will enjoy themselves with play and learning based activities including arts and

Alternatively more information can be found at:

www.hart.gov.uk/index/leisure.htm



** WHAT'S ON **

28 Mar (2pm) Film "The Fox and the Hound" at the Harlington Centre, Fleet. Tickets £2.50 Call 01252 774466.

15 April (10am-4pm) Craft Workshop at Princes Hall , Aldershot for children age 4-7. Cost £14. Call 01252 329155 or book on-line .

14 Mar -25 Apr "Myths & Legends" This hands-on exhibition for all the family at Aldershot Military Museum, Queens Avenue explores some of the many myths and legends from around the world. Visitors can read dragon tales or visit an Egyptian tomb. Entry: free of charge

Youth council for autism pupils

A YOUTH COUNCIL is being set up to give children and young people with autism a chance to have their say.

The aim of the new council is to enable the youngsters to express their views over all kinds of school related issues.

The Autism Education Trust (AET), which is spearheading the initiative is looking for young people from a wide-range of backgrounds, geographical areas, age and ability in order to provide a realistic cross-section of experience on the council.

SYMPATHETIC

The children involved will be interviewed for about 30 minutes at their schools by an Education Support Service worker about specific areas. Questions would be tailored sympathetically to their understanding and ability and specific need, supported by symbols if necessary.

There will usually be one visit per term during the school day and once collated the results will be published on the AET website. For more information contact Victoria Erbes on 0207 704 3801.



Articles for the next newsletter should be submitted by mid- April 2009. Material can be emailed to hart@hampshirefamilies.org.uk.

Submission of articles does not guarantee publication as this will be subject to the availability of space. Hampshire Families Logo designed by Arleford-based graphic designer Karen-Anne Thomas

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Disclaimer Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this newsletter. Opinions are those of the contributors and not necessarily of Hampshire Families.