

### ST HELENS BOROUGH LABOUR GROUP

**FEBRUARY 2022 REPORT** 

## **WE STAND WITH UKRAINE**

The appalling and shocking Russian invasion of Ukraine is an attack on democracy and freedom and a threat to stability not just in Eastern Europe but the whole world. Britain needs to stand united with our allies against Putin's aggression.

In a display of unity and solidarity with the Ukrainian people we lit the iconic Steve Prescott Bridge blue and yellow and we have been flying their flag here above the town hall.

Gestures like this are important, but we need action too. That's why we've called on the British government to do everything in its power to give support to Ukraine, including giving refuge to anyone forced to flee the country.

Over the years many Ukrainian nationals have made their home here in our region, and our hearts go out to them right now. St Helens stands with them, and we are ready and willing to provide a warm welcome to anyone else from Ukraine who is forced to flee their homeland in the coming weeks.



Our borough has a long and proud history of welcoming people needing sanctuary or looking for a better life for themselves and their families, from the Welsh and Irish immigrants of the 19th century right up to the modern day.

As a Labour council we have actively participated in the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme for over five years, supporting successful integration by providing English language support for both adults and children as well as employment support.

We were also the first council in the region to house Afghan families under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, and last year we celebrated Refugee Week, in a series of events led by Cllr Jeanie Bell and supported by Labour councillors across the borough, working with the local charity Our Warm Welcome and bringing our community together to celebrate the valuable contribution refugees have made to the rich diversity of our borough.

As a Labour council and as a borough we will always do everything we can to support those in need.

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#### **GROUND BROKEN ON WORLD-FIRST GLASS FUTURES**

Glass Futures, Network Space Developments, St Helens Borough Council, Liverpool City Region and MPs Marie Rimmer and Conor McGinn welcomed UKRI and BEIS to the site on Friday 4th February 2022 to mark the ground-breaking of the Glass Futures Centre of Excellence.

The 165,000 sq ft transformational global glass research and innovation facility is expected to complete in January 2023, ready for internal fit-out.

Find out more: <a href="https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/07/glassfutures/">https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/07/glassfutures/</a> and watch here: <a href="https://fb.watch/bkuCW2XPz8/">https://fb.watch/bkuCW2XPz8/</a>.

#### **WORK UNDERWAY ON PARKSIDE LINK ROAD**

Activity has started to unlock the first phase of development at Parkside in Newton-le-Willows, described as a 'game-changer' for the local and regional economy.

Teams of engineers, project managers, architects and landscape designers are amongst a host of professionals now working to bring the 1 million square foot first phase of Parkside and the new Parkside Link Road to life. When completed, phase one of the scheme will generate more than 450 jobs through construction, with creation of a further 1,300 posts projected amongst end-users.

Find out more: <a href="https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/11/plr-2/">https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/11/plr-2/</a> and watch here: <a href="https://fb.watch/bkuAbRTlbc/">https://fb.watch/bkuAbRTlbc/</a>.

#### SIGNIFICANT FUNDING SECURED FOR EARLESTOWN TOWN HALL REPAIRS

Plans to bring Earlestown Town Hall back into public use moved a step closer at Cabinet on Wednesday 2 February after Labour committed more than £980,000 to carry out external repair works.

Dating back to 1892, the Grade II listed building – a rich part of Newton-le-Willows' heritage which once staged The Beatles – was closed in 2008 by the Lib Dem and Tory coalition which ran the council at the time. Labour are fully committed to bringing the building back into full public use.

Find out more: <a href="https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/02/significant-funding-agreed-for-earlestown-town-hall-repairs/">https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/02/significant-funding-agreed-for-earlestown-town-hall-repairs/</a>.



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#### £15m SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL INVESTMENT AGREED

Work is set to start to enhance walking and cycling infrastructure in two local parks to improve access to one of St Helens' busiest railway stations as part of the £15m St Helens Southern Gateway project.

At a planning committee meeting on Tuesday 15 February permission was granted to widen footpaths in Sherdley Park and Sutton Park as part of a broader network of active travel to and from Lea Green railway station and surrounding residential areas.

A partnership between St Helens Borough Council; Liverpool City Region Combined Authority; and Northern Rail, St Helens Southern Gateway focusses on making sustainable transport an easier choice for commuters by linking up Lea Green with safe, dedicated pedestrian and cycling routes, connecting nearby residential, leisure and employment areas.

Find out more: <a href="https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/16/15m-sustainable-transport-scheme-gears-up-as-walking-and-cycling-works-receive-planning-permission/">https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/16/15m-sustainable-transport-scheme-gears-up-as-walking-and-cycling-works-receive-planning-permission/</a>.

#### £1m DEAL AGREED FOR 'BOX PARK' IN ST HELENS TOWN CENTRE

Our Labour Council has agreed a 5-year deal with a delivery partner to bring a new attraction to St Helens town centre.

The investment, totalling almost £1m, will see the formation of a vibrant new events space and retail hub that brings together a mix of local and regional independent businesses in a quirky industrial setting, offering everything from an outside cinema; street food and fine dining experiences; bars and an outside terrace – to artisan studios and boutique retailers, with business start-up and mentoring also available onsite. More: <a href="https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/23/boxpark/">https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/23/boxpark/</a>.

#### **OMEGA WEST WORK BEGINS**

Work is underway in St Helens to build a new distribution centre for one of the UK's largest retailers which will bring more than 1,000 jobs to the borough.

As well as the vast employment opportunities, coordinated by St Helens Borough Council's Ways to Work programme, other key features of the development include a 17 acre 'Green Wedge' planted to provide biodiversity mitigation and ecological enhancements; almost £2m in developer contributions to improve Bold Forest Park as a priority area; £750,000 for better bus connections between St Helens and Omega West; and improved pedestrian and cycling routes within and nearby the site.

Find out more: <a href="https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/22/omegawest/">https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/22/omegawest/</a>.



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