

ST HELENS BOROUGH LABOUR GROUP

END OF YEAR REPORT 2022





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BOROUGH COUNCIL



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Cllr David Baines

Labour Leader of St Helens Borough Council



Welcome to our St Helens Borough Labour Group end of year report for 2022.

It has been a very busy and productive year, and you can read many of the highlights and key stories in the following pages. In addition to the day to day work of keeping more than 700 essential services running, we've also been working to deliver on our commitments made in May's local elections.

It's also been a year with many challenges. Households, businesses and organisations including the council are all facing spiralling energy prices, inflation and interest rates, and once again – as we did during the pandemic – we're working in partnership through St Helens Together to do all we can to provide support and advice through the winter months and beyond.

As always, my thanks go to my Cabinet and Labour Group colleagues for their hard work, our MPs, our Police and Crime Commissioner Emily Spurrell, and Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and our partners in the City Region for their support. The biggest thanks must go - as always - to council keyworkers and our partners in the local public, private, faith and voluntary sectors for their collaboration and dedication all year round.

You can stay up to date throughout the year by following us on social media at @StHLabour and online at www.sthelenslabour.org, and follow the Council's official channels on Twitter and Facebook.

Best wishes to all residents,

David

YOUR LABOUR CABINET



COUNCILLOR SEV GOMEZ-ASPRON MBE

DEPUTY LEADER AND TRANSFORMATION



COUNCILLOR JEANIE BELL

SAFER, STRONGER COMMUNITIES



COUNCILLOR MARTIN BOND

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

COUNCILLOR ANDY BOWDEN

ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT



COUNCILLOR ANTHONY BURNS

WELLBEING, CULTURE AND HERITAGE



COUNCILLOR KATE GROUCUTT

ECONOMY, BUSINESS AND SKILLS



COUNCILLOR RICHARD McCAULEY

REGENERATION AND PLANNING

COUNCILLOR NOVA CHARLTON

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



COUNCILLOR MARLENE QUINN

INTEGRATED CARE AND HEALTH

SCRUTINY

Scrutiny is a vital and statutory part of local government. Cross-party committees hold the Leader and Cabinet to account and add significant value to policymaking across the council, assessing progress on delivering essential services and priorities.

Find out more about scrutiny: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/5530/What-is-Scrutiny>



COUNCILLOR MANCYIA UDDIN

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION CHAIR



COUNCILLOR MICHELLE SWEENEY

ADULT HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY CHAIR



COUNCILLOR TRISHA LONG

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY CHAIR



COUNCILLOR ROBYN HATTERSLEY

PLACE SERVICES SCRUTINY CHAIR



COUNCILLOR LYNN CLARKE

AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE CHAIR

January



Blackbrook Labour councillors and council staff with school staff and pupils from Ashurst Primary celebrating the start of work to build their new school

2022 began with Covid still affecting our daily lives, and concerns growing about energy bills and the cost of living...

- Community testing and booster vaccines were still very much part of our lives in January. Meanwhile the one year anniversary of Merseyside's first mass vaccination site at Saints was celebrated with a special event at the stadium. Throughout the pandemic, our council, voluntary sector, local NHS, and GPs worked hand in hand to keep the community as safe as possible. **We thank all those involved for all their amazing efforts.**
- Businesses in St Helens Borough like HAMMA Academy of Sports and Martial Arts have been able to grow thanks to funding support from Labour Metro Mayor Steve Rotherham's **£500,000 Town Centre Fund**. Our Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Business, Cllr Kate Groucutt and Saints coach Kristian Woolf were invited down for the official opening of their new gym: <https://tinyurl.com/2kcw529b>.
- Labour members and supporters were out campaigning across the borough, speaking with residents about the growing **cost of living crisis** and Labour's plan to lower energy bills.
- Our Labour Cabinet almost **£4m in funding to deliver a number of ambitious projects** to support residents from all different backgrounds into employment and training: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8wcsn8>. Cllr Kate Groucutt said: *"I was very proud to bring to Cabinet today two reports outlining investment totalling nearly £4million in employment support and job creation for residents of our borough. Supporting residents to get into employment or training, and progressing to skilled and secure jobs, is one of our key objectives as a Labour-run council."*
- We marked **Holocaust Memorial Day** with a special online service.
- Work began on the rebuild of **Ashurst Primary School** in Blackbrook.
- Cabinet approved a new draft **Housing Strategy** for St Helens Borough with the clear vision of 'Quality and accessible homes for all'. The strategy sets out the borough's future housing needs, the council's commitment to building quality and accessible homes for everyone, and to improving and strengthening neighbourhoods over the next five years: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/01/18/housingstrategy/>. Cllr Jeanie Bell said: *"Emerging from this challenging time, we now have a period of opportunity to reset our expectations in relation to housing – with transformational regeneration planned for our Town Centres, a new Local Plan and clear priorities within our Borough Strategy, our Housing Strategy sets out the central role that housing will have in improving our borough."*



February



Labour councillors, MPs, Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, council staff, and representatives from Glass Futures at the site of the world-first project

International events dominated the headlines this month as Putin began his invasion of Ukraine. Meanwhile locally work got well underway on several major projects...

- The iconic Steve Prescott Bridge was lit blue and yellow in **solidarity with Ukraine**. Community groups and volunteers came together to organise donations and support, and in March hundreds would attend a special vigil in Victoria Square to hear from speakers including Cllr David Baines, Cllr Jeanie Bell, and Ian Umney who had just returned from a 1700 mile journey to rescue his family from Ukraine and bring them safely to St Helens.
- The council agreed a five-year deal with a delivery partner to bring a new attraction to St Helens town centre. In October 2021, the council went out to tender for a contractor to create and operate a **food and drink offer utilising upcycled shipping containers** as a meanwhile use on the former Chalon Way carpark in Foundry Street – and in February we were pleased to announce that Steel Life Group Ltd. had been confirmed as the successful contractor winning a £1m contract. The project has seen delays outside of anyone’s control but it is expected to be open this Spring.
- Planning permission was granted for improvement works as part of a **£15m investment in the area around Lea Green**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/16/15m-sustainable-transport-scheme-gears-up-as-walking-and-cycling-works-receive-planning-permission/>.
- Following an overwhelmingly positive public consultation, Cabinet approved the final masterplans for **the regeneration of St Helens and Earlestown town centres**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/03/town-centres-masterplans-approved/>. Welcoming the decision Cllr Richard McCauley said: *“This is a huge step forward for our borough and as a Cabinet we are delighted that the plans have had the backing from the public. It shows that businesses, residents and visitors are ready for us to get to work in transforming Earlestown and St Helens town centres.”*
- Work on **the Gamble** progressed: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/10/external-repair-works-well-underway-on-the-gamble/> and Cabinet agreed significant funding to begin external repairs to **Earlestown Town Hall**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/02/significant-funding-agreed-for-earlestown-town-hall-repairs/>.
- Groundwork began on the world first **Glass Futures** project: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/07/glassfutures/>, **Omega West**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/22/omegawest/> and the **Parkside Link Road**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/02/11/plr-2/>.



March



 Cllr Andy Bowden and Cllr Mancyia Uddin with DriverNet, one of 16 local businesses to benefit from council grant funding for carbon reduction schemes

In March, the Rugby League World Cups arrived in the borough, we opened a new hub to help local people access jobs and training, green grants were awarded, and much more...

- St Helens **town centre businesses** OD's and Mercure St Helens Hotel put funding from the council to good use by focusing on modern technology to put them ahead. Cllr Kate Groucutt visited both to see how the money is helping them: <https://orlo.uk/Czl0f>
- 16 local businesses and community groups received decarbonisation grants through our **Climate Change Response Funding**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/16/local-carbon-reduction-projects-backed-by-labour-council-funding/>.
- We launched a campaign giving advice and support on coping with the energy crisis: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/17/advice-and-support-for-coping-with-the-energy-crisis/>.
- Women from across St Helens Borough's **Community Safety Partnership** backed the **#BreakTheBias** campaign at the Safer St Helens Summit. The event brought local partner agencies together to discuss community safety priorities for the year ahead, informed by residents' views from a recent Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Survey.
- A multi-million pound redevelopment project for **St Helens Crematorium** was completed.
- Plans were submitted for the **town centre regeneration** projects: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/24/plans-submitted-for-first-phases-of-town-centre-regeneration/> and the council confirmed it had purchased the Hardshaw Centre.
- The council backed the NSPCC's Look, Say, Sing, Ply campaign to boost **children's early development**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/10/nspcccampaign/>.
- In Taylor Park we officially opened the borough's first **accessible play equipment**, with more to follow.
- With our City Region partners we took the first major step to **bringing the bus network back under greater public ownership**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/04/labour-delivering-a-bus-revolution/>.
- The **Rugby League World Cup** trophies visited the borough as excitement started to build for the tournaments to be held later in the year: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/14/world-cup-trophies/>, including St Augustine's, where council and tournament legacy funding has provided a new sports pitch: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/15/staugustines/>.
- A new Ways to Work centre officially opened in Earlestown, to help even more local people into **jobs and training**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/03/15/new-ways-to-work-centre-opens-in-earlestown/>.



April

The Workers Memorial

Dedicated to the men, women
and children who have lost their
lives through accident or illness
caused by their work.

"We are who we are today because of yesterday"



The Workers' Memorial in Vera Page Park

April began with the launch of our election manifesto, ahead of May's elections. We also marked International Workers Memorial Day and more...

- We launched our **election manifesto *A lot done. More to do.*** We were the first Party to set out our plans, and it turned out we were the only one. Our manifesto is still available online so that residents can hold us to account: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/vote2022/>.
- On April 28th Council Leader David Baines, councillors and our MPs joined the Workers Memorial charity committee and dozens of attendees at a special service in Vera Page Park to commemorate **International Workers Memorial Day**. We stand proudly with working people, and we back the Day's motto – *Remember the dead. Fight for the living.*
- We presented the local NHS and Lord Dave Watts with their **Freedom of the Borough** scrolls. It's the highest honour a council can give, and deserved recognition for their tireless service for the borough and its residents.
- The outline business case for the **Freeport** received approval: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/02/major-step-forward-for-liverpool-city-region-freeport/>.
- A wave of **antisocial behaviour** was in the headlines, and the community stood united against such unacceptable behaviour: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/08/leaderasbstatement/>. Merseyside Police and partners including the council launched the Springwatch campaign to tackle ASB: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/04/springwatch/>.
- The planning applications for **St Helens and Earlestown town centre regeneration** were published: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/06/view-the-planning-applications-for-first-phases-of-town-centre-regeneration/>.
- At full council, Labour brought motions supporting the **Hillsborough Law campaign**, calling for an end to **'fire and rehire'**, and **supporting our Armed Forces and veterans**.
- A plan to replace aging council vehicles with modern and electric variants – **saving money and cutting emissions** by nearly 100 tonnes every year – was agreed by Cabinet: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/20/fleet/>.
- We launched a bid to bring **GB Rail HQ** to the borough: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/20/gbrail/>.
- The iconic **Dream** got a much-needed spring clean as part of our ongoing maintenance of the sculpture: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/04/26/dream-set-for-spring-clean/>.



May

A lot done. More to do.



 Our manifesto

CALL LABOUR

Vote Labour
Thursday 5 May

Election won, and back to work...

- **Labour won the local election** in St Helens Borough with a strong, clear majority and a mandate to deliver our plans for the borough in the next four years. Labour won 29 out of 48 seats after receiving over 50,000 votes – that's 52.5% of the vote, and an increase of 10.7% on our vote share last year. We thank everyone who voted Labour for your support!
- After the election, David Baines was re-elected Labour Group leader and Leader of the Council. He said: *"I'm pleased to have been re-elected as Leader and I'm looking forward to getting straight back to work. Our Labour council will work hard for you in the next four years to deliver our manifesto commitments, and I want to thank all those residents who voted Labour and all my excellent Labour colleagues, members and supporters for their hard work in the campaign and all year round. I would also like to thank all our amazing council staff who administered the elections professionally and impartially. It literally couldn't happen without them. A lot done, more to do. Back to work!"*
- **Cllr Sue Murphy was re-elected Mayor** for another 12 months: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/05/25/cllr-sue-murphy-to-remain-as-mayor-for-another-year/>. Speaking of her pride to be given the opportunity to represent St Helens Borough for another year, Cllr Murphy said: *"Being mayor this past year has been a wonderful honour for me and my family – meeting so many inspirational people and community groups who have done incredible things to make our borough a better place – so I'm delighted that I get to do it all over again for another year. The support I have received, especially for my chosen charities, has been nothing short of outstanding and I'm very much looking forward to going out to meet even more people, groups and organisations, while raising awareness and funds for Willowbrook which is a cause very close to my heart."*
- Cllr Baines set out **Labour's plans** in a speech at Annual Council: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/05/27/annualcouncil/> and confirmed the **Cabinet**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/05/28/cabinet-positions-confirmed-back-to-work/>.
- We announced the Business Advocates scheme was being extended, helping to **support more local businesses**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/05/31/labour-backing-local-businesses/>. Cllr Kate Groucutt said: *"Local independent businesses are the heartbeat of our town and district centres, and we know the last couple of years have been very difficult. We hope the expert support provided through this scheme will help them to grow, strengthen their business and employ more local people, as well as contributing to the revival of our town centres and high streets."*
- Independent inspectors completed their examination of the **St Helens Borough Local Plan** and published their report, meaning that the Plan could go forward for consideration at Cabinet and Council in June and July: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/05/24/independent-inspectors-complete-local-plan-examination/>.



June



Mayor of St Helens Borough Cllr Sue Murphy and Labour councillors with Deputy Lieutenant David Steer KC at the Platinum Jubilee Beacon lighting in Taylor Park

Armed Forces Day and the Platinum Jubilee were among the highlights in June...

- St Helens Borough celebrated **Armed Forces Day** with a great day of family events and fun at Victoria Park. Mayor Cllr Sue Murphy, Deputy Mayor and Armed Forces Champion Cllr Lynn Clarke, Council Leader Cllr David Baines and Deputy Leader Cllr Seve Gomez-Aspron were among those attending a special dinner at St Helens town hall to celebrate our Forces.
- Events were held across the borough to celebrate **Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee**, including street parties and special beacon lightings at Taylor Park and Billinge Hill.
- The council joined forces with local former professional boxer Martin Murray to launch an important new initiative to **support men with their mental health**. The St Helens born former WBA interim middleweight title holder helped to launch a new booklet, titled 'MENTal Strength', in partnership with the council's Public Health team at his ThinkFast Academy at Parr Sports & Community Centre in St Helens just before the start of national Men's Health Week (June 13 -17th): <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/06/12/council-teams-up-with-martin-murray-for-mens-health-week/>. Cllr Anthony Burns and Cllr Michelle Sweeney, our Member Champion for Mental Health, supported the launch.
- Planning permission was granted for units 2 & 3 at **Omega West**: <https://tinyurl.com/mutfxkde>.
- The new Borough **Housing Strategy** was agreed: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/06/22/housing/>.
- An ambitious strategy setting out how the council will manage, maintain, and invest in its **highways and infrastructure** network over the next five years was adopted at a Cabinet meeting: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/06/23/highways-2/>.
- We welcomed **Freeport** Board Chair Tom O'Brien to Parkside to see progress on the redevelopment and discuss the site's huge potential as part of the City Region Freeport: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/06/24/freeport/>.
- Events were held across the borough to mark **Refugee Week**, with Labour councillors taking part and supporting activities: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/06/25/refugee-week-events-held-across-the-borough/>.
- We welcomed **rugby league** legend Mal Meninga to St Helens to help promote the upcoming World Cup, and visited Portico Panthers to see their new clubhouse which has been delivered thanks to tournament legacy funding and council support.
- Cabinet welcomed the latest report from the independent Local Government Association into St Helens Borough Council. Their latest findings were **overwhelmingly positive and recognise the progress we've made** under new political and officer leadership since 2019: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/06/30/independent-review-confirms-council-progress/>.



July



Among July's highlights were a Stuttgart visit, St Helens Pride, Local Plan agreement and more...

- [Students from Stuttgart visited St Helens](#) as part of our town twinning partnership, believed to be the oldest in Europe. During their time in the borough, the group were invited to Cowley for a concert and went on a tour of St Helens Town Hall, The World Of Glass and the iconic Dream statue. They also took in a Friday night game at the Totally Wicked Stadium. St Helens' relationship with Stuttgart dates back to 1948, just a few years after World War II.
- The community came together to celebrate **St Helens Pride**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/02/pride22/>.
- Cllr Nova Charlton congratulated **Abbeyford** on its latest Outstanding Ofsted report: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/05/outstanding-abbeyford-celebrates-ofsted-result-in-style/>. Nova said: *"As a council, our first priority is to ensure all children and young people have a positive start in life and fantastic facilities like Abbeyford are a shining example of what can be achieved."*
- It was confirmed that work would begin later in the summer on **rebuilding Lea Green station**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/11/work-to-begin-on-major-lea-green-station-improvements/>.
- The St Helens Borough Local Plan was officially adopted. Setting out the borough's existing needs for housing, employment, infrastructure and services, together with its future development plans, the Local Plan strikes a balance between **growth, prosperity and quality of life for residents** over the next 15 years: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/12/local-plan-for-new-jobs-new-homes-and-new-opportunities-agreed/>. Cllr Richard McCauley said: *"We want St Helens to be a vibrant, attractive, and prosperous borough. We want local people to benefit from a good choice of quality and affordable homes, skilled local jobs, efficient infrastructure, beautiful open green spaces, good transport links and better health and wellbeing. These aspirations are at the heart of our Local Plan, and I'm delighted that it will now guide local growth and development for our borough over the coming years."*
- External repairs were completed on the historic **Gamble Building**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/13/gamble/>.
- Six **Town Deal projects**, developed by the Board made up of local private, public and third sector representatives and chaired by John Tabern, were submitted to government for approval: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/15/towndeal/>.
- We reaffirmed our commitment to **supporting people with disabilities**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/21/council-reaffirms-commitment-to-supporting-people-with-disabilities/>.
- Outline planning permission was granted for our exciting **Earlestown regeneration** plans: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/07/27/outline-planning-permission-granted-for-earlestown-regeneration/>.



August



Plans for Earlestown market

September's agenda included investment into our digital infrastructure, further funding bids for regeneration, and the countdown continued to the Rugby League World Cup...

- A state-of-the-art fibre exchange is being rolled out across St Helens. The first stage is being built in Peasley Cross as part of a £30m investment by **CityFibre** to bring full fibre connectivity within reach of almost every home and business in the borough.
- With 50 days to go, Council Leader David Baines, Cllr Richard McCauley, Saints and Tonga coach Kristian Woolf and St Helens town centre businesses encouraged residents not to miss out on attending **one of the biggest sporting events in the world** when the Rugby League World Cup comes to St Helens this autumn: <https://tinyurl.com/4943v2m8>
- Our council-run Ways to Work Centre in St Helens, in partnership with the DWP, ran a Jobs Fair at St Helens Town Hall. A number of live vacancies with local and national employers were available. This was just one of a number of similar events we've organised or hosted this year in order to help local people into **employment and training**.
- Stunning **Victoria Park** in Windle won the prestigious Green Flag award for the 8th consecutive time: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/08/01/victoria-park-win-8th-consecutive-green-flag-award/>.
- The new **Ashurst Primary School** in Blackbrook continued to take shape. By August the building's steel frame was up, ongoing work was taking place to the first floor external walls, and the ground floor was ready for the concrete pour. Blackbrook Labour Councillors Anthony Burns, Linda Maloney and Paul McQuade said: *"It's great to see this progress. It's been a long time coming and it's something we've fought hard for, so we're delighted to see it and can't wait for the new school to open. Our children right across the borough deserve the very best facilities and we'll continue to do everything we can to provide them."*
- Two **Levelling Up Fund** bids were submitted to government by the council, for projects in Earlestown and St Helens town centres. The bids seek funding of up to £40million and are complimentary to our wider plans with ECF and our Town Deal bid for St Helens: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/08/06/levelling-up-bids-submitted-to-government/>.
- Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram and Council Leader David Baines were among those writing to Arriva calling for them to come to a resolution to the **ongoing bus strike**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/08/12/time-for-arriva-to-act/>.
- As part of our commitment to improving access for all children in our parks, the council installed an **accessible roundabout** in Rainhill: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/6693/Accessible-roundabout-installed-in-Rainhill-Park>.
- The council's Sports Development Team, St Helens Rotary and St Helens Canoe Club teamed up to organise **canoe sessions** on the Sankey Canal: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/6602/Water-way-to-explore-St-Helens-borough-s-proud-heritage>.





September

September 2022 will always be remembered for the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Our Borough came together to mark her life and give thanks.

- The whole borough was immensely saddened by the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Books of commemoration, floral tributes and more were left across St Helens. Services of thanks and remembrance were held across the borough, and Mayor of St Helens Cllr Sue Murphy led tributes on behalf of the borough. We will remember Her late Majesty's remarkable life with awe and gratitude.
- Crowds gathered in Victoria Square to witness the Mayor Cllr Sue Murphy read the proclamation of our new sovereign, King Charles III. The Mayor was accompanied by others including her Consort Mike Murphy, the Deputy Lieutenant David Steer KC, and Council Leader David Baines. Long live the King!
- Later in the month work resumed in earnest, beginning with confirmation that the council had been successful in securing almost £1m from the Government's Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) Fund to help us **prevent rough sleeping** through a programme focusing on prevention, intervention, recovery and systems support: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/09/19/council-secures-almost-1m-to-continue-rough-sleeping-prevention-work/>.
- We welcomed a **ground-breaking national art education project** to the borough. The World Reimagined aimed to improve understanding of the transatlantic slave trade and its history in our region: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/09/20/borough-welcomes-the-world-reimagined-project/>.
- **The UK's first custom-built, hydrogen-fuelled waste collection vehicle** arrived in St Helens Borough and was unveiled by Cllr Andy Bowden and Cllr Mancyia Uddin ahead of its integration into the council's fleet. It is a pioneering investment by our council, and forms part of our wider fleet and operational modernisation and our commitment to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. The vehicle's unveiling in St Helens saw international partners and local stakeholders come together for a presentation at St Helens Town Hall about its merits and a demonstration of its green technology: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/09/21/hydrogen/>. Cllr Andy Bowden said: *"Our aspiration is to be at the forefront of a green revolution taking place in the region – investing in renewables, diversifying the green skills of our workforce, future-proofing our services, hosting cutting-edge decarbonisation projects in industry and fostering climate action locally at grassroots. Supported by investment in electrics and the most efficient diesel vehicles, we have confidence that our decarbonisation plans can be introduced in a managed way that doesn't compromise service delivery to our residents. This vehicle represents our faith in the renewables sector as both a service provider and employer, and our commitment to net-zero emissions by 2040, and I'm delighted to see it arrive in the borough."*
- The **once-in-a-generation transformation of St Helens town centre** received the green light from the Planning Committee, following on from the approval of regeneration plans for Earlestown town centre in July: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/09/28/major-milestone-in-st-helens-town-centre-regeneration-plans/>.



October



The Tongan men's squad, Mayor of St Helens Cllr Sue Murphy, Labour councillors and representatives from the local rugby league community at St Helens town hall

October was a month of contrasts. The cost of living emergency was making things increasingly difficult for households, businesses and service providers. Meanwhile the Rugby League World Cup finally kicked off with colour and fun and Labour won the Moss Bank by-election...

- Partners across St Helens Borough pledged to work collectively to support residents through the **cost of living crisis**. With rising energy prices and the impact of inflation on a wide range of everyday essentials for both residents and businesses the borough is facing an unprecedented situation with wide ranging impacts on residents: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/10/04/cost-of-living-support/>. At meeting convened at the town hall, essential service providers spoke of the increasing pressure they were seeing, not just on residents but on themselves and their own ability to provide proper support. Council Leader David Baines said: *“Through St Helens Together we will be bringing together the services, information and advice from partners across the borough and doing all we can to make it easier for residents and businesses to find out all they need to support them through the coming months. We already have lots of help and advice available online at www.sthelens.gov.uk/sthelenstogether and this will continue to be updated with further advice and help from partners in the weeks ahead.”*
- The council and partners launched the **FEEDSTHELENS** appeal to raise funds for food pantries and foodbanks: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/10/22/feedsthelens/>.
- Rebuilding work for **the brand new Willow Bank School** in Newton was completed and Deputy Leader Cllr Seve Gomez-Aspron was on hand with school staff for the handover of the keys: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/10/28/new-school-building-ready-to-welcome-pupils/>.
- Labour candidate Jeanette Banks won the **Moss Bank by-election** – congratulations Jeanette, and to the Moss Bank team! And thank you to voters for your support once again.
- Cllr Jeanie Bell, Cllr Richard McCauley and Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram visited the **Moss Nook** site to see progress on the redevelopment, and to welcome the news that another 262 homes are set to be built thanks to a further £2m funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/10/31/new-homes-set-for-moss-nook-development/>.
- The council launched its 2022 **Christmas gift appeal**: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/7099/St-Helens-Borough-Council-Christmas-gift-appeal-2022>.
- We heard how the **transformation plans** for St Helens Borough will see St Helens “deliver on its ample potential as a strategic hub in the north west” according to a top town centre boss: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/10/21/transformation-plans-will-help-borough-reach-its-potential/>.



November



Marking Remembrance Day and campaigning for urgent support to deal with the cost of living crisis were among the issues on the agenda in November...

- As always, we marked Remembrance Day with services taking place across the borough. Labour councillors and members were proud to take part and to honour our servicemen and women past and present. **We will remember them.**
- St Helens councillors, staff, and dozens of representatives from local public, private, faith and voluntary sector organisations wrote a joint letter to the Chancellor spelling out the challenges facing residents and service providers right now: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/7141/Letter-to-the-Chancellor>. We called for **urgent support for residents, and fair funding for essential services**, and our campaign was highlighted on regional TV and radio.
- We worked with partners to launch a directory of **warm spaces** to support residents through the winter months: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/11/22/warm-spaces-available-for-residents-this-winter/>.
- Creating jobs and apprenticeships for residents, opportunities for local businesses to provide goods and supporting community projects and schools is the aim of our new **Social Value Policy** agreed at Cabinet in November: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/11/12/social-value/>. Cllr Martin Bond said: *"This is an exciting and ambitious approach that is in keeping with the values of St Helens Borough Council and will allow us to get better benefits for our residents, businesses, and communities. Major schemes such as Glass Futures, Parkside, St Helens Crematorium refurbishment and Earlestown Town Hall refurbishment are already delivering social value in the form of jobs, apprenticeships, school partnerships on topics like STEM skills and much more. This new policy will allow us to go even further to get wider benefit from every penny the council spends."*
- The council and its partnership working with organisations and businesses in St Helens town centre brought success with the award of the **prestigious Purple Flag accreditation**. The Purple Flag is similar to the Green Flag for parks and focuses on raising standards and broadening the appeal of town and city centres between the hours of 5pm and 5am. Clinching the Purple Flag shows that judges recognised the vibrant and diverse mix of dining, entertainment and culture on offer in St Helens town centre while also promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and local residents: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/11/14/purple-flag-award-for-st-helens-town-centre/>.
- The council's **Library Service secured a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant** of almost £250,000 to deliver an ambitious new programme of work which will uncover the borough's rich heritage in the arts, culture and creativity industries: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/11/18/library-service-secures-funding-grant/>.
- We saw the work underway on the **transformation of Lea Green Station** and the new CYCLOPS junction: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/11/19/work-underway-on-significant-lea-green-transport-improvements/>.



December



Victoria Park Santa Dash

In December, council staff responded to the cold weather, we took on the Borough of Culture title, and there was a very well deserved award for our Mayor...

- **Christmas events** took place across the borough, with large switch on events in St Helens and Earlestown town centres and a Santa Dash and festive family fun day in Victoria Park: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/05/santa-dash/>.
- We secured more **brownfield funding** to help deliver town centre regeneration: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/06/brownfield/>.
- Newton councillor Jeanie Bell was appointed **Merseyside Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner**: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/06/jeanie-bell-appointed-new-merseyside-deputy-police-and-crime-commissioner/>. Congratulations Jeanie!
- St Helens took on the title of Liverpool City Region **Borough of Culture** 2023 at a ceremony in Knowsley: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/07/city-region-borough-of-culture-title-passes-to-st-helens/>. More information about special events to mark the year will be revealed in the new year.
- Our new hydrogen powered waste collection vehicle – the first in the UK – was officially named, with the '**Hydro Hero**' now ready for its debut collections in the New Year. Well done to Maisie, aged 9, from Queen's Park Primary School for picking the winning name!: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/15/uks-first-custom-built-hydrogen-powered-waste-collection-vehicle-named/>
- The council launched its **budget consultation** for 2023/24, spelling out what further budget cuts mean to local services: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/18/have-your-say-on-budget-options-for-2023-24/>.
- Council staff laid more than 450 tonnes of rock salt along the borough's primary routes during the **cold snap**: <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/article/7502/Council-s-highways-team-show-true-grit-during-cold-snap>.
- The council's **Christmas appeal** raised thousands in donations and meant that hundreds of local children received gifts this Christmas: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/20/christmas-gift-appeal-sees-thousands-of-donations/>.
- Deputy Leader Cllr Seve Gomez-Aspron and Cllr Richard McCauley took a look at **Earlestown town hall** to see the great progress on external repair works to the historic building: <https://www.sthelenslabour.org/latest-news/2022/12/22/earlestown-town-hall/>.
- Mayor of St Helens Borough **Cllr Sue Murphy was awarded the MBE** in the New Years Honours: <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=537296125097533&set=pb.100064514507272.-2207520000.&type=3>. Congratulations Sue!



The Year Ahead

As we enter 2023 we all continue to face huge challenges, not least the **cost of living emergency** and the **budget pressures** on the council and other service providers. Through our work in our communities and in the council via **#StHelensTogether** we will continue to do all we can to help residents through these tough times.

Despite these challenges there are positive things to look forward to, and we're determined to make the most of them. From our **Borough of Culture** honour celebrating the amazing people and groups in St Helens to the opening of **Glass Futures** and further milestones on our **town centre regeneration** journey, there's a lot to get excited about.

Whatever the year brings, and whatever difficulties put in our way, we know that our communities have the strength and character to get through it and come out fighting.

Stay in touch with our work all year round on social media at @StHLabour and online at www.sthelenslabour.org, and here's to a successful year for all of us!





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