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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2011



Parents' fight to save nursery from closure

THIS was the scene outside Milton Keynes Council's offices on Friday as parents protested against the possible closure of a nursery.

The campaigners are trying to save Russell Street Day Nursery in Stoy Stratford.

The nursery has been closed since a heating failure before Christmas, with staff and children forced to relocate to the Rowans Surestart Centre in Fullers Slade.

Annette Parmar, one of parents, said: "I chose Russell Street over other nurseries because of the family approach to looking after our children.

"I am not happy about this move, I would rather my children were at Russell Street.

"It is a disgrace that the council have been happy to take our money but not take care of the welfare of our children."

> Full story, see page 4.



Dumped puppy loses fight for life

See report on page 4

Brother leads tributes to Paolo after body is found



by Gareth Ellis

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THE body of missing man Paolo Scirello has been found by police.

Officers were called to the Giffard Park area at 11.12am on Sunday after reports of a body seen in the canal.

The body had not been formally identified at the time of going to press, but clothing and identification found on it suggest it is that of Paolo. A post mortem will take place today but the death is not being treated as suspicious.

Paolo had been missing since

LEFT: Paolo Scirello

Death of 34-year-old is not being treated as suspicious, say police

January 9 with friends and family joining police in the search for him.

Now, hundreds of tributes have been posted on a Facebook page that had been set up in an appeal for information on the 34-year-old computer worker.

Family and friends, including Paolo's brother Alf Scirello, have also visited the site where he was found to lay flowers and pay their respects.

Alf said: "Last night I sat and read the many tributes people have been sending in, it gave me great comfort to know that so many people thought

so much of my brother Paolo. You were so popular and will be missed by so many, I miss you so much Paolo, I love you with all my heart."

And Joy North posted: "So sorry to hear this awful news of such a lovely young man. My thoughts and prayers are with his family and friends. RIP Paolo."

Colin Woodcock said: "Such a sad day for one of the good guys, this page shows all the love you had from people you met in your life. Taken so soon but will never be forgotten, let the angels lead you, RIP."

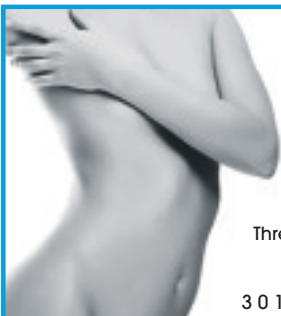
To read these and hundreds more tributes visit the page on Facebook by searching Help Find Paolo Scirello in Milton Keynes.

Detective Inspector Simon Robert said: "Paolo's family were notified yesterday of the discovery and our thoughts are with them at this very difficult time.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank the media and the public for all their help and support during the search for Paolo. Obviously we were all hoping for a positive outcome so this is a very sad end to what has been an extremely difficult time for all of Paolo's family and friends."

> See Thursday's Citizen for full tribute.

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BODILIGHT

FIRST FOR NEWS

Homes cleared as blaze rages

SIX homes were evacuated after a terraced house fire in Wolverton.

Firefighters were called to the blaze in Windsor Street shortly after midnight on Saturday. They were praised for preventing the fire spreading through a row of neighbouring houses.

Around 30 firefighters from Great Holm, Newport Pagnell, Broughton and Blechley, tackled the fire at its peak with crews finally leaving at around 3.45am. Thames Valley Police and Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue officers are investigating to discover the cause.

Incident commander, Ian Wilson, said: "When the first crews arrived, smoke was pouring through the roof of the mid-terraced house. The house was empty, so they had to force an entry through the front door before starting to fight the fire from the inside."

"Firefighters had to withdraw when the roof started to collapse on to the first floor, but were able to surround the fire and prevent it from spreading in both directions."

Boy attacked by trio of thugs

A 16-YEAR-OLD boy was attacked and robbed as he stood outside shops in Blechley.

The incident happened at 6pm on Wednesday, February 2, as the youth waited outside the Melrose Way shops when two or three men approached him and assaulted him. While on the ground one of the men stole his mobile phone. Another of the offenders had a dog with him.

The boy was taken to Milton Keynes Hospital for treatment to head and body injuries.

Anyone with information can call police on 0845 8 505 505.

Man charged with car theft

A MAN has been charged in connection with the theft of a car.

Neal Lambert, 18, from Conniburrow Boulevard in Conniburrow, was charged with one count of taking a motor vehicle without consent, one count of driving a motor vehicle without insurance and one count of driving without a valid licence.

The charges are in connection with the theft of a Rover 75 from a driveway in Two Mile Ash in the early hours of January 25.

Lambert has been released on bail and is due to appear at Milton Keynes Magistrates Court on Monday, February 14.

Help in picking the right school

SCHOOL admissions are back on the agenda as consultation begins on how youngsters can apply for school places.

The arrangements will be relevant to children starting school for the first time, transferring from an infant school at the end of Year 2 and for transfer at the end of Year 6 to secondary school.

The consultation documents can be viewed at www.milton-keynes.gov.uk or by calling 01908 253371.

Parents protest to save their nursery

by Georgina Butler

01908 651241 editorial@mkcitizen.co.uk

PARENTS fighting to save an 'outstanding' nursery took to the streets outside the council offices in central Milton Keynes on Friday.

Russell Street Day Nursery has been a feature in Stony Stratford for 70 years but is in danger of being lost forever.

The Nursery Parents Association is protesting at the way it believes Milton Keynes Council has neglected the building and now considers it a real possibility it will be demolished.

Cliff Brett, from Stony Stratford, who has a 20-month-old daughter registered at the nursery, said: "The council has neglected the nursery over the years and just not reinvested – they are responsible and are now trying to get rid of what they see as a problem."

Surveyors' reports highlight problems such as damp, but parents argue no significant effort has been made by the council to improve the state of the building. Following a heating failure before Christmas, staff and children have been forced to temporarily relocate to the Rowans Surestart Centre on Fullers Slade but parents fear this may become a permanent move.

Parents were only given two weeks' notice of the temporary relocation and further discussions appear to make it a foregone conclusion that Russell Street Day Nursery will remain closed.

Philip Walton, Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes Council 'neglected' 70-year-old facility, say protesters



PROTEST: Parents campaigning outside the council offices

Conservative Councillor for Stony Stratford, attended Russell Street as a child and supports the parents' cause.

He said: "I am seething about this to be honest – to be given two weeks' notice was really not on."

"What really annoys me is the council has got money that can be used to make up the amount needed to allow the nursery to continue for three to four years."

Parents are concerned their children have moved from a nursery classed as 'outstanding' to one that received a 'satisfactory' result in its last Ofsted inspection.

Councillor Walton added: "It is the only outstanding nursery in Milton Keynes. It should be helped rather than the council funding a demolition."

A council spokesman said: "As part of a review of the future management of the eight council run day nurseries, councillors will consider a proposal to merge Russell Street Day Nursery in Stony Stratford with the Rowan's Day Nursery in nearby Fullers Slade."

"Russell Street Day Nursery has been rated outstanding by Ofsted and the proposed move, which includes the moving of all current staff with it, will ensure that this standard of provision can be maintained."

"A recent inspection of the Russell Street site identified that extensive works are needed to ensure young children can be cared for in a safe environment."

"These include repairs to the building's structure and heating system which is currently not operating to the standard required for babies and young children. Options for retaining the Russell Street site have been robustly explored, however, the cost of refurbishment could not be met by the council at this time of significant budget pressures. The views of parents, staff and local councillors are being taken into consideration."

Appeal for witnesses as man is killed crossing road

A MAN has died from injuries suffered after a collision with a car on a busy city road.

The 30-year-old man, who lived in the Blechley area, was crossing the busy V4 Watling Street, close to the Asda store in Granby.

Police are now appealing for any witnesses who may have seen the accident or know anything about the man to get in touch with them as soon as possible.

The victim, who is still yet to be formally identified, was crossing the road near Granby when he was involved in the collision with a Ford KA.

An ambulance was called and the man was taken to Milton Keynes General Hospital where he later died of his injuries.

The driver of the Ford KA was uninjured in the collision.

> Anyone who witnessed the incident or knows the man can call police on 08458 505505 or Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555 111.

Debt advice now on hand from Shelter

CHARITY Shelter has extended its services to offer help to people struggling with debt.

The charity's specialist advisers will continue to offer free, impartial advice and support on housing issues including rent and mortgage arrears and illegal eviction.

Helene Vancliff, Shelter service manager for Milton Keynes, said: "Last year we helped over 2,000 people in the area with their housing problems, but with tough times ahead more and more people are going to need help with issues like debt."

"That's why we've extended our service and I would urge anyone who is having difficulty with debt or welfare benefits to get in touch with us immediately."

"Most people will be seen within a week by one of our specialist advisers who can let them know what their rights are, explain their options, and help them negotiate with councils, landlords and lenders."

Debt advice will be on offer on Monday and Tuesday from 9am-5pm.

For more information, visit www.shelter.org.uk or to book an appointment, call 0344 515 1876.

Vet devastated after death of dog she hoped to re-home

Dumped pup Benjamin Button loses fight for life

A VET has been left devastated after the dog she had been hoping to re-home was put to sleep.

Last week, Citizen First reported on the plight of Shih-Tzu puppy Benjamin Button, who was cruelly dumped outside Willows Veterinary Surgery in Newport Pagnell.

He was taken to Astonlee Veterinary Surgery on Friday, January 21 where he was recovering well after being found with a bad skin condition and was due to be taken home by the surgery practice manager, Barbara Keeling.

However, the dog developed Kennel Cough, a condition he was bravely fighting.

His condition then deteriorated further when he developed Parvovirus, a virus that affects the digestive system of dogs.

With the skin condition affecting his immune system



TRAGIC: Benjamin Button when he was brought in, left, and in his new home, right, before he sadly died

he wasn't strong enough to combat the illness and was regrettably put to sleep.

Barbara said: "I am just so gutted that he never got to see his new home or play with my youngest dog, Barney Rubble, he will never get to go on our 'dog holidays' and won't see the canals or the seaside."

"It is such a sad waste of life and I truly hope someone



is absolutely ashamed of themselves for robbing a puppy of his future."

Barbara once again called for the people who dumped the dog to be prosecuted.

She said: "Someone must know someone else who had this little dog and now mysteriously doesn't have one."

"The people who did this have now not only dumped

a dog but are responsible for his death as well."

"I hope they are found and feel the full force of the law."

She now hopes the case will encourage more people to take up insurance cover before they think about getting a pet.

"She said: "Pet insurance for this little guy would have been just £20 to £25 per month."

Two reds for the Dons at Thrillsborough

> See page 47 & 48 for full report and Thursday's Citizen for all your Sports news.