

Help wanted for healthy living scheme

IPSWICH: A healthy living scheme is seeking volunteers to join its team.

The borough funded Town and Bridge Project works with people aged 45 and over who live in the town centre and Stoke areas of Ipswich.

The Town and Bridge team is looking for volunteers who want to improve their own health and help motivate others to be more active.

A free three-day course has been organised to inform people about the scheme. Project manager Julie Stokes said: "We want to recruit volunteers to help spread the word among friends, neighbours and family."

The project's ActivAge scheme this year features new activities including beginners golf, creative dance and "family fun with food" - during which six teenagers from the local high schools will compare diets and eating habits with a relative or friend who is over 45.

If you would like an ActivAge timetable telephone Lindsay Bennett on 01473 261112.

The volunteer recruitment course includes a free lunch and runs from 10am to 3pm on Monday, January 24, at ICVS, 1 Cornhill, Ipswich. For more details call Julie on 01473 261112.

Surgeon speaks out to defend fattest man op

BY KATIE MCGONAGLE

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IPSWICH: A leading doctor who performed life-saving surgery on the world's fattest man has defended the operation in advance of a TV documentary being shown tonight.

Paul Mason, classed as the world's fattest man at his top weight of 70 stone, was followed by TV crews as he underwent major gastric bypass surgery in February last year.

Shaw Somers, consultant upper gut surgeon at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester, started treating Mr Mason two years ago.

"The main difficulty was just physically dealing with his size," said Mr Somers. "He was so heavy at that stage he couldn't walk so he needed quite a significant amount of help to get from one place to another, or getting into a hospital bed. He understood it wasn't going to be easy and this was part of a process to help him."

Mr Mason lost just under 12st in the run-up to the operation, which involved a team of a dozen health professionals, to lessen the surgery's high risk.

He has shed another 20st since the gastric bypass and now tips the scales at just under 40st. But Mr Mason, who lives in a specially-

adapted bungalow in east Ipswich, hit the headlines last year as a storm erupted over whether he should have the £100,000-operation paid for by the NHS.

The 49-year-old had been bedridden for nearly a decade and relied on a team of carers - costing about £2,000 a week - to look after his every need.

"I think it's understandable that people have that kind of opinion," added Mr Somers. "But the reality is that looking after these patients long-term is much more expensive than doing the surgery."

"The most important thing is that Paul is a human being and he deserves respect and privacy."

"He deserves care - he worked and paid his taxes and I think people forget it's easy to judge when you don't know the real reasons for people's behaviour."

Since having the surgery, Mr Mason has been seen out in the town and it appears he is on his way to leading the normal life he so desperately wants.

But tonight's documentary will also show how his addiction to food has torn apart his family.

His sisters have reportedly refused to speak to him since their mother Janet lost her house after re-mortgaging it to fund



SURGEON: Mr Shaw Somers who performed a life-saving gastric bypass operation on Paul Mason, below

Pictures: CONTRIBUTED/CHANNEL 4

his ever-growing food bills.

■ *Britain's Fattest Man* is on Channel 4 at 9.35pm.
 ■ **What do you think of the situation? Write to Your Letters, Evening Star, 30 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich, IP4 1AN, or e-mail eveningstarletters@eveningstar.co.uk**



In brief

Warning lights collision at level crossing

MELTON: Police are appealing for witnesses after a vehicle collided with level crossing warning lights at a railway line.

It happened at Wilford Bridge Road, Melton, near Woodbridge, at about 2.20am on New Year's Day. The driver of the Citroen Berlingo abandoned the car, but it is thought he spoke to several people at the scene before he left. Anyone with information should call police on 01473 613500.

Luncheon club's plea for new volunteers

STOWMARKET: Volunteers are being sought by the team behind a popular social lunch club for older residents.

The Thorntree Lunch Club needs people to help out on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 2pm, serving and preparing food. The club is based at the Stowmarket Town Council Offices in Milton Road South. For more details telephone 01449 613565.

Animal transporter stolen from farm

CLAYDON: Thieves have stolen an animal transporter lorry from a farmyard.

The red Mercedes lorry, registration B755 HYJ, was stolen from a property in Church Lane, Claydon, at some point between 2pm on Monday, January 3, and 6am yesterday. Fencing and a gate were damaged as the lorry was driven away towards Henley.

Any witnesses are asked to telephone the Crime Investigation Bureau on 01473 613500.

■ **Breaking news online: www.eveningstar.co.uk**

Funeral for councillor is to take place this week

SUFFOLK: The funeral of a popular Suffolk county councillor will be held this week.

Rosie Clarke (pictured) passed away on Christmas Day following a battle with cancer.

A service for Ms Clarke will be held on Friday at St Mary's Church, Market Hill, Woodbridge, at 11am.

For those who would like to attend, Requiem Mass will be tomorrow at St

Thomas' Roman Catholic Church, St John's Street, Woodbridge, at 4pm.

In place of floral tributes, Ms Clarke's family have asked that contributions be made to either Macmillan Cancer Care, St Thomas of Canterbury RC Church, Woodbridge, or Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust Oncology Unit. To make a contribution visit www.justgiving.com/matt-clarke2



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PUBLIC MEMBER

PRESS COMPLAINTS COMMISSION

Applications are invited for three new public members of the PCC, the body that deals with complaints about the editorial content of UK newspapers and magazines and their websites (including audio-visual material). The appointment - which is made by the full Commission, following recommendations by the Nominations Committee of the PCC, working in conjunction with an Independent Adviser - is for an initial term of three years. Membership - which comes with fees of £11.5k per annum, plus reasonable expenses - involves nine board meetings in central London each year (usually on a Wednesday afternoon), and occasional adhoc Committee work. In addition, Commission members are sent papers for consideration each week.

Applicants will need to demonstrate a number of criteria, including: a record of achievement in their own walk of life; an understanding of the principles of self regulation, and its legal and political context; an understanding of the problems faced by those caught up in the media spotlight, in particular vulnerable groups of people,

and a commitment to the public service of helping them. A full list of criteria is available on www.pcc.org.uk.

Because of the importance of the Commission's independence, applicants should not have been employed in the newspaper and magazine publishing industry - at management or editorial level - for the last ten years.

A description of the role, and further information about the applications process, is available on the PCC's website www.pcc.org.uk. Applications must take the form of a CV and covering letter (addressing specifically how the candidate can meet all of the stated criteria) to be received by 5pm Tuesday February 1st 2011. Interviews of a shortlist of candidates are expected to take place in the weeks beginning 14th and 21st February. For those with difficulty accessing the internet, application information can be obtained from Mrs Tonia Milton, PCC, Halton House, 20/23 Holborn, London, EC1N2JD.

