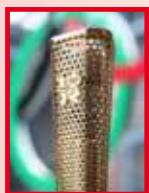




## Are you going to be an Olympic Torchbearer?



On Thursday 8 December LOCOG began to make conditional offers to inspiring people to carry the Olympic Flame next summer during the 70 day Olympic Torch Relay. 6,800 individuals were contacted and we are keen to find out who from Hertfordshire has been one of the lucky ones. If you are – get in contact and tell us your story.

This month we had the honour of a visit from the Premier of the British Virgin Islands, read more about that on page two. Also this month, we are introducing the Olympic Ambassadors from the Virtual School for Children Looked After.

Thanks for subscribing to our e-newsletter and we would like to wish all of our readership a very merry Christmas and all the very best for 2012!

### The Herts 2012 Team

**Jon, Sophie, John, Sally and Gareth**

visit us online at

[www.hertsisreadyforwinners.co.uk](http://www.hertsisreadyforwinners.co.uk)

or follow us on Twitter

[www.twitter.com/readyforwinners](http://www.twitter.com/readyforwinners)

## Olympic News from The Virtual School for Children Looked After

### Hertfordshire's Virtual School for Children Looked After has five young people as Olympic Ambassadors

Children from the Virtual School are all in the care of the local authority. The role of the Virtual School is to support and track the education of young people in their real schools to ensure they meet their true potential. However, like a real school the Virtual School organises different events to allow young people to meet together and their bi-annual magazine 'Herts and Minds' included a poster asking for young people to apply to become Olympic Ambassadors for the Virtual School. It was a difficult choice to select the final five to be part of a year long Olympic Project.

*I am writing as I would love to become an Olympic Ambassador for the virtual School for the London 2012 Games. I believe the games will bring long-lasting benefits to Herts, London and Great Britain, not just in the sporting field but socially and in the tourist industry.*

*Rahmat Khan - Year 12.*

*I am a 100m sprinter and high jumper and I have won district awards and gold and silver medals for this. I am part of the Ridlins Athletics Club in Stevenage and I attend every week to train. I have a keen interest in sport and I would like the opportunity to be part of the Virtual School Olympic group to see where the*

*athletes train, the stadiums they will compete in and the motivation they have to take their talents to be part of Team GB.*  
*Dolapo Sarumi - Year 11*

Since being recruited in the summer the ambassadors formed a focus group to promote the benefits of the Olympics to young people; to keep them updated about what is happening in Herts and to gather their opinions on the Olympics. The group have met and been on an Olympic Park tour with the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners team and also had lunch with Richard Roberts, Executive Member for Children's Services. The ambassadors also plan to organise an Olympic style sports day for younger children from the Virtual School so that they can enjoy a fun day of different sports before the Games begin.



*L-R - Harriet Wilkerson - An excellent sportswoman, a keen footballer who plays for Cambridge United; Kate Cawthra - Organiser of the group; Lizzie Colton - Strong interest in politics; Rahmat Khan - Keen interest in the Olympics and the legacy it will bring to Great Britain; Mitesh Vagadia - Organiser of the group; Dolapo Sarumi - An excellent sportsman who excels in the 100m sprint and high jump; Diane Gyassi - An excellent communicator with a keen interest in all sports.*



# New agreement brings the Caribbean to Herts



*Signing of the Memorandum of Understanding*

**Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners' 2009 agreement with the British Virgin Islands National Olympic Committee for their athletes to train in Hertfordshire Pre London 2012 has taken a further step towards official friendship with Hertfordshire County Council and the British Virgin Islands Government signing a Memorandum of Understanding of their own, to develop formal links between a range of organisations in the British Virgin Islands and Hertfordshire.**

The initiative, which was pursued by the BVI and Hertfordshire County Council, builds on their Olympic relationship and supports the objectives of the UK Government's strategy for the Overseas Territories that includes strengthening ties between the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories.

Foreign Office Minister for the Overseas Territories, Henry Bellingham MP congratulated the Premier of the British Virgin Islands (BVI), the Hon Dr Orlando Smith, and Cllr David Lloyd, Deputy Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, on the signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding.

Premier of BVI, the Hon Dr Orlando Smith said he *"envisioned a very long lasting relationship between the British Virgin Islands and Hertfordshire Council"*. The Premier also extended thanks to Shirley Parker and the residents of Aston for welcoming BVI athletes into their homes under the community hosting arrangement made in the initial MOU on sports cooperation.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Henry Bellingham said, *"As Overseas Territories Minister, I am very pleased to be here today to show the British Government's support for the signing of this important Memorandum of*

*Understanding between Hertfordshire County Council and the British Virgin Islands Government.*

*"This is exactly the type of partnership that we are seeking to encourage between the Overseas Territories and the United Kingdom as part of our new strategy for the Territories, and I hope that other Territories will seek to follow BVI and Hertfordshire County Council's lead."*



Speaking at a reception held at County Hall, Hertford on Friday 25 November, Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council Jane Pitman said, *"This agreement gives us the opportunity to share best practice, skills and business contacts between the public and private sector in Hertfordshire and our new partners in the British Virgin Islands.*

*"Particular areas of focus are education, adult care, youth offending and economic development. We are also investigating setting up graduate work experience opportunities for newly-qualified students from the British Virgin Islands so they can come to Hertfordshire to learn valuable skills.*

*"This is also a good opportunity to develop community links with the British Virgin Islands. We have already seen villagers from Aston open their homes to athletes from the British Virgin Islands who are training for the Olympics. This agreement will give Hertfordshire communities and our schools the opportunity to link with and learn more about Caribbean culture."*



*Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council, Jane Pitman with the Hon Dr Orlando Smith*



## Herts businesses should build on successes says Paralympian Danny Crates

Hertfordshire businesses were inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games at a free event at Paradise Wildlife Park.

The event is the latest in an award winning series of free business meetings arranged by Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners. Delegates enjoyed a cooked breakfast, heard about London 2012 contract opportunities, were given advice on business preparedness, met a Paralympic gold medallist and local young talented athletes, found out about Hertfordshire's Olympic venue - the Lee Valley White Water Centre, enjoyed a tour of Paradise Wildlife Park, and networked with other local business people.



Left to right: Presenters Vivek Chaudhary from Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Danny Crates, Paralympic Gold Medallist, David Coulson, East of England Development Agency and John Fuller, Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners.

Paralympian Danny Crates, the former T46 arm amputee, 2004 Paralympic Champion combined with other speakers to inspire local businesses to get themselves ready for the London 2012 Games. Danny said, *"These events are still as important as they were two years ago as contracts are still available. There is also the added opportunity for the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Partnership to champion the amount of business success that Hertfordshire has already had from London 2012."*

Chairman of the Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners Board, Derrick Ashley, said,

*"Our county has maintained the accolade of the highest percentage of businesses registered on CompeteFor in the region, we are proud of this and want to keep the level of engagement up. With the recent London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay announcing that Hertfordshire has the honour of hosting the torch on two days, now really is the time for Hertfordshire businesses to grab the opportunities that the Olympics is bringing to the county."*

Registrations are now being taken for the partnership's next 'Win Business Gold' business event on Friday 27 January at the Holiday Inn, Elstree.

These free events are very popular so delegates are advised to book early to avoid disappointment - download the registration form here, <http://www.hertsisreadyforwinners.co.uk/downloads.html> and return it to [herts2012@hertsc.gov.uk](mailto:herts2012@hertsc.gov.uk)



James McMurray

## Olympic Hopeful – James McMurray

Middle distance runner James McMurray is making strides in the world of athletics with his recent national and international achievements.

Harpenden athlete

James, 16, was selected for the Hertfordshire Talented Athlete Programme in August and now benefits from the Strength and Conditioning support provided by coaches at Performance Hertfordshire who also work closely with James' coach.

James joined St Albans Athletics Club in 2005 at the age of 10 where coach Deborah Steer recognised his natural talent in the 800m and 1500m disciplines. Since then James has steadily worked his way up the track and field rankings to become the National Under 17 800m, 1500m and Cross Country Champion.

James' aim for 2011 was achieved when he was selected to represent Great Britain at the World Youth Championships in Lille, France, finishing in a respectable 6th place. He then qualified for the

Commonwealth Youth Games in the Isle of Man, improving his earlier result to 5th place. This gave James the opportunity to gain his second England vest after his previous representation at the SIAB Schools International earlier in the year where he won the silver medal.

The pinnacle of the season for James was breaking the all-time British Under 17 1500m Record. A title previously held by Steve Cram for 34 years.

The Hertfordshire Talented Athlete Programme is not the only scheme to recognise this young talent. James was selected to attend a Kelly Holmes Future Stars Programme day where he received media training and nutrition advice amongst other services.

Supported by the University of Hertfordshire, Herts County Council, Lee Valley Regional Park and Herts Is Ready For Winners, this programme supports 24 other talented young athletes from around the county.

**For more information visit  
[www.hertssportsvillage.co.uk/](http://www.hertssportsvillage.co.uk/)  
[hertstalentedathletes](http://hertstalentedathletes)**

## New attractions highlight legacy in action

**Sport, leisure enthusiasts and young children are to start feeling the benefits of the success of the inaugural season of Lee Valley White Water Centre.**

New play and leisure facilities are being constructed in the River Lee Country Park adjoining the Centre in an attempt to increase the overall experience for visitors.

New features include a natural play area, designed to increase youngsters' awareness of nature and encourage more traditional forms of play. Thanks to a team of volunteers, the area is being cleared of overgrown vegetation, allowing a series of large sculptures to be erected which children will be able to climb.

For those who want a challenging yet fun sport activity, a new disc golf course is being created. The increasingly popular sport is similar to traditional golf but instead of using clubs and balls, a flying disc is thrown.

A new 500m dog agility assault course consisting of 10 obstacles including jumps, hoops and tunnels is proving popular among those



looking to put their pet through its paces. Most obstacles have been created to suit dogs of all sizes and abilities.

The new features form part of Lee Valley Regional Park Authority's drive to deliver an enduring legacy from the London 2012 Games by ensuring that the success of venues is felt throughout the community.

Lee Valley White Water Centre is also opening for a new season to meet huge demand for those wanting to raft at the venue. Those who are bold enough to brave the winter rapids can do so from 19 January until 9 April.

Prices start at £49 per person for a half-day rafting adventure which includes a safety briefing and a session to get used to paddling.

To book, visit  
**[www.gowhitewater.co.uk](http://www.gowhitewater.co.uk)** or call  
**08456 770 606.**



## 2012 Physical Activity Challenge – Silver Accreditation



*L-R Sir David Nicholson, Alan Farmer, Jenny Ambrose and Jonathan Edwards*

**NHS Hertfordshire have been recognised for their health and wellbeing work with an NHS 2012 Physical Activity Challenge Silver Accreditation Award.**

The award was presented to Alan Farmer (Director of HR and Workforce) and Jenny Ambrose (HR Advisor) by Sir David Nicholson and Jonathon Edwards (Olympic Gold medallist and Athlete) at the Department for Health in Whitehall.

Following on from the presentation all NHS organisations who received awards across the country were taken for a tour of the Olympic Park in Stratford. The tour included the Olympic Stadium, Basketball Arena and Aquatics Centre but the Hertfordshire cohort particularly enjoyed seeing the Velodrome where they got the opportunity to go inside and see Team GB practicing.

NHS Hertfordshire received the silver award for supporting the following activities/events:

- Providing a range of types and levels of activities eg walking, tennis, badminton, aerobics, golf, pedometer challenge
- Running activities and purchasing supplies from local communities to support the notion of being 'green'
- Offering a flexible extended lunchtime
- Producing an Employee Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- Achieving the Inspire Mark and intending to seek accreditation for the 'Staying Healthy at Work' Programme
- Running focus groups (Have your say session)
- Running Nutritionist Sessions and on-site massages
- Offering an Employee Assistance Programme
- Operating a Health and Wellbeing Group

For more information on the NHS 2012 Physical Challenge please visit <http://www.sportandphysicalactivity.nhs.uk/>



## Hertfordshire Goes Global!



*The Mascots at  
The Russell School*

A school twinning programme inspired by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games has seen the mascots Wenlock and Mandeville travel half way around the world.

The Russell School, in Chorleywood, teamed up with The Tanglin Trust School in Singapore to spread a bit of Olympic magic. A pair of the Olympic and Paralympic mascots were sent from The Russell School to The Tanglin Trust School. The mascots are two of only 2012 made and delivered the Olympic and Paralympic message to over 1000 students during their stay in Singapore. The mascot team presented assemblies to all junior year groups, around 800 pupils, to spread the Olympic and Paralympic values to their classmates.



*Robert Dunstan at  
The Russell School  
accepting the Mascots*

Wenlock and Mandeville are now carrying on their journey, going to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to meet members of the Malaysian Royal family before

travelling onto Australia and New Zealand and their final destination of the Pacific Island community of Kiribati.



*The visit of Rosemary Mula to  
Tanglin School Singapore*



*Pupils from Tanglin school and St Theresas  
Convent School at The Olympic Museum  
in Singapore*

## A10 Active Olympic Festival



### A10 Active (formerly A10 SSP) held their 4th Olympic Festival recently at Turnford School.

The Hertfordshire is Ready for Winners' own Ambassador John Fuller officially opened the Games and encouraged the schools to support the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Children from 13 schools with 14 teams were encouraged to experience the Olympic and Paralympics value in 10 sports which included boccia, tennis, gymnastics, hockey, basketball, swimming, rowing, football and athletics - running, throwing and jumping.

Each of the 14 teams was given a country prior to the event to research and make their own flags to use in the opening ceremony with teams parading 2012 metres with their flags to Olympic themed music.

Prizes were awarded to the winners by the Mayor of Broxbourne, Cllr Eddy Rowland; winners on the day were Sheredes Primary School who represented South Korea.