

No place like home

For many people the festive season has been a welcome distraction to gloomy economic headlines.

But in the run up to Christmas we saw some positive news coming from our area. Local newspapers reported a dozen new shops had opened between October and December. It meant less units standing empty than in the same period in 2008.

Shops opening up tells its own story. Potential retailers must like what they see. Residents and visitors are coming to shop and eat or use other services that are available. And I am sure that the existing local businesses are in no small way responsible for this positive news.

It is very easy, when things are going against you, to look to blame others for your plight or wallow in self pity. Much harder to dust yourself down, roll up your sleeves and fight back. But that is exactly what the businesses and retailers did in Stafford Town Centre.

In fact more than 100 have joined a new 'Town Centre Partnership.' A website was set up, thousands of loyalty cards distributed, and offers have been running in local newspapers. I am proud we helped them make this happen.

With determination such as this, maybe it is more than just coincidence that Stafford Borough is currently fairing better economically than the majority of towns and cities in the country.

As a council we have signed up to the 'Think Local' pledge. This means we will always look close to home to buy any goods and services. It is just one of the ways we can ensure we do our bit to help the Stafford Borough economy. I hope everyone will start (if they have not done already) to 'Think Local' too.

Together we can make sure it is a Happy New Year.

Mike Heenan