

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Boxer Callum Simpson takes on one of the Reds players and writes an exclusive column as tickets go on sale for his Oakwell showdown...

PAGE 22

SOAP STAR'S SHOW

Sherrie is set for local appearance

PAGE 9

BARNLSLEY

CHRONICLE

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NEWSLINES

Convenience store hit with £9k fine

A BUSINESS has been fined £9,000 for failing to comply with Food Safety Act laws. Enforcement officers from Trading Standards swooped at Brothers Convenience Store on High Street, Wombwell, last May. Following their visit, they served an improvement notice after finding that food packaging did not include mandatory product information. After failing to comply with the notice, the business was subsequently fined at Barnsley Magistrates' Court.

Coun Wendy Cain, cabinet spokesperson for public health and communities, said: "We're committed to keeping our communities safe and take this responsibility seriously. "Our teams do great work to make sure businesses comply with the Food Safety Act and keep potentially harmful products off our shelves. "We work closely with traders to make this possible, helping them to understand their responsibilities and issuing warnings where they can correct errors."

BAFTA nominations for game developers

A PAIR of game developers from Barnsley have picked up seven BAFTA nominations. James Carbutt, from Wilthorpe, and Pogmoor's Will Todd have been highly-acclaimed for their video game 'Thank Goodness You're Here'. It all started when the duo met at the old Kingstone secondary school – and they've now been nominated for seven BAFTA Games Awards. They received nominations in the Animation, Best Game, British Game, Debut Game, New Intellectual Property, as well as two nominations for Matt Berry and Jon Blyth in the Supporting Role categories. The pair will be up against some of the biggest games in the world, such as The Legend of Zelda, at the awards ceremony on Tuesday.

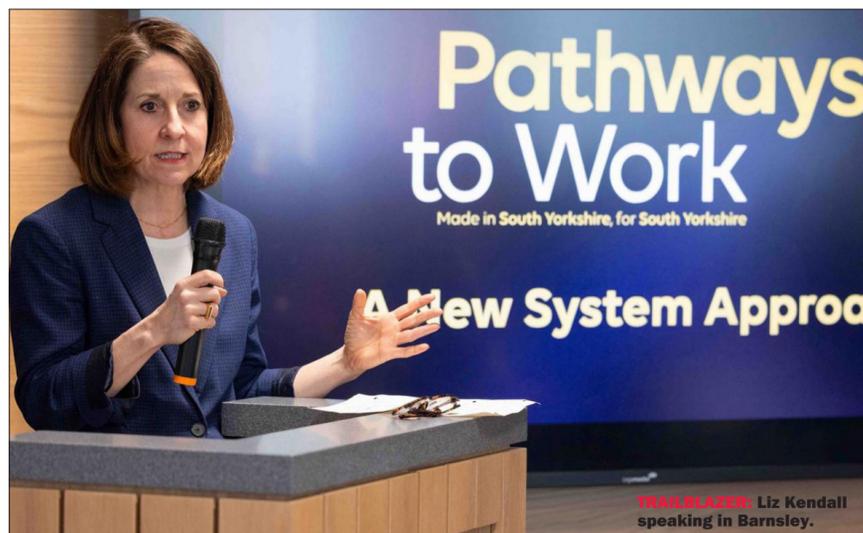
Town's key role getting Britain back into work

Government minister's praise for scheme devised here in Barnsley

By Jack Tolson

A SCHEME pioneered in Barnsley which aims to get residents back into work has helped shape a government project that will now be rolled out across the UK. Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall revealed in a visit to the town yesterday. The Pathways to Work Commission report was published by Barnsley Council in July with Ms Kendall in attendance to hear more about the scheme. It took evidence from employers, educators and experts and spoke with 750 locals who have been affected by economic inactivity. Yesterday Ms Kendall unveiled the first of nine trailblazer programmes in Barnsley to get Britain back to health and back to work, nine months on from her landmark speech on employment reforms in the town. South Yorkshire is one of nine £125m-backed 'inactivity trailblazers'

across the country to launch, with the aim of helping areas with the highest levels of economic inactivity as part of the wider 'Plan for Change'. Backed by £18m, South Yorkshire plans a dedicated new service working with employers to hire those with health conditions, and a new 'triage' system to make it quicker and easier to connect people to employment, health, and skills support. This work will include preventing people falling out of work completely due to ill health through an NHS programme, working with people with conditions ranging from cardiovascular disease to diabetes. This could include arranging voluntary work as a stepping stone to paid employment or helping people receive the right treatment early so they can remain in a job. In the first year, South Yorkshire will work with over 7,800 people and aim to help up to 3,000 people into jobs or to stay in jobs.



TRAILBLAZER: Liz Kendall speaking in Barnsley.

Ms Kendall said: "For too long, whole areas of the UK have been written off and deprived of investment. We are turning the tide on this – as we believe in the potential of every single person across our country and that they deserve to benefit from the security and dignity that good work affords. "This is why we're investing £125m into nine local areas to get Britain back to health and back to work – with our new approach making it quicker and easier for people to access the support they need to stay in work if they have a health condition or return to work. "Through their new initiatives, South Yorkshire aims to reduce inactivity from 25.5 per cent in 2023 to under 20 per cent by the end of 2029 – equivalent to helping 40,000 people across the area. Alison McGovern, the Minister of State for Employment, told the Chronicle that the investment is about regenerating people, as well as 'bricks and mortar'. She said: "It's massively important that we invest and I am knocked over with how Barnsley looks. "It's not just because the sun is shin-

ing, it's because it's been rebuilt. "We don't just want a bricks and mortar regeneration, we want regeneration of people – of hearts and minds. "If you're going to do that you need a strong economy working hand-in-hand with strong public services. "That's why we've all worked together to think what's a good way of bringing in work help and employment support with the support that people need for their health. "This campaign has been shaped by Barnsley's Pathways to Work Commission – a landmark report that heard directly from local residents who have experienced barriers to accessing work. South Yorkshire Mayor Oliver Coppard told the Chronicle: "I'm grateful to the government for putting support into Barnsley because for all too long that support just hasn't been there, especially for the first two years. I've been asking time and again for support for South Yorkshire, and all we got back at best was a response saying 'we're not interested'. "We know what works for our communities and we have the backing from our government."

Barnsley Council leader Sir Steve Houghton added: "We've created more jobs, and better jobs, so everyone can benefit from our growing Barnsley. "However, we know and recognise that some residents need more help. "That's why we launched the Pathways to Work Commission, to examine the barriers preventing people from working and how we can overcome them. "Now, through government backing and funding, we're going to see the roll-out across South Yorkshire of more one-to-one, individual support for people that are out of work. "This personalised approach will help our residents to overcome their barriers to work and find opportunities that are right for their needs, interests and circumstances. "We've had an incredible response from businesses ready and willing to create roles are suitable for people who've been out of work. "We couldn't be more proud that Pathways to Work, born here in Barnsley, is about to help fast-track thousands of people out of economic inactivity, into a prosperous future in employment that suits them."



REVIVAL: Boz Davison and Julian Wyles with the knurr and spell kit.

SPORTING COMEBACK: The traditional game of knurr and spell is set for a revival thanks to some dedicated fans. The once-popular game – known as poor man's golf – will be played at Wortley Men's Club later this month. Now all the organisers need are some volunteers to compete for the trophies that will be up for grabs. Full story – page five.

£2m cost of council's senior management team

By Josh Timlin

BARNLSLEY Council's highest-earning employees collectively cost the town's taxpayers more than £2m in wages and pensions in a single year, new figures released this week revealed. The Taxpayers' Alliance's 'Town Hall Rich List' compiled a list of staff members breaching the £100,000-a-year bracket in 2023/24. Top earner was chief executive Sarah Norman, whose total package included a wage of £192,000 and a pension contribution of £31,000, totalling £223,000. Wendy Lowder, now-retired executive director for place, health and adult social care was the second highest with a £154,000 salary and a £25,000 pension. Children's services boss Carly Speechley and growth and sustainability director Matt O'Neill both pocketed £138,000, while core services leader Wendy Poplewell and finance director Neil Copley

also surpassed the £120,000-a-year mark, as well as £20,000 pension top-ups. It meant the top seven earners – combining both salaries and pensions – surpassed £1m, although there were ten further undisclosed employees on £107,500 each and two more on £102,500. The Chronicle can reveal that the total cost came in at £2,297,000. A Taxpayers' Alliance spokesman said: "First compiled in 2007, the Town Hall Rich List 2025 marks the 19th edition. "Every year the Taxpayers' Alliance has compiled a comprehensive list of all local authority employees receiving total remuneration over £100,000. "For the average band D property, taxpayers in England will have to pay a council tax rise of 4.99 per cent in Barnsley in 2025/26. "We seek to ensure transparency surrounding local authority employees receiving over £100,000

in total remuneration – the number of such employees has risen to the highest recorded level. "Many staff are reported as receiving salaries between £90,000 and £99,999, but their total remuneration is likely to exceed that when other pension contributions are taken into account. "As such, the total number of employees receiving over £100,000 in total remuneration is likely to exceed the identified number. "Aside from service bosses, there are 63 councillors – three in 21 wards – and each receive between £10,720 and £11,823 through a basic allowance. In addition to their annual salary, some councillors receive special responsibility pay for carrying out extra duties, such as serving on the council's ruling cabinet, or chairing committees including planning, scrutiny or licensing boards. Council leader Sir Steve Houghton was paid the most at

£40,917, with deputy leader of the council Caroline Makinson second as she received more than £30,000. Coun Robert Frost, cabinet spokesperson for core services, added: "We're a large organisation and must remain competitive in the marketplace to continue to attract the best talent and deliver our ambitious plans for Barnsley. "Our salaries are competitive to make sure we can both attract and retain the best candidates. "The salaries of most of our employees are graded using the National Joint Council Job Evaluation Scheme structure. "Our external auditors reviewed our annual statement of accounts for the 2023/24 financial year and believe we get value for money, while the recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge noted that we manage our finances well and have a good understanding of our financial position and any associated risks."

Weekend weather outlook:

FRIDAY
A pleasant, sunny day 18
SATURDAY
Sunny start cloudy later 14
SUNDAY
A pleasant, sunny day 15

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