

Still time to sign up for cheaper energy deal

Energy customers in the East Riding still have time to take advantage of exclusive discounts on their electricity bills by signing up to the YORSwitch energy scheme before February 2.

The scheme, which is organised by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council, negotiates competitive prices with energy companies on behalf of those who register.

YORSwitch gathers together those who want to switch energy companies and pay less for their energy, with companies bidding for the privilege of providing energy to those who sign up to the system.

An auction will be held between several suppliers on February 3. The energy company that offers the best prices will win the contract and the right to supply the local residents who have registered for the new energy deal. The residents will be sent 'offer' letters to see if the offer being made is actually a saving on their current energy bills.

The scheme is free to join, with no obligation to switch to the winning suppliers' tariff. Should residents choose to switch, ERYC will oversee the entire process. Average household savings after the last auction stood at more than £220.

Cllr Symon Fraser, ERYC portfolio holder for the environment, said: "The scheme continues to bring benefits to the East Riding residents who signed up for it. In difficult financial times it is excellent that we are able to negotiate significant savings for householders."

For more information on YORSwitch or to sign up, visit www.eastriding.gov.uk/yorswitch or phone 01482 393 939.



A queue of people waiting for bread and soup at the Faith, Hope and Love Kitchen in Bulgaria (22-01-62 SU).

Local plea for Bulgarian poor

by Bronte Matthews

A charity raising money for vulnerable people in Bulgaria is holding a fundraising event in Goole on March 21.

The Hull-based charity 'Bulgarian Aid' was founded by local woman Christine Metcalfe following a trip in 1997 to a Rotary conference in the city of Thessaloniki, Greece. The Bulgarian delegates who attended the conference appealed to Rotarians for support to tackle poverty in their country.

At the time Bulgaria was almost bankrupt and struggling to establish a democracy. Vulnerable people, such as orphans, the elderly and the disabled, desperately needed help.

Christine was invited to visit a town in Bulgaria called Rousse. It was there she saw hundreds of children in orphanages. They were poorly dressed, badly fed and had little hope for the future.

Once back in England, Christine had the idea to knit warm jumpers for vulnerable children in Bulgaria.

But this was only the start as her project soon grew - thanks to the help and support of friends and fellow Rotarians.

Christine started collecting clothes, shoes, bedding, toys and many other types of aid. She arranged for fundraising craft fairs to take place in Hull, Cottingham, Bilton and Ferryby.

The items being donated in the UK soon started to be sent to Bulgaria by sea - in containers.

Christine said: "Our last shipment - in October 2014 - was mainly food for elderly people in Varna. In Varna there are 1,000 people a day being fed by soup kitchens."

She went on: "We need to expand our fundraising as the need for our help in Bulgaria is growing. These people are really in need and very grateful for what we can do."

Part of that expansion will be a charity event held at Montague Mills in Goole. Christine has worked with the fashion outlet previously to raise money for the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity.

This time Montague Mills has offered the charity, Bulgarian Aid, its exhibition room on March 21 for the holding of a craft fair.

There will be a variety of stalls operated by local crafts people as well as stalls run by and in aid of the charity. Homemade jams and preserves and household crafts will be sold. There will also be a tombola and a raffle.

The event will run from 10am to 3pm. Stalls can be booked by email at info@bulgariarelief.co.uk.

● Pictured above left - Christine gives a gift to Constantin. They are pictured in a Home for Disabled People in Provadia, Bulgaria (22-01-61 SU).



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IPCC probe into local convicted police chief

A former Humberside Police Chief Superintendent was found guilty of aggravated stalking, harassment, common assault and witness intimidation at Manchester Crown Court on January 23.

Colin Andrews (59) was found not guilty of rape, assault occasioning actual bodily harm and a further charge of common assault.

At the time of Mr Andrews' arrest he was the force's criminal justice unit manager.

Chief Constable Justine Curran said: "As soon as I became aware of the allegations against Mr Andrews I took personal action to ensure a proportionate and independent investigation.

"The matter was referred to the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Commission), which decided to take overall management. Senior officers within Humberside Police had close relationships with Mr Andrews and I made the decision that an independent force should carry out the inquiry. From this point Durham Constabulary continued the investigation.

"This was agreed by the IPCC, which retained ultimate oversight. I identified the fact that alleged victims were distrustful of the police and personally assured them the matter would be handled appropriately, giving them the confidence to engage with the criminal justice process."

Mr Andrews is currently suspended from work. Humberside Police has warned his future employment will now be considered in accordance with internal conduct procedures.

Chief Constable Curran said: "The dedication of our anti-corruption unit, who assisted Durham police in their investigation, demonstrates the victims' bravery and confidence in our officers was not misplaced. These officers, whose professionalism is echoed in the majority of officers in Humberside Police, should be recognised for the highest standards of integrity. I would also like to personally thank the Durham officers involved in this investigation. They have worked tirelessly to ensure a proportionate and professional case was put before the court."

Mr Andrews will appear before Manchester Crown Court again on March 13 for sentencing.

Libraries Day

National Libraries Day - on Saturday, February 7 - is an event organised to allow communities to celebrate their local library and the role it has in their area.

Everyone from regular customers to people who may never have set foot in a library before are invited to discover what services are on offer. Residents in the East Riding will be able to visit their local library to see the variety of facilities available - and even get a chance to win a prize.

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