

# Sports achievers are all jumping for joy

■ Chief executive of British Gymnastics Alan Sommerville presents the award to Tracy Whittaker-Smith  
CE picture by KELLY BARNES 050609KA-3



OLYMPIC hopefuls are jumping for joy after their sports club became the 1,000th winner of a major national award.

The Northamptonshire Trampoline Academy, based at the Benham Sports Arena in Moulton Park, was handed a Clubmark award by Sport England, in recognition of their high standards of coaching, safety and equal opportunity.

The club, which have had success at national and international levels, have more than 600 members and satellite centres at Bishop Stopford School and Southfield Sports College, Kettering.

The award ceremony was accompanied by a trampoline display, showcasing all levels of performers, from youngsters who jump for fun to international competitors aiming for a place at the next Olympic Games.

Head coach Tracy Whittaker-Smith said: "We are committed to providing a quality service. Gaining Clubmark accreditation will mean that we will be recognised as a safe, effective and child-friendly club."

Sport England chief executive Roger Draper said: "It is not easy to reach the standards demanded by the scheme, so the club should be very proud of all they have achieved."

And three special schools in Northampton joined forces to put their sporting skills to the test in a combined sports day.

A total of 80 pupils from Billingbrook, Fairfield and Greenfields Schools took part in activities ranging from trampolining to football during the event at the Northampton Academy in Billing Brook Road.

The event was part of a sports initiative involving the town's 30 primary schools, five secondary schools and three special schools. The School Sport Co-ordinator Partnership scheme aims to encourage pupils to become involved in sports.

Paul Lamb of the Northampton Academy said: "The Government recognises the importance of physical education in schools and has set a national target that two hours of high quality PE per week should be part of the curriculum and beyond. It would be brilliant if this event encouraged the students to develop their existing skills, learn new sports and join a sports club."



■ Special needs children at Northampton Academy: from left, Henry Worth and Kerrine Rand on trampolines, Alex Kings plays football and Lee Morton catches a rugby ball  
CE pictures by KATHERINE BATCHELOR 050610KB (17, 18, 20 & 21)

Tory-led council disputes claims over abuse victims, repairs and disabled

## Keeble attacks aspects of borough housing services

**HOUSING services offered by Northampton Borough Council have been attacked by one of the town's MPs.**

The Labour MP for Northampton North, Sally Keeble, has accused the Conservative-run council of failing to house victims of domestic abuse, of not carrying out repairs to council houses, and of not helping families with disabled children.

Mrs Keeble made her claims after noticing a rise in the number of people attending her advice surgeries with complaints about council housing. She said:

**By Wayne Bontoft**  
Politics Reporter

"There are major issues about the way domestic violence victims are treated. Some women have contacted me who have been left in refuges for far too long.

"I have also had reports of families of five being left in bed-sits in some very extraordinary cases.

"But these can't be just treated as independent cases - there are major problems in the housing department.

"During the election campaign some of the areas I saw were in a terrible state."

The borough council's housing department was inspected by the Audit Commission earlier this year. Independent examiners gave the service one star out of a possible three, raising concerns about the council's treatment of the homeless and the value for money of the department.

But an authority spokesman said it did not recognise the increase in problems Mrs Keeble had suggested. He said: "We are extremely disappointed to learn of Sally Keeble's comments and totally dispute her claim that there has been a dramatic decline in the standard of housing service we provide.

"The council is undergoing a major period of change in order to improve our services and we are focussing on putting the structures in place to ensure we continue to provide quality homes for many people who live in Northampton.

"Mrs Keeble's comments are made all the more surprising given that she met with senior officers and councillors from Northampton Borough Council last week and did not raise any of these issues then."

Northampton Borough Council currently manages about 12,500 properties across the town.

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## Focus on change, ex-MP tells authorities

OUSTED Labour MP Tony Clarke has vowed to keep a close eye on the victors of May's elections and has called for those now in charge of Northampton to push the town forward.

Mr Clarke lost his Northampton South seat at the General Election to Tory Brian Binley, by a margin of 4,419 votes.

But, in a letter to the *Chronicle & Echo* today, he says he will closely monitor the progress of

both his successor and the new county council administration.

He says: "I still believe that too many people in authority at both town and county hall have become too well practised at finding reasons and excuses as to why we can't achieve things rather than focusing on ways to bring about change and prosperity.

"Therefore, I make a plea to them all to start finding ways

to make things happen."

In his first political statement since his election defeat, Mr Clarke also calls on politicians to take action on illegal traveller camps by finding a long-term solution to the problem.

He adds: "I will, of course, be keeping a very close eye on local affairs and be challenging any ineptitude that arises, while at the same time helping out, in any way I can, those who, like

me, want to see Northampton prosper."

But despite warning Conservative he will keep an eye on them, Mr Clarke praises them for their hard-fought campaign and puts part of the blame for his defeat down to Labour voters protesting against the Iraq war.

He says: "Too often, voters who said they had become disillusioned with the Prime Minister told me that they supported

what I was doing locally, but unfortunately wouldn't vote for Mr Blair.

"I told them that he would still be there on May 6, but I wouldn't if they took that view."

Mr Clarke is now general manager at Northampton Town FC and will help oversee a multi-million-pound overhaul of Sixfields.

■ See Tony Clarke's letter in *Your Say*, on page 10.



### Samba day

HARTWELL primary school will be having a carnival on Friday. A procession through the village at 2.15pm will be followed by a party. The children will be donning fancy dress on the theme of fire, earth and water and showing off dance steps they will have learned from dance company Samba Wamba.

### For felines

A CATTERY in Northampton is having a jumble sale in aid of Cat Rescue, on Saturday from 10 to 11.30am. The sale at St James Community Centre will include children's toys, bric-a-brac and books. It is organised by A&E Malin of Semilong.

### Food tips

DIETICIANS will be at a Northampton supermarket tomorrow, to give customers health advice on the content of their trolleys. Asda shoppers in Kings-thorpe will be able to ask for advice about diet and lifestyle from 12.30pm to 1.30pm. It is part of a Northampton Primary Care Trust diabetes awareness campaign.