

Going for gold at an off-road bike event

CYCLISTS can go for gold in an off-road test at Danbury Bike Festival.

The event on July 18 and 19 is being arranged by Chelmsford Council, Danbury Outdoors, SportEssex, Little Havens Children's Hospice and Trailnet.

The Little Havens Off Road Bike Ride on the Saturday starts at 2pm with a 3km loop at the Danbury Outdoors centre.

The event is aimed at families and children and is challenging but nothing that someone of reasonable fitness won't be able to cope with.

Bronze, silver and gold medals will be awarded with sponsorship going to Little Havens Children's Hospice.

For an application form visit www.littlehavens.org or call 01702 220324.

On the Sunday, Mud Sweat and Gears mountain bike races cover a more challenging 5km loop with stiff climbs.

This is part of the Mud Sweat and Gears three race series. To take part visit www.mudsweatgears.co.uk

Jewels taken

BURGLARS escaped with at least £1,000 worth of jewellery, having caused £400 of damage to a property at Lawrence Court, The Street in Hatfield Peverel on June 30 between 8.45 and 10.25am.

Police are appealing for anyone with information to contact 0300 3334444 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

A new lease of life after transplant op

Former patient to take part in sporting games event

By Anne Fitzgerald

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THREE years ago Justine Laymond was planning her funeral, but this month she is looking forward to taking part in the UK Transplant Games and is also planning to develop her career as an artist.

Justine, 36, from Chelmsford, had a life-saving double lung transplant in July 2006.

She had been suffering from end-stage lymphangioleiomyomatosis (LAM), a rare condition affecting one in a million people.

The transplant gave Justine a new lease of life and she was able to resume her active interest in sport.

Friends

Last month Justine went to the annual LAM Action meeting in Nottingham, met up with other people who have faced the same condition and heard how progress is being made to find a cure for the fatal lung disease.

"There are not many women who have this illness, but three of us are from Essex who I have become friends with," said Justine.

At the end of this month, at the UK Transplant Games in Coventry, Justine is competing in five events - the 100m, 100m relay, 200m, long jump and badminton.



TRANSPLANT FRIENDS: Justine Laymond is pictured, centre, at the LAM conference in Nottingham, with Clair Hemmington from Brentwood and Clare Lauwerys from Peldon near Colchester, who have also had transplants

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"I have been training hard and really hope to achieve at least one medal if not more in these events," she said.

"In October, I will be entering my first half marathon at the Bupa Great South Run.

"I would like to thank Nuffield Health, Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre, Runners World

in Chelmsford and to Fran Cliffe for assisting with my coaching.

"I am still amazed that a 42-year-old man whose life was ending was kind enough to sign the donor register to save my life.

"I think it is amazing that I am alive, breathing with someone else's lungs.

"To think almost three years

ago I knew I was dying and planning my funeral, and soon I will be competing in the UK Transplant Games."

Justine is also hoping to develop her career as an artist and plans to set up a website and stage more exhibitions.

Examples of her work can be seen at www.justinelaymond.com

IN BRIEF

More space at park and ride

CHELMSFORD: Essex's first and only park and ride centre is to increase in size for the second time.

The staggeringly successful scheme, which serves Chelmsford town centre, is to get space for an extra 500 vehicles at its car park in Sandon, upping its capacity to 1,450 cars.

All the land in the original scheme was used up and the extension will be on to 3.5 acres of private land leased for the next 30 years for £90,000 plus a peppercorn rent.

County council treasury chief Cllr Sarah Candy said: "The council's park and ride site at Sandon has proved very successful, having already been extended once beyond its original size.

"Funding for the project has been found in the capital programme," she added.

Festival of geraniums

SOUTH WOODHAM FERRERS: The Meadow Croft Garden Centre is holding its third annual geranium festival, which will run until July 12.

This year the festival includes an even wider range of geraniums in a host of different colours to cheer up garden beds.

With at least one variety perfect for every garden, Meadow Croft staff will be available to help visitors choose the right plants, as well as to offer useful gardening advice, to ensure that all customers leave with an attractive display which lasts all summer long.

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