

editor's comment

Tackling traffic

THE news that was broken exclusively on Sunday by the **Comet** that the hard shoulder of the A1(M) is to be used to ease congestion should be welcomed.

For those who travel on this important road at rush hour both in the morning and in the evening it is clear that something needs to be done.

For the sake of businesses and commuters who travel from Herts and Beds all the way into London this route needs to be eased. At the moment the initial plan is to convert the hard shoulder northbound from junction six to seven (Stevenage south). We urgently need this to include the southbound side as well and for traffic to be eased southbound from eight (Coreys Mill) to seven as well. It is a good start, but businesses and drivers alike must keep up the pressure, to make sure this major link really is up to the job.

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Duke launches business project

THE Duke of Edinburgh paid a royal visit to Stevenage this week to open a business start-up enterprise.

Prince Philip spent an hour at the Business and Technology Centre on Wednesday morning to officially launch its My Incubator project and meet entrepreneurs.

Run by Stevenage Borough Council

and Herts business advisors Wenta, the scheme has helped launch and develop more than 50 businesses in two-and-half years, with over 20 currently at the Bessemer Drive facility.

Schoolchildren from Marriotts, John Henry Newman, Oaklands, Barnwell and Barclay greeted Prince Philip with cheers and flag waving before telling him about their enterprise links to the My Incubator scheme – including setting up a fashion show and an auction.

Wenta chief executive Chris Pichon

who chaperoned the Duke, said he showed a great deal of interest in the project.

"I found him hugely engaging and hugely interested – especially in our schools' projects and new businesses," he said.

The project has been a huge success he added, with 93 per cent of businesses surviving their first year thanks to provision of office space, technical support, and business and university links.

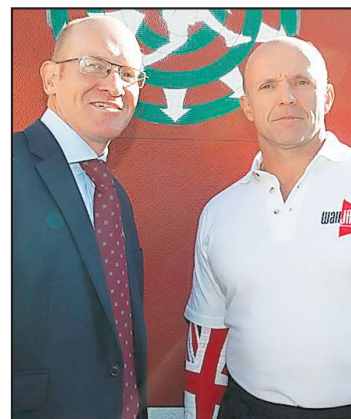
Robert Hughes, whose web design and online marketing company Evevo has developed at the centre over the last 18 months said the support was fantastic.

"There are big costs in having an office and here it is cheaper than elsewhere. I also have three or four clients within the premises."

Banana Lettings entrepreneur Jana Honzova said the royal visit was a great boost.

"He was asking what business we are in and how we evolved. He was really nice. It's a small reward for all your hard work. I was working from home before and never thought I would meet such people."

The Duke's appearance made good on a promise to return after a visit as part of the Queen's jubilee tour to the town in July was cancelled due to illness.



■ Tim Warboys of WallJam met the Duke with former Olympic athlete Roald Bradstock



■ The Duke with the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire Jane Wentworth-Stanley



■ Prince Philip was shown a prototype of the Mars Rover (above) and (left) crowds turn out to greet the Duke

What's on the web this week

» Strange sounds picked up by paranormal investigators can be heard online.

The audio clips come after two nighttime visits to the British Schools Museum in Hitchin.

The Stevenage stretch of the A1(M) has also featured heavily with news that the hard shoulder could be used as a third lane and a crash which saw a car collide with the central reservation.

www.thecomet24.co.uk



Most viewed

The top five most read stories on www.thecomet24.co.uk last week

- 1 On-loan Leeds United winger is back in training
- 2 Horses killed in botched stable burglary
- 3 Prime Minister announces A1(M) changes
- 4 Woman cut free from A1(M) crash – dogs on carriageway in aftermath
- 5 Four trapped and hospitalised in Letchworth car flip

Comet Poll

This week's question:

Is funding for road improvements on the A1(M) justified? last week's result

Will changes to the social housing policy free up homes for more people?

46% said yes
54% said no

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tweet of the week

Robin Selley @HawickBalls (on A1(M) new lane plans): @thecomet24 some good news but this will just encourage more drivers to sit in the middle lane when they should use the inside lane! Granty @grantlyh (on A1(M) new lane plans): @thecomet24 @JournoKellyAnn Great news but why have we got to wait until 2014?!