

Mourne Observer

LARGEST SALES IN COUNTY DOWN

WEDNESDAY 21 DECEMBER, 2011

DOWN EDITION

e-mail: editor@mourneobserver.com

63rd YEAR

£1



ON THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM . . . Spa PS pupils Alice Goucher (Mary), Christopher Lyons (Donkey) and Ben Lyons (Joseph) are looking forward to Christmas day after taking part in their school's Christmas Carol Service last week.

Photo: Chris Halpin

End in sight for building freeze?

By Claire McLaughlin

AN end to the moratorium in Newcastle is in sight thanks to progress being made upgrading the town's antiquated sewerage system.

In 2008 the Planning Service was advised by the Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) to impose a ban on new housing developments.

This was due to the poor state of the sewerage infrastructure deemed unable to cope with the demands placed on it.

But the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) announced last week that restrictions on planning applications on larger developments could be lifted in October 2012 - provided that the upgrade to the sewerage system is on schedule.

Newcastle councillors are hopeful that

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A Christmas wish granted

By Elizabeth McGivern

A FAMILY support service which was plunged into a funding crisis over a year ago, may have received an early Christmas present.

Home-Start feared it would have to close its Ballynahinch office after it emerged in 2010 that long-term funding was no longer available.

However, news of a solution to the charity's money woes came yesterday when Health Minister Edwin Poots travelled to the market town where he met with local Home-Start officials and revealed that money is available to fund the service until the end of March 2012.

The DUP Minister met with MP Jim Shannon, Down Councillors William Walker and Garth Craig and Home-Start representatives at the charity's satellite office in the town.

Although keen not to give away an

exact figure his department will provide, the charity is hopeful that the funding to get them through the remainder of the financial year - an estimated £65,000 - will be granted.

Beyond that, Mr Poots has offered his department's help in finding solutions for Home-Start's long-term funding needs in Down District.

There were jubilant scenes in Ballynahinch yesterday afternoon as Home-Start officials and volunteers celebrated the good news. (to page 12)

Jenny's & Jenny's Plus

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HOLIDAY NOTICE

The Mourne Observer office will be closed from today (Wednesday 21st December) re-opening on Friday 30th December.

WE WILL BE OPEN MONDAY 2nd JANUARY

The next issue will be on sale on Wednesday 4th January, 2012



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
TO ALL OUR READERS**