

Trust's tandem ride is a generation gain



■ Mayor of Stevenage Sherma Batson welcoming the cycling duo outside the borough council's offices.

Not many people would spend a milestone birthday cycling 62 miles on a tandem, but Robert Stewart did just that to celebrate his 50th.

The chairman of Stevenage Community Trust, along with his son Callum, cycled from Cambridge to Stevenage to raise money for the charity in their business suits to reflect the importance of corporate support in the continuing success of the good cause.

The pair set off from Cambridge at 6.30am hoping to raise £10,000 to help mark the 25th anniversary of the trust.

They arrived in Stevenage town centre shortly before 10am and were met by town

mayor Sherma Batson before cycling back to Cambridge later that day.

Rob and Callum also beat their fundraising goal, netting more than £12,000 in donations.

Robert, who is also chairman of Old Town-based Stevenage Packaging Ltd, said: "The 60-mile bike ride with my son, on my birthday, frankly turned out to be one of the best days of my life.

"Not only did the generosity of 86 donors ensure that we set a new record for the highest amount raised for one single event for the community trust but I was welcomed by the mayor and all of my family who have such strong Stevenage connections.

"The cycle ride down started in freezing temperatures and fog but we arrived in Stevenage in glorious sunshine.

"The incentive to cycle the 31 miles back home, arriving back in Cambridge in the dark, was one of my wife's best dinners in 29 years of marriage."

Having achieved their first target, the long term goal is to raise £25,000 to mark the 25th anniversary of the community trust.

The cash will be now be put towards the £100,000 which will be given away to those in need within the community in 2015.

To help support the cause visit charity page www.virginmoneygiving.com/Stevenagecommunitytrust.

Mum admits sending revealing pictures to boy, 15, via Facebook

A mother-of-four is facing prison after pleading guilty to inciting a child to engage in sexual activity.

Frances Schneider, of Trumper Road in Stevenage, sent photographs of her breasts and vagina via Facebook Messenger to a 15-year-old boy, who cannot be named for legal reasons.

The 32-year-old was arrested in November after the boy's mother called police.

Police seized the boy's phone and found explicit messages and indecent images from Schneider. The message content included: 'Are you horny?' and 'Are you touching yourself?'

Schneider initially denied she knew the victim was 15, claiming

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he told her he was 17, and she pleaded not guilty to the offence.

But on Friday – four days before she was due to stand trial – she changed her plea to guilty.

She appeared at Stevenage Magistrates' Court on Monday where prosecutor Ms Morrissey requested a custodial sentence be considered due to the "degree of planning and forethought" and Schneider's "lack of remorse".

The prosecutor also asked the late guilty plea to be taken into consideration and said: "The victim didn't want to come and give evidence because it's all too

shocking and stressful for him.

"He is preparing for his GCSEs and hasn't been able to properly do that."

The court heard how Schneider's four children are all in foster care, or care of family members, due to neglect.

Defending, Bobby Dhillon asked for Schneider's learning difficulties to be taken into consideration.

Schneider, who must now sign the Sex Offenders' Register, has been given conditional bail and will be sentenced on May 12.

Her bail conditions include having no contact with anyone under 16 in a private place and not accessing social networking sites such as Facebook.

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