

NEWS BRIEF

Champion for victims

■ A NEW Victims and Witnesses Champion has been appointed in Cardiff to offer support to local people in tackling anti-social behaviour.

Using funding from the Home Office, Shelly Harold has been appointed to the role to ensure people can take a stand against anti-social behaviour and be fully supported throughout the process.

To contact Shelly for information, advice or support call 07772 690639.

Garden safety event planned

■ AS the weather improves Trading Standards officers in Caerphilly are organising a 'Garden Safe' event at Gilfach Bargoed Community Centre on Wednesday, March 31.

The event will run from 9.30am until 4.30pm, and aims to raise awareness of issues affecting personal and general safety and around the garden.

THE BAR IS THE STAR IN AWARDS

A PUB in Cardiff which was transformed into a Bohemian boudoir has been voted one of the best designed bars in the UK.

The North Star, on North Road, Cardiff, was shortlisted for the prestigious title of Best Independent Restaurant & Bar Design 2010.

The bar was known previously as the Maindy - a spit-and-sawdust pub - before it was taken over and transformed by landlord Jahan Abedi who appeared on Channel 4's Secret Millionaire programme earlier this month.

Some of the bar's features include 100-year-old wallpaper, fake grass, trumpet lamps, Chesterfield sofas, suitcase tables and a raised section designed to look like Penarth Pier.

Tim Corrigan, 40, The North Star's operations manager, said: "It was a rough old local. It was just left to its own devices and got run-down."

Mr Corrigan said that the bar's isolation meant that it really needed to stand out.

He said: "It is stuck in the middle of nowhere. There is no passing trade, so we have to set the standard to get people coming back. There is a lot of showmanship and it is a theatrical design. If you were on a first date, for example, there's always something to look at and talk about and it is not just a blank wall with a dodgy painted canvas."

Simon Gaskell
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The bar is doing a roaring trade and Mr Corrigan said the bold design has paid off.

"People are becoming more adventurous, more imaginative and willing to try new things," he said.

WHAT DO THE CUSTOMERS THINK?

■ "There are a lot of different styles that clash, but it is good. I come here because of its proximity to university halls and because they have offers for students. There is a jelly baby thing which is kind of quirky and with these chairs you expect there to be a roaring fire somewhere or something. The one weird thing that I don't think works is the artificial grass - it is literally Astroturf. But it is probably the nicest pub in the area."

Joe Walker, 20, architecture student, from Maindy

■ "It is the first time I have been here, but it is a really good layout. The seating area is unusual. You don't see the pictures and gilded gold frames in most pubs that you see in here."

Ian Kelleher, 26, unemployed, from Canton

"We are trying to offer as much as we can without coming across as being pretentious. It is just nice that someone, somewhere along the line has seen what we have done and enjoyed it."

Tim Rice, 41, is the bar's designer and said it took 10 weeks of creative thinking to realise his vision.

He said: "I had to think about the area and how to make it more elegant and a different type of bar. I love different periods of furniture, real quality and I like mixing and matching things so they look beautiful."

Mr Rice said he has enjoyed listening in on what people have made of his work.

He said: "Everybody loves it. Whenever people sit down and they don't know I designed it, you can hear them talking and see them just looking round everywhere. There have even been some people who've recorded it with their phones."

The bar's recognition is particularly special for Mr Rice, who has only been a designer for two years, because he decided on a career change after his father's death.

He said: "I thought: I have got to get my finger out."

"I did some work with somebody who was an interior designer and thought: 'I like this and this should be my direction'."

"Now, it is just exciting and my mother was really excited."



■ Customers Aimee White and Joe Walker at The North Star.

