

The Herts ADVERTISER

St Albans Edition

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ARCHANT

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» Pages 12-14

Orange illuminations for children's mental health

City centre landmarks have been illuminated orange to commemorate the district's first Children's Mental Health Week and raise awareness of the It's OK To Say campaign.

St Albans Cathedral and Museum + Gallery have been transformed for the duration of the week, with orange ribbons and banners at key locations around the old Town Hall, and both buildings coloured orange with special lighting at night.

It's OK To Say strives to encourage people of all ages to discuss issues surrounding mental health and seek proper support when necessary, and is run by anxiety specialist Stacey Turner in conjunction with the Herts Advertiser.

This year's Children's Mental Health Week is based around the theme of being Healthy: Inside and Out, focusing on the

MATT ADAMS

Matt.Adams@archant.co.uk

importance of physical and mental wellbeing working together, and supports the school-based support charity Place2Be.

As well as the visual displays, the Museum also hosted a drop-in session with Stacey and the campaign's mascot Okie the Bear on Market Day.

Stacey explained: "Acknowledging the national campaign, I wanted to carry this across our city and inspire our community."

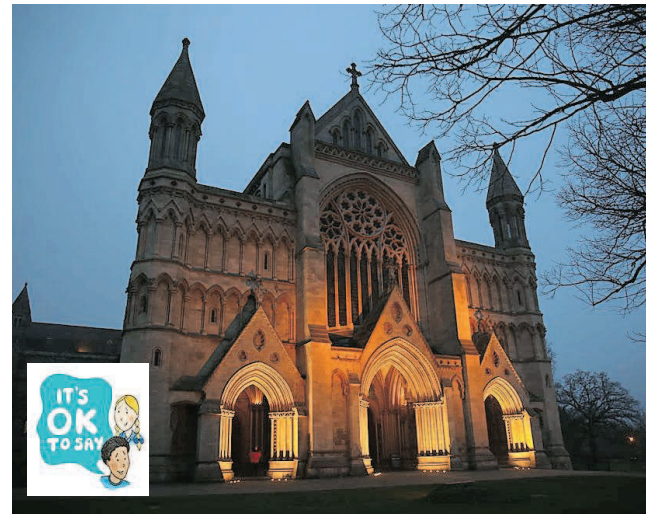
"It's been a real team effort to pull this off across our cities landmarks, businesses, organisations with special thanks to the individuals involved, but 'bear' with us until next issue as we share more about this incredible week with a goal to inspire you."

Cllr Annie Brewster, portfolio holder for sport, leisure and heritage on the district council, who helped arrange the light-up, said: "The St Albans Museum + Gallery is delighted to support the St Albans It's OK To Say campaign this week."

"The Town Hall and Courthouse have turned orange to highlight Children's Mental Health Week with ribbons on internal and external pillars and our colour changing lights on the balcony, the glazed links, the Assembly Room and the Courtroom lantern set to orange."

"Most of the challenging emotional issues we face in our lives grow out of our very young childhood experiences. Therefore, it is vital to shine a bright light on what healthy relationships can be. My elderly parents believed one did not show or, indeed, share

Continued on pages 6-7



The outside of St Albans Cathedral is lit up in orange to celebrate the district's first Children's Mental Health Week. Picture: DANNY LOO



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CAMPAIGN

District united to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing message

Continued from front page

one's emotions but, identifying the consequences of this, I have enjoyed an incredibly open relationship with my own children and believe we are all healthier for it."

St Albans Cathedral has also been saying prayers at every evening service throughout the week for children struggling with mental health issues and particularly for the work of It's OK to Say.

Sub-dean Revd Canon Abi Thompson said: "St Albans Cathedral is honoured to be supporting Children's Mental Health Week and especially the work of the local campaign It's OK to Say by lighting the walls of the Cathedral in bright orange from Monday until Sunday.

"We hope that the Cathedral will always be a place of warmth and welcome for those who are going through tough times, and the doors are open every day for people who may want some quiet space and the opportunity to light a candle.

"There are regular day chaplains at the Cathedral who are happy to listen to anybody who needs to talk."

The initiative has also received the support of DJ's Jungle Adventure in St Albans, with their monkey mascot wearing an It's OK To Say t-shirt on Tuesday, and St Albans City Football Club, who invited Stacey to meet players at Clarence Park on Monday night.

Helen Whittington from DJ's Jungle Adventure said: "I was delighted to see Stacey and



support her in raising awareness of Children's Mental Health Week locally in St Albans!

"Our bodies and minds are connected and playing with our children is a simple thing we can offer to improve our physical wellbeing - which in turn can help our children's mental wellbeing too."

Stacey also made her regular monthly appearance on the Radio Verulam show West Herts Drivetime, with presenter Danny Smith, who said: "As our mental health correspondent on my radio show, we were delighted to hear all about how some of the city's most magnificent landmarks have

turned orange to show their support for this worthwhile campaign. We are really proud of Stacey and all of her efforts as part of It's OK To Say. And we also loved meeting their new mascot!"

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Facebook: It's OK To Say
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(Left) It's OK To Say campaign founder Stacey Turner, Okie the Bear, Cllr Annie Brewster and the Herts Advertiser's Matt Adams at the launch of Children's Mental Health Week at St Albans Museum + Gallery, which has been illuminated in orange all week (top); Stacey also appeared on West Herts Drivetime with Danny Smith (bottom) and joined daughters Molly and Emily at DJ's Jungle Adventure with owner Helen Whittington (right)

Pictures: DANNY LOO, SUBMITTED



(Above) Stacey visited Clarence Park to talk to St Albans City FC players about the club's work with mental health for a future article; (below) and she's been carried away by the support received for It's OK To Say...



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