

## News

## NEWS WIRE

## Cash boost dismissed as election ploy

A NEW £250m cash boost for England's culture and creative sector has been branded as a "cynical pre-election ploy" by the councillor who oversees the borough's libraries.

Last week, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) unveiled the Culture Investment Fund, described by Culture Secretary Nicky Morgan as the "biggest ever single investment in cultural infrastructure, local museums and neighbourhood libraries".

However, the announcement has been met with scepticism by St Helens Council's cabinet member for public health, leisure and libraries, Cllr Anthony Burns.

Cllr Burns said the figure was a "drop in the ocean" compared to what the Government has cut in council funding since 2010, and called on Whitehall to "properly commit" to the nation's libraries.

"This announcement is a cynical pre-election ploy by the Government," Cllr Burns said.

"The figure announced is a drop in the ocean compared to the amount of funding this same Government has taken from the people of St Helens and local government nationally since 2010."

The £250m investment will be delivered by DCMS, with Arts Council England (ACE) having a key role in distributing the fund.

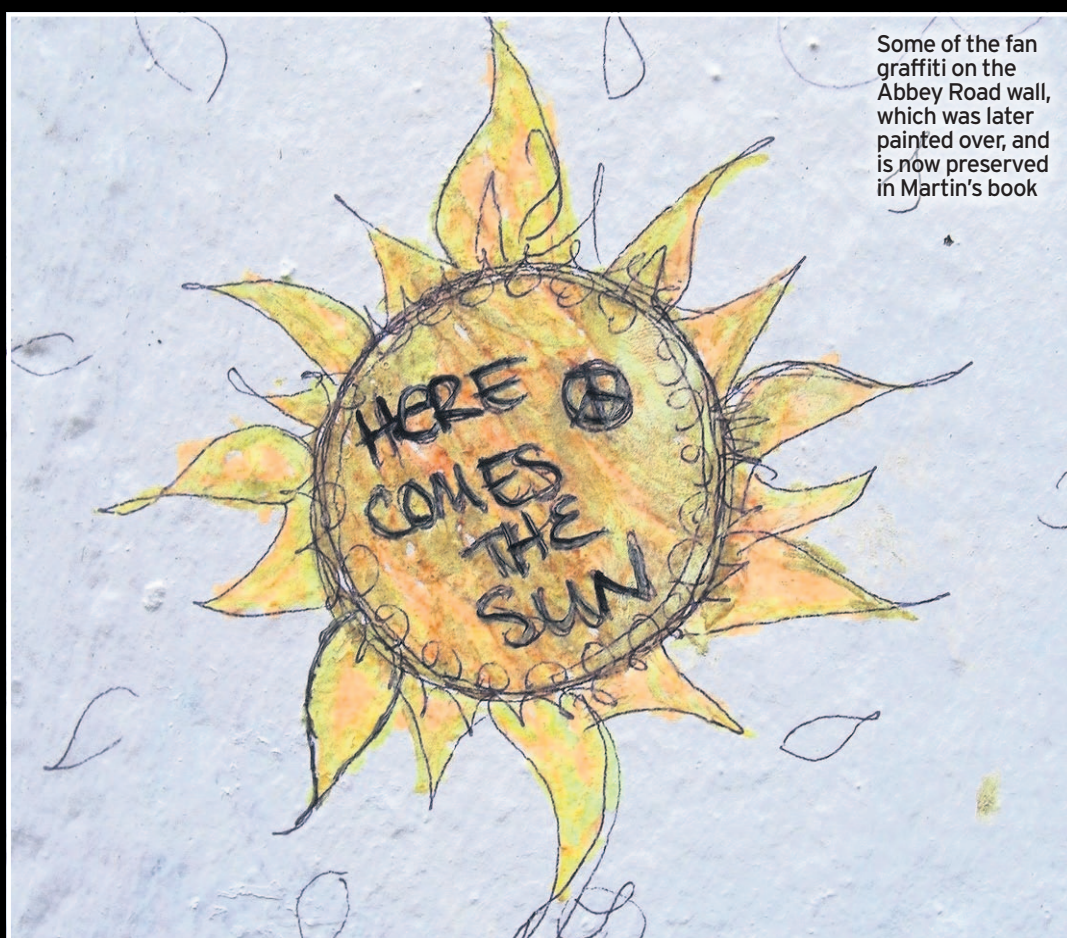
## Plan 'will kill green belt'

A PLANNING inspector has been urged to recommend rejecting plans to "kill" green belt land by allowing a £75m Eddie Stobart warehouse to be built.

An appeal against the council's decision to turn down the firm's proposals started at the Town Hall on Tuesday.

The company's revised application to construct a national distribution centre in south Warrington was approved in July. It is set to be built on green belt land north of Barleycastle Lane.

Liberal Democrat Appleton borough councillor Sharon Harris said the parish council has "grave concerns" over the significant reduction in green belt.



Some of the fan graffiti on the Abbey Road wall, which was later painted over, and is now preserved in Martin's book

# Martin's Beatles project is picture-perfect legacy

## DAD'S GRAFFITI PHOTOS TO BE PUBLISHED IN BOOK

By **PADDY SHENNAN**

ECHO Writer

paddyshennan@liverpoolecho.co.uk  
@PaddyShennan

THE dying wish of a Beatles superfan is set to come true – with the publication of his unique book on the Fab Four.

Father-of-three Martin Holden, who grew up in Netherton and Bootle, died in August of a brain tumour at the age of 51, before being able to realise his dream.

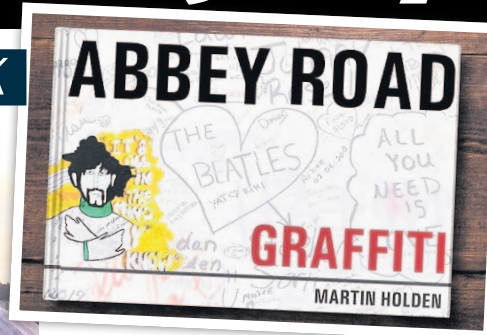
The environmental surveyor, who moved to London when he was 29, spent years photographing the graffiti left by Beatles fans on a wall outside Abbey Road Studios, in St John's Wood, north London. Every month or so, the wall would be whitewashed – but the loving messages that had been left had been captured for posterity by Martin, who would then photograph the next set of messages before they, too, were painted over.

Though it doesn't end until October 30, the Kickstarter appeal for the book – Abbey Road Graffiti – has already exceeded its £5,000 target.

His widow, Jo, told the ECHO: "This is Martin's legacy and we're thrilled to have reached our target and that the book will soon be out – we're delighted there is so much interest in it."

"We are also going to set up a Trust in Martin's name, while a percentage of the proceeds from the book will go to The Brain Tumour Charity."

Describing how it came about, she explained: "Martin's passion was photography and graphic design, and he made lots of photo-books of our children. We met in 1996, and Martin moved down



Abbey Road Graffiti, by Martin Holden; left, Martin and his wife, Jo, with their children Milly, Sam and Rosie

helped us put things together. So, in Martin's final months, he managed to turn his passion into a book. We had really hoped he would get to see it published, but sadly that wasn't to be."

Now, though, his dream – and legacy – is to be realised.

Martin, who attended the Countess of Derby School, in Netherton, and still has relatives in the Liverpool area, was dad to a son and two daughters – Sam, 17, Milly, 14, and Rosie, nine.

Jo says: "He used to drink in Lennon's Bar, in Mathew Street, and The Birkey, in Crosby. Everything about his life revolved around The Beatles. When the book comes out, it would be lovely to hear the reactions from some of the people around the world who left the messages."

All those who pre-order the book on Kickstarter will receive it before Christmas. And, once the Kickstarter campaign has finished, people will be able to buy it online at [www.abbeyroadgraffiti.art](http://www.abbeyroadgraffiti.art)

Jo says: "The plan is for the book to also be sold by Amazon and major book shops. Martin took thousands of photographs and there is the potential for a second book – that's the plan!"

“

Martin realised he would be the only person with a record of the graffiti written by fans from all over the world.

Jo Holden

here the following year. We lived in West Hampstead at first, just around the corner from Abbey Road, which he would occasionally visit. He would go on Sunday mornings and the first time he properly started taking photographs outside the studios was in 2007.

"When the wall was repainted, Martin realised he would be the only person with a record of the graffiti written by fans from all over the world."

"Over the years, we talked about the idea of doing a book. Then we met a friend of a friend who loved the idea and