

Is there a Valentine message for you?

Pages and pages of special greetings in **Saturday's Echo**



Toddlers in protest 'march'

By Anne Harrison

A LAP round around the park is a bit more than child's play for these enthusiastic youngsters in our picture, even though they are barely more than two-and-a-half years old.

They undertook a sponsored toddle to raise money for the serious business of trying to keep their creche open.

The willingness of the youngsters to lead the battle to save their playgroup at Mersey Park Primary School in Tranmere brought pledges of up to £300 cash before they had even begun.

Their efforts yesterday afternoon marked the start of an appeal to raise the £15,000 annual running costs of the popular creche, which caters for 56 youngsters, aged two-and-a-half to school age.

Determined

Unless they raise the cash, the creche could close in April, a victim of Wirral Council making £9.47m cuts to avoid government capping.

Closure would not only leave the three creche workers without jobs and the toddlers with nowhere to go, it would also stop their mums from helping out in the school next door.

The creche opened in a classroom seven years ago, but only 16 months ago it moved into a purpose-built £16,000 building in the school grounds.

Sponsored toddle organiser Rhona Coffy, 30, said: "If we let the creche close we've got no chance of re-opening it again."

"People around here feel very strongly about it. They are determined to keep it open."

Parents have also collected an 800-name petition which they plan to give to councillors at Monday's council meeting at Wallasey Town Hall.

QUEEN MAY PAY JUST £1m TAX

THE QUEEN'S income tax bill could be as little as £1m, it was claimed today.

Her true personal wealth will probably never be known, but the most consistent estimates put her private fortune at about £50m.

Assets are mainly shares, property and treasures which she could sell if she wished.

Private estates include farmland and stud farms, although none is regarded as a major money spinner.

Based on private wealth worth £50m, the Queen could end up paying about £1m in income tax a year, said Mike Warburton, head of tax accountants Grant Thornton.

Royal bill won't be too demanding

By Echo reporter

"It obviously depends on how much money the Queen feels she needs to have," he said.

Any competent tax planner could organise income of about £3-£4m a year from stocks and shares and property income — which would mean a tax bill of around £1-£2m.

The Queen could also offset her tax bill by investing in special tax-free savings schemes.

She would be liable for capital gains tax from the sale of shares or property.

But capital gains tax on share transactions is calculated on profits arising from the purchase and sale price of the shares.

The Queen's share portfolio is likely to be valued at current prices and such a tax is likely to only take effect in later years, said Mr Warburton.



The Queen ... taxed

Chalker opens medical centre

□ BARONESS Chalker was this afternoon opening a £250,000 medical centre in her old Wallasey constituency.

□ The new practice in Reeds Lane, Leasowe, has two consultation rooms, a treatment room, patient reception, and waiting areas, plus other rooms for practice staff.

□ Four GPs, doctors Bennett Quinn, Ewan Cameron, Kathryn Fegan and Nicholas Swift, teamed up with Wirral Family Health Services Authority to open the centre.

WILLIE ... BY FRANK

