

business column

IT'S that time of year again - the deadline for tax returns is **January 31.**

Businesses pay tax on their earnings, and it will be helpful for companies to sort their business and private expenditure into categories and assess the eligibility and proportions of allowable expenditure.

Some expenses like transport and mileage, if they can be proven to be business-related, can make a substantial difference.

Working out tax returns can be stressful for people who do not have the correct information to hand and have left it too late.

The law requires people to keep business records and at Taxfile we favour simple Excel spreadsheets to track income and expenditure.

It's a good idea to register for online banking and periodically download bank statement data.

Taxfile has an insurance policy for customers who get us to do their returns. We charge them a one-off fee and, provided they get everything to us before our January deadline, we take care of everything including any queries from the taxman.

Top three tips for tax returns:

- ❑ Online banking has made completing tax returns less taxing. At the click of a button, you can download your entire records and statements to your desktop, so if there is something in your records that needs extra scrutiny or if you have misplaced a vital statement, you are covered.
- ❑ Keep everything, as you never know when something on your return may be called into scrutiny. We recommend you keep receipts and invoices for at least six years.
- ❑ Know your deadlines, as in the wake of massive budget cuts from the Government, HM Revenue & Customs have reduced the amount of awareness campaigns that they usually run to remind everyone about the January 31 deadline for self-assessment forms.

Guy Bridger

● **Guy Bridger** is the owner of Taxfile in Thurlow Park Road, Tulse Hill. He has been an accountant for 20 years and is also an adviser to the Government's new Office of Tax Simplification. To find out more visit www.taxfile.co.uk



South London

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Letters may be edited for legality, space and clarity (250 words max)

Holocaust Memor

TWO special events are taking place in Lewisham to mark National Holocaust Memorial Day (official date January 27) to remember all the world's atrocities and genocides.

And I would like to encourage residents to get involved by coming to them.

The first of these will take place on Saturday, January 22, when a multi-faith service will be held at Catford Synagogue in Crantock Road at noon.

Anyone wishing to obtain a ticket to the multi-faith service should contact Derek Johnson on 020 8314 8636.

The second event will take place on Sunday, January 23, when children and young people from Lewisham primary and secondary schools will be putting on a production in the Broadway Theatre.

They have been working with the Yaller Skunk Theatre Company to create and perform drama, music and dance pieces using this year's Holocaust theme of Untold Stories.

Residents will also have the

chance to see some of the people's work during a variety of productions of drama, movement, poetry and music at the Broadway Studio.

Evening performances will take place from January 18-19.

This will lead up to the principal production in the Broadway Theatre on Saturday at 3pm.

Tickets for the theatre performances are available from Broadway Theatre box office on 020 8690 0002.

Councillor Pauline Chairwoman, Holocaust Memorial Committ

Have say on how to run community

I WANT to start 2011 with a call to action: Let this be the year we really get involved in our community. In July, Southwark council's cabinet agreed a vision for the borough where everyone should be able to take advantage of the opportunities that come from living in the centre of London.

We know that the only way to make this a reality is for the council to work closely with residents, businesses and local groups. In 2010 residents helped us reach some major milestones. Plans for Elephant & Castle began to take shape; we started reforming council meetings to make decision making more open and accessible; we agreed a new violent crime strategy and it was another record-breaking year for schools' results in Southwark.

In each case residents were involved every step of the way. We need more of the same this year. Online and through community councils, residents have given us their money-saving ideas and views on spending priorities. On January 25 the cabinet will look at proposals to save more than £30million.

The Olympics are coming, so 2011 has to be the year that Southwark gets into shape for the Games. In a major step forward in the fight against childhood obesity and underachievement, we are



CALL TO ACTION: Southwark leader Councillor Peter John

this month.

An independent teenage pregnancy commission will bring together the public sector and local groups to find ways to tackle the issue.

We received our settlement from the Government in December. The cuts are at the upper end of our expectations.

They leave us with very little room to manoeuvre. It is going to be very difficult to protect services in the coming years. But I believe 2011 will be the year when the borough comes together to meet the challenge of providing the quality services Southwark needs to deliver a fairer future for all. Councillor Peter John

WHERE DID

WHERE did all the Christmas cards go? I am a pensioner and I was sending and receiving Christmas cards. But this Christmas I did not receive any via the postal system, although friends and family say they sent me cards. I was reliably informed that the SE1 distribution office had a stockpile of cards that they could not send out.

MP must on subject

ONE has to be concerned over the position taken by MP Simon Hughes concerning students' university tuition fees. Pre-election, his views on abolishing fees, then changed, come the cost of a vote, to abstention. By sitting on the fence, Mr Hughes, pictured, has upset many people (besides students), now believing he lacked the courage of his conviction and that his position in the [Liberal Democrat] party has become untenable. The wheel has now turned full circle with the new MP that Nick Clegg's deputy is to tour the country