

August 2nd, 2011

Benefit cheat took £54,000 from public purse

A fraudster who falsely claimed £54,290 in council tax benefit and income support has been given an eight-month prison sentence, suspended for one year.

Alison Bevans of Broadfield Way, Countesthorpe, failed to notify Blaby District Council when her employed husband returned to live with her after they had previously separated.

She dishonestly claimed the benefits between 2003 and 2009.

The 46-year-old mother-of-three was given the suspended sentence and told to do 180 hours unpaid work at Leicester Crown Court on July 27.

Judge Michael Pert QC said: "You know benefit fraud is stealing from the rest of us; it's a mean and despicable offence."

She now faces a proceeds of crime hearing, which could lead to the loss of any assets including her home.

The case was brought jointly by Blaby District Council and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Councillor John Hudson, portfolio holder for finance and efficiency said: "The Council is committed to ensuring that everyone who is entitled to benefits receives them. However, we will take action against anyone found to have deliberately withheld information relevant to their claim."

"I would encourage anyone who is claiming benefit and has a change of circumstances to declare this at the earliest opportunity."

The public can report benefit fraud online at www.blaby.gov.uk/fraud or by calling the Council's confidential 24 hour hotline on 0116 272 7733.