

# the reporter

**BUDGET  
SECURES  
VITAL  
SERVICES**



**A COUNCIL FOR ALL  
GENERATIONS**

# Convenient ways to pay your council tax

2013 – 2014

## 7 ways to pay

The Council offers the following methods to pay your council tax. Please contact your local office for further information on any payment method.

Council tax is payable in 10 monthly instalments between April 2013 and January 2014.

Payment is due on the first day of the month, with the exception of Direct Debit payers, who have a choice of five payment dates.

**1 By Direct Debit:**  
Phone: 0303 123 1011

**2 By phone:**  
Call the 24 hour payments  
Call Centre  
Phone 0303 123 1005  
To pay by credit or debit card



**3 Online:**  
[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

**4 By post:**  
Please send cheques to the  
Cashiers Service, Brandon  
Gate, 1 Leechlee Road,  
Hamilton ML3 0XB and  
remember to write your  
reference number on the  
back of the cheque.

**5 By standing order**

**6 At the local Council  
Cash Office, Post  
Office or Paypoint**

**7 By Payroll Deduction:**  
For South Lanarkshire Council  
employees

### Change to Direct Debit The easy way to pay

The Council recommends payment by Direct Debit as the safest and easiest way to pay your council tax. The Council offers a choice of five payment dates during the month: 1st, 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th, so customers can select the payment date which suits them.

Changing to Direct Debit could not be easier. Just call the Direct Debit helpline on **0303 123 1011** where your application will be completed over the phone.



## Recovery Action

South Lanarkshire Council will take prompt action to avoid the build-up of council tax arrears. Council staff will contact customers who have missed payments by letter, telephone calls and home visits to discuss repayment arrangements and offer advice and support.

However, when customers fail to make or adhere to a repayment arrangement, the Council will take legal action to recover outstanding debts. The Council works in partnership with a Debt Investigation company and Sheriff Officers to ensure that outstanding council tax is recovered.

For council tax arrears, the Council will lodge a petition at Court for a Summary Warrant, which enables the Council to take legal recovery action, including attachment orders and earnings or bank arrestments.

## Support and Advice

The Council recognises that customers may experience financial difficulties and if you experience problems in meeting your council tax payments, you should contact the Council Tax Recovery team on **0303 123 1014**.

Our fully trained staff can offer confidential advice and assistance, including:

- Repayment arrangements
- Advice on council tax benefit eligibility
- Advice on council tax discount or exemption eligibility
- Advice on access to the Council's free Money Matters Advice Service

## How to contact us:

Please phone our contact centre on **0303 123 1011** for information and advice on all council tax and benefit issues or alternatively you can email us at [counciltax@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

If you need this information in another format or language, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

Phone: 0303 123 1011 Email: [counciltax@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



# Welcome

WELCOME to the March edition of The Reporter magazine which sets out the main points of the council's budget.

Despite the economic difficulties across the United Kingdom, I can give you categorical assurance that frontline services will be protected in the coming financial year.

We will remain on course with a budget of £664.791million for 2013/14.

Budgets in Education, Social Work, Roads and Community Resources have all been increased.

These are tough times, and there is no getting away from that, but our 2013/14 budget sees increased funding in the frontline services we deliver day in, day out, for the people of South Lanarkshire.

Last year's budget was £718.216million. The difference for 2013/14 is mainly due to the impact of both Police and Fire moving towards a national service. Funding for Police and Fire of around £60million has therefore been removed from the council budget.

Council Tax will also remain frozen for the sixth year in a row. Council Tax bandings for 2013/14 and the council's running costs for the year are set out in tables on page 5.

Councillors approved the 2013/14 budget proposals at a special Executive Committee meeting on Thursday, February 14.

I am also proud to say that South Lanarkshire Council has introduced a Living Wage rate of £7.56 per hour – the best deal in the country for low-paid workers outside London.

Our commitment to regeneration remains undiminished and I hope you enjoy the four-page special feature on the rebirth of the community of Fernhill.

South Lanarkshire is a council for all generations and we are here for you 24-hours-a-day, 365 days of the year.

*Eddie McAvoxy,*  
Council Leader

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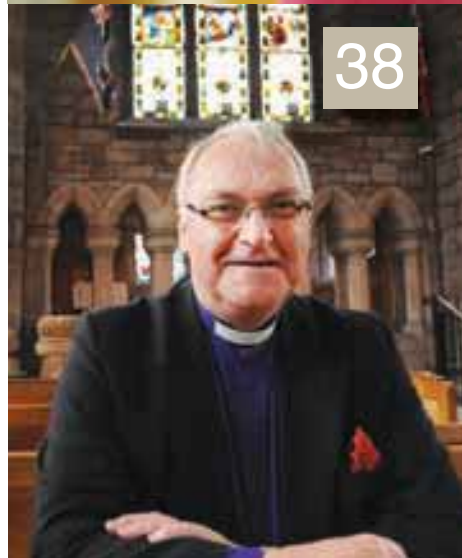
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# Council's £665m budget secures vital services

## Classroom revolution continues to deliver

PLANS for a brand new £9million primary school in Larkhall have been given the go ahead.

Councillors approved proposals for Machanhill Primary School at a recent meeting of South Lanarkshire Council's Planning Committee.

The existing primary school and nursery will be demolished and replaced by a modern, new building.

There will also be a multi-use games area, CCTV cameras and a boundary fence.

Pupils will be decanted to the former Glengowan Primary School building while the work is taking place.

The new school and nursery will be based over two floors.

The ground floor will include the nursery, five classrooms, dining room, gym, kitchen and offices, while the first floor will have seven classrooms and a staff room.

Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Planning Committee, Councillor Hugh Dunsmuir, said: "I am delighted that the committee has given approval for the new school.

"Our primary schools modernisation programme is continuing to deliver first-class facilities for our pupils and teachers across South Lanarkshire.

"Thousands of pupils have had their school lives transformed thanks to the programme and I am sure everyone within the Machanhill primary school community is excited by the news."

● For a full report on the council's multi-million-pound schools modernisation project turn to pages 6/7.



Council Leader Eddie McAvoy is committed to investing in schools, services for older people, housing and roads

SOUTH Lanarkshire residents have been assured frontline services will be protected in the coming financial year.

Despite continuing economic difficulties across the United Kingdom, Council Leader Eddie McAvoy is confident South Lanarkshire will remain on course with a budget of £664.791million for 2013/14.

Last year's budget was £718.216million. The difference for 2013/14 is mainly due to the impact of both Police and Fire moving towards a national service.

Funding for Police and Fire of around £52million £60million has therefore been removed from the Council budget.

Council Tax will also remain frozen for the sixth year in a row.

Councillor McAvoy stressed: "These are tough times and there is no getting away from that but our 2013/14 budget sees increased funding in the frontline services we deliver day in, day out, for the people of South Lanarkshire.

"Budgets in Education, Social Work, Roads and Community Resources have all been increased.

"By working closely together, councillors and officials have come

up with an imaginative package of proposals, allowing us to do everything we can to minimise the impact of cuts and continue to deliver on our key priorities.

"Ongoing investment in our schools, services for older people, housing stock and roads is all secure, as is our pledge to do all we can to boost economic prospects for local communities across South Lanarkshire."

A total savings package of £12.2million was presented as part of the preparation work to shape the 2013/14 budget. Most were approved however, crucially, two proposals were dropped from the list – plans to continue the reduction of school crossing patrollers and a review of primary school class sizes.

The move saved a total of 30 full-time equivalent jobs.

Councillor McAvoy added: "Money is tight but our guarantee we will deliver on key projects remains on course.

"Investment will continue in the Schools Modernisation Programme, our housing stock, caring for the elderly and our roads improvement programme, which began in 2008.

"I am proud to say, by the end of

the calendar year 2013, we anticipate 91 new primary schools will be completed.

"A total of 17 new secondary schools have also been built and two modernised.

"Our care homes for the elderly are superb – they are second to none – and the housing stock improvement programme of heating upgrades and replacements is progressing well.

"And for the employees who deliver these services, we have introduced a living wage of £7.56 per hour, one of the best rates in the country.

"We are going forward into 2013 secure in the knowledge that our budget can, and will deliver on all of our key priorities.

"Make no mistake, looking ahead to 2014/15 and 2015/16, we are facing difficult years and we are going to have to take some very hard decisions.

"However, our budget for 2013/14, which guarantees increased investment in vital services, shows there is still continued growth here."

He added: "I will continue to work with officials to achieve the very best we can for the people of South Lanarkshire."

# DELIVERING HISTORIC HOMELESS REFORMS

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council implemented the 2012 Homelessness Commitment three months ahead of the deadline.

The commitment was part of the 2003 Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act, which set out a requirement that from January 1, 2013, all unintentionally homeless households would have the right to settled accommodation.

The council implemented this requirement last October, three months ahead of schedule. It means every household that finds itself in this situation will be

treated as in priority need, effectively removing it as a separate category when assessing how to respond to homelessness.

The 2003 Act has become known as one of the most progressive pieces of homelessness legislation in the world.

Scottish local authorities were given until the end of 2012 to implement the new legislation, in recognition of the fact that it would take significant preparation and investment to achieve.

The council is confident that customers receive an excellent

service through the 'housing options' approach and note that, in a recent satisfaction survey, 84 per cent of housing options customers rated the service as excellent or good.

Graeme Brown, Director of Shelter Scotland, said: "The 2012 Commitment is internationally regarded as the cutting-edge of progressive homelessness reform and the council can be very proud that it is leading the way in making history.

"I congratulate it on its continued focus on meeting its responsibilities to homeless people."

The rise in the council's living wage will add around £1million to South Lanarkshire's wage bill to help low-paid workers



# Living wage best deal in country outside London

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council has introduced a Living Wage of £7.56 per hour – the best in the country outside London.

The new minimum pay rate means a monthly wage increase for around half of the council's 14,000-strong workforce.

It will also see an above national pay offer award for employees earning less than £21,000, based on a 37-hour week.

Nationally, the one per cent pay offer is currently with the trade unions for consideration.

A Scottish Local Government's recommended Living Wage of £7.50 is due to be implemented in 2013/14.

However, South Lanarkshire is pegging their Living Wage at £7.56 per hour, rising from £7.20.

Council Leader Eddie McAvoyn

said: "This will help all low-paid employees struggling to make ends meet.

"It will make a difference and is the best living wage deal in the country, outside London.

"Our workforce is vital in delivering frontline service to the people of South Lanarkshire.

"We are doing all we can to mitigate the effects of the financial hits our workforce have had to take in recent years."

Among the council's workforce, 7757 employees earn less than £21,000 – 78 per cent of them women.

For employees earning less than £7.56 per hour these proposals represent a substantial increase over current earnings, including the £250 supplement, averaging £488 per annum for a 37-hour week. Councillor McAvoyn

added: "The vast majority of the lower-paid employees in the council are women and I am pleased we can give them this increase, which will further reduce the gender pay gap.

"Our new living wage will have a positive impact on our employees, giving them more money in their pockets in these difficult economic times.

"This move builds on our commitment to delivering a decent living wage for our employees."

The proposals are estimated to add an additional £1million to the council's wage bill, with costs being met from the council's revenue budget.

Initial consultations with the trade unions in the council indicate this is a very welcome development for employees.

## Budget 2013

# Budget at a glance..

### Council Tax Bands

The full range of Council Tax bands – excluding the Scottish Water Sewerage Tax – for 2013/14 is:

**A:** £734.00

**B:** £856.33

**C:** £978.67

**D:** £1101.00

**E:** £1345.67

**F:** £1590.33

**G:** £1835.00

**H:** £2202.00

Householders are reminded that included in their Council Tax bill will be the Water and Sewerage tax that is set by Scottish Water

### The council's running costs

THE running costs the council needs to provide its services are contained in the revenue budget.

The revenue budget sets out how much each service can spend on staff, accommodation and supplies, less the income it raises in any charges made for its services, such as registration fees, a variety of licences and planning/building fees.

This chart shows how much South Lanarkshire's services will spend during the 2013-2014 financial year.

### Running costs

**Education:** £311.024m

**Police & Fire:** £0.550m

**Roads/lighting:** £37.629m

**Transport subsidies:** £6.122m

**Social Work:** £146.694m

**Other housing costs:** £14.929m

**Leisure & Rec:** £33.671m

**Cleansing/environ:** £35.712m

**Libraries/museums:** £5.178m

**Planning/building:** £1.439m

**Other services:** £71.843m

**Total:** £664.791m



The recently appointed Park View Head Teacher Maria Spiers, above centre, with some of the parents and pupils who will be attending the brand new school when it opens in August, with computer generated images of how the new primary will look when it is completed, right and below



# No Halfway measures for brand new school

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE GIVES THE GREEN LIGHT FOR FIRST ENTIRELY NEW PRIMARY SINCE 1996, AS SARAH BURROWS HAS BEEN FINDING OUT

NOT only is work continuing apace on the £812million primary schools modernisation programme – which will see each and every one of the area's primary schools being rebuilt or replaced – but the council is also creating the first entirely new school since reorganisation in 1996.

The non-denominational school, costing £7.5million, is to be built in Halfway Park on the site of a disused park pavilion.

The new Park View Primary is the first entirely new school to be created in South Lanarkshire.

It has been designed to serve a growing population in and around Halfway, as well as homes currently within the catchment of Hallside Primary School.

Meanwhile, work has started on site for the following schools:

Auldhouse Primary School

**Carstairs Junction Primary School**

Carstairs Primary School

**Coalburn Primary School**

Park View Primary School,

**Heathery Knowe Primary School, East Kilbride**

James Aiton Primary School,

**Lanark Primary School**

Leadhills Primary School

**Maxwellton Primary School and**

**Greenburn Primary School**

Mossneuk Primary School

**Neilsland Primary School and**

**Woodlands Nursery**

Sandford Primary School

**St Cadoc's Primary School**

St Mark's Primary School, Hamilton

**St Mark's Primary School Rutherglen**

St Mary's Primary School Larkhall

**St Peter's Primary School, Hamilton**

And, subject to planning consents, construction is due to start on the following new schools later this year:

Lamington Primary School

**East Milton Primary School**

Muiredge Primary School, Uddingston

**South Park Primary School**

Forth Primary School

**Long Calderwood Primary School**

Stablestone Primary School

**St John's Primary School, Blackwood**

St Leonard's Primary School, East Kilbride

**Woodside Primary School**

St Bride's Primary School, Cambuslang

**Bankhead Primary School**

So far, 75 primary schools have been completed, along with 41 nursery classes, 18 bases for children with additional support needs and 12 community wings. By the end of the calendar year 2013, the anticipated total will be 91 new primary schools completed.

Council Leader Eddie McAvoys said the schools programme underlined the authority's commitment to first-class education. "Since 2004, when the Primary Schools Modernisation Programme was launched, 65 per cent of primary aged children have moved into

state-of-the-art buildings, with another 53 schools on track for completion in the next few years.

"If you add that to the 17 new secondary schools and two modernised secondary schools, it illustrates perfectly our commitment to education and ensuring that our young people have access to learning in the very best buildings possible."

The Reporter can also confirm that Maria Speirs, right, has been appointed Head Teacher of the new primary school in Halfway, Cambuslang.

Over the next six months, she will oversee the resourcing of the brand new Park View Primary, the first to have been built in South Lanarkshire.

Maria graduated from Glasgow University in 1995 and began her teaching career in Glasgow.

She then went on to hold promoted posts in North Ayrshire and East Renfrewshire, before becoming Head Teacher of Thornliebank Primary in East Renfrewshire in 2009.

She also has a Masters Degree in Education from Strathclyde University and successfully completed the Scottish Qualification for Headship.

Building work on Park View Primary is now well under way and the first of the new pupils to start in August have just enrolled, as indeed they have done in throughout schools in the area.

Park View is set to provide a first-class learning environment for the growing population in and around the area, with separate catchment areas for the school and that for Hallside Primary being established.

The school will provide seven classrooms, gym hall, dining room, stage, staff facilities, library and IT suite, 21-space car park and multi-use games pitch.

Councillor Jean McKeown, Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Education Resources Committee is delighted with progress on Park View.

"It is fantastic to see the new school take shape and it is an exciting opportunity for Mrs Speirs to take the new school forward, ready for pupils to start in August," she said.

"This is the first brand new school to be built in the area for decades and it will be an asset to the wider community. It is testament, indeed, of this council's ongoing commitment to education and giving our young people the very best start possible."

And Maria said: "I am delighted to join South Lanarkshire's Education Resources as the Head Teacher of the new school in Halfway.

"I am ambitious for our pupils and believe that they should be given the opportunity to learn and develop new skills and knowledge, supported by dedicated and talented staff members, within a learning environment that is stimulating, attractive and meets the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.

"Our new school will be a happy, vibrant and innovative place in which to learn and work. I am looking forward to building a successful partnership with the children, families and local community to create a school which we will all be proud of. I look forward to working together with the parent council and families as we plan ahead for the opening of our school in August. This is a very exciting time for everyone involved."



# Council helps to promote careers in construction

SOUTH Lanarkshire's construction industry has enjoyed a huge boost thanks to the council's ongoing schools rebuilding programme, **writes Andy Livingstone.**

Now, in a major spin-off from the multi-million-pound project, a new drive has been launched to raise awareness of, and access to, the full range of exciting career and job opportunities available within the construction industry.

The schools £850million rebuilding programme, launched in 2005, is being carried out by four partners – the council's Building Services, Kier Scotland, Lend Lease and Morgan Sindall.

Together, they are upgrading the council's entire stock of 124 primary schools to 21st century standards by 2016.

Now the four partners who, as organisations, are strongly committed to social responsibility, have joined forces to apply to the National Skills Academy for Construction, led by CITB-ConstructionSkills.

Their application was approved and a skills co-ordinator, Cat McFarlane, below, has been appointed to run the scheme in South Lanarkshire.

Her remit is to help people to access jobs in the construction industry, which is far more wide-ranging than it first appears.

"For instance, it can involve opening pupils' eyes to jobs that they might not have previously thought about, from the traditional trades to architecture or civil engineering, for example," explained Cat.

"On the other hand, I can be advising someone on a site who is, perhaps, a time-served tradesman but who is maybe interested in upskilling and needs some computer training in order to make that transition.

"I can also spot opportunities for people, as we give them forms at their site inductions that I can use to spot skills gaps or chances to advance that they may not have considered themselves."

Cat added: "I can be taking contractors in to do talks at schools or helping people in the industry to research and apply for training – it's all in a day's work."

Cat has what might seem an unusual background for this job in that, prior to working in Procurement with Lend Lease, she was a theatrical agent.

But, according to Cat, her previous role and her current position have far more in common than people might think at first.

"It is all about facilitating, about spotting the right person for the right opportunity, and finding a way to make it work," she said.

"I am very much a people person and that is what this is all about – getting to know people and understanding how I can help them."

● National Skills Academy for Construction is led by CITB-Construction-Skills, an organisation with a track record of more than 40 years of successfully meeting the training needs of the construction industry.







# BUILDING better lives

## ANDY LIVINGSTONE REPORTS ON THE HUGE PROGRESS BEING MADE IN THE COUNCIL'S FLAGSHIP HOMEHAPPENING PROJECT

A RESOURCE central to South Lanarkshire Council's vision of improving the quality of people's living standards and building better communities is Housing and Technical Resources.

With a housing stock of more than 25,000 properties, providing quality homes to tens of thousands of local residents, the Resource is clearly pivotal in terms of helping the council achieve one of its key objectives.

Such a large and varied portfolio, spanning a wide range of ages, sizes and construction types, obviously poses a huge logistical challenge in terms of co-ordinating its maintenance and improvement.

Here in South Lanarkshire, one of the country's biggest programmes of housing improvement has been running under the 'HomeHappening' umbrella for the past nine years.

Last year, Housing and Technical Resources completed the 25,000<sup>th</sup> property in its multi-million-pound flagship programme to install brand-new kitchens and bathrooms in almost every council home.

The focus of the programme has now shifted to upgrading and installing heating systems, improving insulation and external fabric, as well as fitting new windows and doors and improving the external environment, which will help meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.

The council spends more than £20million a year on the repair and maintenance of homes and the surrounding areas to ensure they are kept to a high level.

The council has a number of projects underway that will continue to regenerate and improve communities, as well as create new homes to help meet continuing high levels of demand for housing in South Lanarkshire.

At the end of 2012, the latest phase of the regeneration work in Fernhill was completed, with 18 new council houses and 96 West of Scotland Housing Association homes built, as well as five new shops and a new community centre to help continue with the overall transformation of the area.

In the coming year, a further 26 new council houses will be completed in Skye Road, Cathkin, and Turnberry Drive, Spittal, and there will be a major boost for older people with the completion of 41 new sheltered homes in Rutherglen and Cambuslang.

To help make best use of the housing stock and help people stay in their home longer, assessments are also being carried out to identify homes that are suitable for being adapted to become Amenity Housing for older tenants.

These are homes that have all the advantages of sheltered housing incorporated in their design, such switches and sockets at convenient heights, wider doorways and

accessible showers, but without sheltered housing officers or communal areas.

In Coalburn, a number of homes are being fully refurbished to incorporate some of the latest advances in external cladding and heating systems, while the transformation of the huge complex of flats at Greenhill Court, in Rutherglen is nearing completion.

Helping to build better communities is central to Housing and Technical Resources' remit and never more so than in helping to manage the enormous project to rebuild or renovate all of the authority's primary schools.

Many of these new schools – especially in rural areas – are specifically designed to incorporate community facilities and are enabling pupils across South Lanarkshire to enjoy their education in 21st century state-of-the-art facilities.

As well as creating the best properties possible for tenants to live in, Housing and Technical Resources also works hard to provide accessible services through our Q and A offices, Customer Service Centre, the council website and out-of-hours service.

These help ensure tenants and residents across South Lanarkshire can easily make payments, get help and advice on benefit matters, homelessness, repairs and tenancy matters, as well as problems such as antisocial behaviour.

From April, however, the council will face a whole new series of challenges as changes brought about by national Welfare Reform start to take effect, and Housing and Technical Resources will play a large part in helping the many people who will be adversely affected.

From offering advice on what changes will be brought in, when they will start to take effect and what they will mean to individual people, the Resource will work to help local residents deal with the changes.

All of these services and projects – and more – will continue into 2013-14.

Residents will start moving into new sheltered housing properties in Rutherglen and Cambuslang, and new shops will start to open in Fernhill as more tenants move into the housing around them.

Plans are being developed for further new-build homes and the heating upgrades will continue, with a target of around 3000 homes, while work is already underway on the building of 18 brand-new primary schools, with a further 12 due to begin construction in 2013-14.

Across South Lanarkshire, in these and many other ways, Housing and Technical Resources will continue to work to make a positive difference to the quality of life of the people who live here.



# So what have the roads ever done for us ...

IT is the biggest asset the council owns and is vital to so many components of everyday life.

Yet few of us ever give the roads infrastructure a passing thought, except in those exceptional circumstances when we are perhaps inconvenienced by necessary repairs or resurfacing.

**So what have roads ever done for us?**

Well, they connect every strand of modern life, running like veins through the human body, facilitating business and industry, linking town and country, cutting the distance between people, markets and services.

Thus, the quality of an area's road network still plays a vital role in its economic development and wellbeing despite the exponential rise of virtual connectivity.

That is why improving and maintaining the roads network continues to be one of the council's key priorities.

There is approximately 2200 km of roads in South Lanarkshire that the council has responsibility for and that equates to a value of more than £3billion.

In 2008, it was announced that the council would embark on a £126million investment project over eight years to improve the

THEY ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF ANY TOWN OR VILLAGE, CONNECTING EVERY STRAND OF MODERN LIFE, FACILITATING BUSINESS AND PEOPLE, ALLOWING BOTH TO MOVE FREELY AND EFFICIENTLY. AND, HERE, IN SOUTH LANARKSHIRE, A MAJOR PROJECT IS ONGOING TO ENSURE THIS VITAL NETWORK KEEPS YOU MOVING. BY **JAMES DAVITT**

condition of the network.

This was revised slightly in 2011, with the scheme now continuing through until 2019.

The spending is set to continue this year, with an additional £12million being spent on the road network.

Chair of the council's Enterprise Resources Committee, Councillor Chris Thompson, said they were making "excellent progress" on improving roads across South Lanarkshire.

"Since we embarked on the Roads Investment Programme almost five years ago, more than 40 per cent of our network has been improved," said Councillor Thompson. "This year, an additional £12million will be spent, on top of the annual roads budget of around £10million.

"This is a significant investment and demonstrates our commitment to improving the quality of our roads."

Councillor Thompson,

however, acknowledged that while huge progress had already been made, the improvement programme was ongoing.

"We do recognise that there is still a long way to go and cold, wet winters can do a great deal of damage to the roads," he said.

"However, I am confident road users across South Lanarkshire can see the difference the scheme is making."

In the Hamilton area, significant investment was made last year in resurfacing the B7071 Main Street in Bothwell.

Around £190,000 was spent on the scheme using "Repave", a road recycling technique that reduces CO2 emissions, waste and energy consumption.

It is also quicker than normal resurfacing schemes.

Among the other schemes going ahead this year is expected to be Badykes Road/Hunthill Road in Blantyre. Costing around £330,000, the works will complete

a huge section of resurfacing in Blantyre that began the previous year at Glasgow Road.

In the East Kilbride area, the A726 through Strathaven was resurfaced at a cost of £180,000 during the past year.

One major resurfacing scheme planned for 2013/14 is at Kirktonholme Road, costing around £200,000.

Western Road in Cambuslang was improved at a cost of £115,000 in the last financial year and it is planned to spend £110,000 on Blairbeth Road in Rutherglen during 2013/14.

In the Clydesdale area, the A73, from St Johns Kirk, Symington, to Wyndales Farm, was resurfaced and a new drainage scheme installed at a cost of £520,000 during 2012/13.

Plans are in place for Cloglands in Forth to be improved during 2013/14 at a cost of £150,000. This is part of year-on-year improvements in and around this area.



# £15m plan will create 15,000 jobs

THE first phase of a major £15million National Business District that could help create 15,000 new jobs has been given the go-ahead, **writes James Davitt.**

The huge project to regenerate vast areas of vacant and derelict land around the former Shawfield Industrial Estate was given approval at December's Planning Committee meeting.

It paves the way for more than 350,000 square metres of business space to be developed over the next 20 to 30 years.

As well as excellent road and rail links, the site's river-front location is a key feature of the scheme and the proposal aims to capitalise on the potentially attractive location by creating a high-quality, sustainable development.

Among the many ambitious plans for the area is a new pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Clyde, with links to Dalmarnock, which is an area also undergoing major regeneration in preparation for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The bridge was given approval at an earlier South Lanarkshire Council Planning Committee.

There is also a proposal for the creation of a new Shawfield Cross on Glasgow Road that would include a pedestrian-friendly civic square and links to the new bridge. A new river promenade/walkway, suitable for walking and

cycling, will provide a continuous route along the banks of the Clyde and include ecological and landscaping improvements.

Also planned is a new industrial spine road running through the southern part of the site and a green network strategy, including sustainable drainage systems.

The site lies within the Shawfield area of Rutherglen, and covers an area of land between the M74 motorway to the south, River Clyde to the north, the boundary of Glasgow City Council to the west, and railway line to the east.

The areas to be developed have been split into five broad zones, one of which is a HQ Area, to the east of Shawfield stadium.

South Lanarkshire Council Leader Eddie McAvoys said: "This is one of the most ambitious and groundbreaking projects we have had the pleasure of giving approval to in recent years.

"It could make a significant contribution to growth in Scotland's economy, as well as massively improving the local environment.

"The size and scale of Clyde Gateway's ambitions really have to be applauded.

"It's important to remember that the site is currently mostly vacant and derelict land, with contaminants in the ground.

"These proposals will bring the area back into use and create a first-class riverside hub for business and leisure use."

MORE than £33.5million is to be invested in housing by South Lanarkshire Council in 2013-14 – while its tenants will face a below inflation rent rise of 2.5 per cent.

Council leader Eddie McAvoys said: "We were keen to continue the extensive investment in housing of recent years, which continues to see massive improvements across South Lanarkshire.

"For example, the HomeHappening housing improvement programme is now heavily involved in upgrading and installing heating systems, improving insulation and external fabric, fitting new windows and doors, as well as improving the external environment to help meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard by 2015.

"In addition to the completion of the extensive regeneration work in Fernhill, a further 26 new council houses will be completed in Cathkin and Spittal, and there will be a major boost for older people with the completion of 41 new sheltered homes in Rutherglen and Cambuslang and the continuation of the refurbishment programme of our sheltered complexes

## COUNCIL TO INVEST £33M IN HOUSING

throughout South Lanarkshire." Every year, the council meets with tenants at a series of events to explain the budget process, to hear tenants' views on their priorities for the following financial year and the level of rent rise needed to make that possible.

Councillor McAvoys added: "Although securing this level of capital programme, in excess of £33.5million for the coming financial year, prudent financial budgeting over the years has enabled us to keep the rent rise to less than inflation."



Tenants are delighted with the council's commitment to improvements

# School for excellence

## INSPECTORS LAMISH PRAISE ON SECONDARY AND HEAD TEACHER, AS LYNNE CARSTAIRS REPORTS

FOR many of us, the thought of being responsible for educating the next generation of young adults would be enough to induce sleepless nights.

But, for Tony McDaid, Head Teacher at East Kilbride's Calderglen High School, it's the reason he gets up every morning.

And the "outstanding leadership" he provides to staff, pupils and the wider community has helped to win the school plaudits on a national scale.

Calderglen High in East Kilbride wowed inspectors after they visited the school last year to gauge its progress following the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence.

Their glowing report hailed the school's curriculum as "sector-leading" and Tony's leadership as "outstanding".

Inspectors also highlighted the invaluable contribution of partnerships and innovation and the school's holistic approach to health and wellbeing, as well as the impact of leadership at all levels across the school, as first class.

In fact, across five key quality indicators, the school achieved 'excellent' in three – Learners' Experiences, Meeting Learning Needs and the Curriculum.

While in the remaining two categories – Improvement Through Self Evaluation and Improvements in Performance – the school achieved 'very good'.

The report so impressed the Scottish Government that Dr Alasdair Allan, MSP, Minister for Learning, Science and Scotland's Languages, far right, visited the school to congratulate staff and pupils.

"It is an outstanding achievement for Calderglen to become the first school marked as excellent since criteria were strengthened in

line with the new Curriculum for Excellence," he said.

And Tony, far right, is justifiably proud of the achievements of current and former alumni.

"We, as a school community, are delighted with the inspection report, which recognises the work that has taken place since the school was formed in August 2007, from the merger of the former Claremont and Hunter High schools," said Tony.

"In that time, there has been a number of notable school community achievements, including significant academic success, with pupils moving on to university and further education, studying subjects as diverse as medicine, law and business management to aeronautical engineering, music, drama, and social sciences."

Calderglen's young people have also excelled in sport and the performing arts, with trophy wins in boys' and girls' football, netball and handball.

Individual pupils also picked up gold medals in Scottish athletic and swimming events.

And, as far as the arts go, the Calderglen Wind Band are British Champions and the Jazz Band are three-time annual winners at the Glasgow Jazz Festival.

Such diversity and quality of achievement, reflects an environment that nurtures its students at all levels and is one of the many facets of life at Calderglen that caught the attention of inspectors.

In fact, so impressed were they with some of the "innovative practice" on display, that representatives want to return to the school to learn more and share ideas with other local authorities.

Inspectors praised the school across every aspect of campus life.

The curriculum, for example, is described as "sector leading", with



the report adding: "Learning and achievement are of particularly high quality.

"The school community exemplifies high expectations, support and mutual respect.

"Young people feel very secure and know that staff value their views. The school is helping them become independent thinkers.

"They experience rich learning through clubs, visits, excursions and residential courses ... and, at all stages, young people are confident and mature in their approach to the many innovative learning opportunities in classes and beyond."

Learning "real life" skills is also key to the Calderglen curriculum and the report focuses much praise

on this aspect of pupils' education.

Such opportunities for learning at all levels of the school are highlighted, including strong links with feeder primary schools, themed literacy and numeracy projects at S2, "master classes" in S3, as well as a wide range of courses that meet the interests and needs of the seniors from S4-6.

Effective communication and leadership were also marked out as "powerful features" of the school.

"The school works extremely well with a range of partners, including parents ... for example the Chaplaincy Team works with the school to provide workshops, where young people have time and space to reflect on personal



matters. Young people support each other very well in classes and work very effectively to support pupils in the campus partner establishment, Sanderson High school.

According to inspectors, Tony McDaid is very highly regarded and has nurtured the sense of community exemplified by the motto 'We are Calderglen'.

His very high expectations and vision for the future have created a forward-thinking school that inspires young people to learn and develop skills for the future.

Understandably, Tony is mildly embarrassed by such lavish praise and is keen to point out that Calderglen is a community – a sum of all of all its parts.

"We are fortunate to enjoy

outstanding facilities that contribute to supporting pupils' learning which, in turn, helps us as we implement Curriculum for Excellence," he said.

"It is also clear that the excellent behaviour and positive attitude of pupils helps create an environment that supports attainment and achievement.

"Our school vision is 'Working Together' to inspire learning and shape the future and this captures what we strive for on a daily basis."

South Lanarkshire Council's Chair of Education Resources, Councillor Jean McKeown, is delighted with the school's success

"This report talks about the school motif – 'We are Calderglen' – and credits Head Teacher Tony

McDaid as having nurtured that sense of community," she said.

"It goes on to praise his 'very high expectations and vision for the future creating a forward-thinking school, inspiring young people to learn and develop'.

"I can honestly say that I agree with every word of this. The school has a fantastic sense of community across pupils, teachers, support staff, parents and carers, and that is in no small part down to Tony and the leadership he displays.

"This strength cascades down through the outstanding depute heads, senior and class teachers, to the pupils themselves who, as the report points out, are 'justifiably proud of their school'. Calderglen High School is undoubtedly a

credit to South Lanarkshire but, most importantly, to its young people."

But, perhaps Calderglen's best endorsement of all comes from the pupils themselves, who when asked **why they loved Calderglen** responded:

"Because Calderglen High loves me! Staff members always give 100 per cent to helping us learn and making sure we get the best out of our time." *Hannah Scott (S1)*

"... you always feel safe no matter what the circumstance and because of the fun that I have in my learning." *David Logan (S1)*

"... the school community is fantastic at assisting my needs.

The teachers put 100 per cent into their work and to help the pupils. I am really lucky to be part of this school and how it will help me pursue my goals in the future. It's great." *Dean Garrity (S3)*

"... of the amazing opportunities we are given. The staff and other pupils also help you to pursue your dreams and goals." *Beth Dougan (S4)*

"... of the numerous opportunities I have been given, not only for my goals in school, but my aspirations for the future. I now know what I want to do when I leave and it has all been through the help given by the school." *Ian Rae (S5)*

"... staff and pupils encourage me to be proactive, which is easy with such a wide range of activities around the school." *Erin McIver (S6)*

TRANSFORMATION is one of those words, Annette Finnan believes, that is thoroughly over used when it comes to building projects.

But, in the case of Fernhill in Rutherglen, South Lanarkshire Council's Head of Area Services (Housing and Technical Resources) reckons it is entirely justified.

"What's happening in Fernhill is about much, much more than the physical changes – it's about putting the heart back into a community," she explains.

"All you have to do is walk through Fernhill today and you will see the transformation taking place in front of you, with new-build properties going up on one side of the road and the old houses coming down on the other."

South Lanarkshire Council's Fernhill regeneration strategy began in 2004, when it was already obvious the community was suffering from an assortment of problems, including poor housing conditions, antisocial behaviour and deprivation.

Annette explains: "Most of the housing in Fernhill comprised tenements and deck access buildings that were very unpopular, showing the signs of wear and tear and densely packed. The area as a whole was in

decline, with lots of empty properties, vandalism and perceptions from outside the community were poor."

The council, in collaboration with the Scottish Government, West of Scotland Housing Association and the local community, came together to draw up a masterplan which, as Annette explains, had a simple aim.

"The plan was to transform Fernhill into a place in which people wanted to live and work," she says.

"Partnership working is essential on a project of this scale and we worked closely with a range of organisations and groups to make it happen."

The masterplan was developed by John Gilbert Architects, in consultation with the community, and developed in partnership with West of Scotland Housing Association.

A total of 302 tenement flats have already been demolished, with 34 still to go. So far, a total of 176 new homes have been built, including properties for rent and shared equity, 158 built by West of Scotland Housing Association and 18 built by South Lanarkshire Council."

The existing parade of 11 shops is to be

demolished, creating more space for residential development and five new shop units have been built, due to open later this spring.

And in one of the most startling changes, the old Fernhill Pavilion, built in the late 1950s as little more than a small hall with meeting rooms and some outdoor football pitches, has been replaced with a £5.5million community centre complete with a range of sports facilities and play areas.

Involving the community in the masterplan was essential, as Annette Finnan explains.

"Here was an area badly in need of regeneration but the community – the local residents and shop owners – were absolutely key to the whole process," she says.

"It wasn't about the council coming in and foisting our opinions upon them – it was about listening to people in Fernhill, reflecting their wishes and capturing the active community spirit that already existed there."

The council formed a Neighbourhood Board to provide a forum for the local community, elected members and key partners to oversee and shape the regeneration process and pick up on a wide range of issues, including broader problems such as antisocial behaviour,

IN THIS SPECIAL 4-PAGE FEATURE, **ANNIE STUART** REPORTS ON THE STUNNING TRANSFORMATION THAT HAS LED TO THE ..



# REBIRTH OF A COMMUNITY

improving places to play and activities for young people.

A new-build focus group was also established by West of Scotland Housing Association to work with residents who were being re-housed and to ensure that they could influence key aspects of their new homes at the design stage.

Elinor Taggart, the housing association's director of property investment, says: "Our focus groups in Fernhill were very well attended – it is a very community focused area, with strong champions in local residents who were keen to work with us on the regeneration plans.

"That was fantastic for us because we could draw upon their experience of the area."

"Following on from the focus groups we have established our own residents' association and they have regular meetings.

"The community remains essential to the whole process and it is up to them to keep the pressure on us, and on the council, to ensure Fernhill continues to flourish."

Central to the transformation is the community facility, as Annette Finnan explains. "This is the hub, a place where every section of the



**Before: Fernhill was badly rundown**

community, whether it's young children, or families, or older people, can come and join in what's on offer," she says.

"Fernhill has always had a strong sense of community – yes, the area, like many others, had its problems around community safety and the physical decline of the place which, of course, has an impact on the people living and working there."

She adds: "But what's different about Fernhill is the determination and enthusiasm of the people who want to change things.

"They didn't want to leave and give up on

the place, they wanted to stay and improve it.

"There is a real demand for the new housing, a buzz about the place. People in Fernhill have always been proud to live there but that sense of pride is growing and it has become a vibrant, attractive place."

Annette is first to admit that there are still challenges to be faced in Fernhill.

"The wider regeneration masterplan involves improving the housing stock we have retained, not just focusing on the new build," she says.

"We are looking into further phases of new-build development and plan to continue external environmental improvements across the whole Fernhill community."

Annette smiles: "We have got the momentum – we want to keep it moving. It's very rewarding to think you have been part of a bigger plan that is making a difference to people's lives.

"But it's not about how we feel, it's about how the community feels and the feedback we have been getting has been very positive – people are delighted. I think the future is extremely bright for Fernhill."

● The story of Fernhill's rebirth continues on pages 16/17.



**'What's happening in Fernhill is about much, much more than the physical changes – it's about putting the heart back into a community'**



# Community spirit is alive and kicking ...

BY ANNIE STUART

A walk along her local main street is like a stroll down memory lane for Annette Riches.

The Fernhill grandmother laughs: "I recognise so many faces from years ago – every second or third person is someone I know and it's really nice.

"I see children I used to know, who are all grown up now. I feel like I have come full circle."

Annette grew up in nearby Rutherglen and moved to Fernhill in the late 1960s.

After her children were born, she moved away but, in November last year, she and her husband, Sam, decided the time was right to come back.

"I have always liked this part of South Lanarkshire – it's where I'm from," she says, simply. "I used to live on Fernhill Road, in a wee maisonette not far from where I am now.

"The area changed a lot after I left – it got quite rundown, like everywhere that has older houses and shops."

She adds: "But some things didn't change – the community spirit, for example.

"What I've always loved about Fernhill is the way people look out for each other and fight their corner."

## AS FRESH LIFE IS BREATHED INTO FERNHILL, TRANSFORMING THE AREA AND GENERATING NEW HOPE

Annette and Sam, who are in their early 60s, have been married for 37 years, and have three grown-up children and one grand-daughter.

The couple are South Lanarkshire Council tenants and delighted with their new home in Neilvaig Drive.

"It's fantastic, we're really settling in," smiles Annette, a former bakery worker.

"Now the area is changing again, for the better this time.

"There is a new energy about the place and I think people are starting to feel proud of the area again."

The Riches' house is close to the new community centre and children's play-park.

"I love hearing the kids play in the swing park – it's lovely to hear them shouting and laughing and it's good to see the area being used properly," adds Annette.

"And the new community centre is

amazing – I go along for the bingo.

"The new shops will make a big difference, too. Sometimes, it could feel a bit intimidating if you were out in the late evening but it's not like that any more."

Martin Green, who owns Melville Chemist in Fernhill, agrees.

The pharmacy – part of M&D Green Dispensing Chemist – is moving out of its current home in the rundown parade of shops into the brand spanking new units across the road.

"We've been here for around 12 years, so we have seen the area change considerably," he explains.

"The move will allow us to expand into a bigger unit and develop the services we already offer to people in Fernhill.

"For example, we will have a consultation room for customers looking for a bit more privacy, plus better equipment



The new-look Fernhill, chemist shop owner Martin Green and pharmacist Louise Carson, centre, and brothers Thomas and James, with Annette and Sam Riches, left

and more space. "The parade of shops has always been the focal point of the community and, despite the traders' best efforts, has fallen into disrepair over the years. The new ones will help to revitalise the area."

Martin, and pharmacist Louise Carson, have got to know the people of Fernhill well over the years.

"The area has had its problems but there is a great community spirit here," explains Martin.

"Throughout all the demolition work and rebuilding, it's been hard for the traders and residents but things are heading the right way now.

"Everyone is feeling upbeat and buoyant about what's happening and it's good to see."

Brothers Thomas and James have always looked out for each other.

They supported each other after both their wives died following battles with cancer and, despite moving to different areas of South Lanarkshire and beyond, they have always kept in touch.

So when ill-health struck and Thomas, 65, found himself in need of extra care, James did not hesitate.

"After we were both widowed, we stayed in touch," explains James, 68.

"Thomas had a stroke several years ago, so he needs a bit of extra help.

"He took up his South Lanarkshire council tenancy in November, moving into a lovely ground floor cottage flat, which really suits him.

"There are not too many heavy doors to negotiate – he uses a wheelchair – and he is looking forward to spending some time in the garden in the summer."

Thomas and James are both impressed by the changes taking place in Fernhill.

"It's great to see things improving," says James. "There is still a lot of work to do, of course, but things are definitely moving in the right direction."

Annette Riches agrees. "A lot of people have the wrong idea about Fernhill," she says. "When we said we were moving here, some folk couldn't understand it – they said they would never live in this area. But I feel comfortable here. When you see all this work getting done and money being spent, you realise people want things to change and, so far, it looks good."

Council Leader Eddie McAvoiy said : "The regeneration of Fernhill is a massive undertaking that will give many people a much better standard of living.

"The quality of the new housing that has been provided in both phase one, and the recently completed phase two, is amazing, and I know many tenants have said how delighted they are with it.

"With the addition of the brand-new community centre and shop units, it is heartening to see that the council and our partners, working closely with the local people themselves, are taking huge steps towards creating an area that the community can be proud to live in.

"This has taken a great deal of planning and years of work, but it goes to show what can be achieved when people work together for the common good."



# New team to help people hit by the changes to housing benefit



Picture by Anne-Janine Nugent

‘... there are a lot of people losing out and there is no doubt it’s going to be tough for them’

DEBBIE SMITH

IN APRIL, more than 5000 tenants of working age, who live in council or housing association homes in South Lanarkshire, will lose part of their housing benefit as a result of the UK Government’s welfare reforms.

New under-occupancy rules mean that from April 1, 2013, people on housing benefit will have their benefit reduced if they are deemed to have more bedrooms than they require for their family size.

This leaves many single people or couples in two-bedroom apartments, and middle aged people whose children have moved out of the family home, having to find the money to pay for their ‘spare rooms’.

In council houses, this has meant losing £8, on average, for one extra room and £14.50 a week, on average, for two or more spare rooms. But some people are having to pay as much as £20 a week from their existing income and there is no transitional support to phase in the change.

The council and housing associations wrote to tenants they believed might be affected last November, asking them to

complete a form that would update their current circumstances.

Head of Housing Area Services Annette Finnan explains: “More than 1700 people replied to the first batch of letters, which was a great response.

“We have been working our way through these returns to identify any households that might be exempt from the charges, or have special circumstances that would allow us to grant discretionary support.

“In February, the council wrote again to people giving them a clear indication of how much they are going to have to pay and also wrote to people who have now been identified as exempt from the new rules.

“Unfortunately, the Department for Work and Pensions has allowed very few exceptions to these restrictions – but anyone who has reached the age that people become eligible for state pension credit is exempt, and people who need a carer staying overnight are allowed that room.

“We also have some discretion to help people who foster children when they are between placements and people in houses that

have been significantly adapted for their needs.

“But there are a lot of people losing out and there is no doubt it’s going to be tough for them.”

Under the new rules, where parents don’t live together and have shared care of children, the children are only treated as living with the parent that provides their main home.

In effect, this means that many parents, particularly fathers with weekend access, will have a significant shortfall in their housing benefit under the new rules.

People planning a family and mums who are pregnant are not entitled to a room for their child until the baby is born.

The council’s housing service has formed a temporary ‘Benefits are Changing’ team that will make contact with tenants affected and who have not responded to the letters to offer any support they can, as people adjust to this change in their circumstances.

Debbie Smith, a team leader with Q and A in East Kilbride, will lead the 10-strong team.

“These changes are affecting people who, by definition, are already on very low incomes and

we know it’s going to be hard for them,” explained Debby, left.

“If, after checking their circumstances, it’s clear that people are going to have to make these payments, we can advise them on payment methods and check if there is any other advice or support we can offer that might help them.

“Some people will want to move to smaller properties. And we are looking to see how we can promote mutual exchange schemes that would enable people to swap with those who would like more bedrooms.

“But, the fact is, there are very few one-bedroom properties in our housing stock.

“We can also arrange for people to see the council’s Money Matters service if they are in financial difficulties, or want benefits advice.

“Our South Lanarkshire Works 4 You service can help them prepare for a return to work, if that’s possible.

“It’s important that people do make their rent payments when they’re due and that they talk to us right away if they are getting into any difficulties.”

The council aims to use the experience of supporting people affected by under-occupancy to help prepare for greater changes due to be introduced later in the year, when the Department for Work and Pensions starts to roll out Universal Credit.

At that stage, rent will no longer be paid direct to the council, or other landlords, and all benefit claimants of working age will need to pay their own rent from their Universal Credit, which will be paid monthly in arrears.

## Occupancy rules

Working-age households are allowed one-bedroom for each for:

- A couple
- A person over 16
- Two children of the same sex under 17
- Two children under 10 of either sex
- Any other child (other than a foster child or a child whose main home is elsewhere)
- A severely disabled child who is unable to share a bedroom due to their disability
- A carer providing overnight care

## Money Matters tips on PIPS

MORE than 12,000 disabled people in South Lanarkshire currently receive support with their living costs from Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

Under the UK Government's Welfare Reforms, DLA is to be phased out for people of working age over the next few years.

A new scheme of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) is being introduced for those in the 16-64 age group.

The Department for Work and Pensions states that DLA has become "outdated and unsustainable" and that PIP will ensure benefit is "more fairly targeted at those who face the greatest barriers".

The timetable for introducing the new benefit was revised earlier this year and, like all the welfare reforms, may still be subject to change.

The DWP has been sending out general information about PIP to all existing DLA claimants in their annual DLA benefit rate letters.

This is the first time it has written directly to claimants about PIP. DLA claimants don't need to take any action as a result of this letter.

From June 10, 2013, there will be no new claims to DLA for people aged 16 to 64. New applicants will apply for PIP instead.

From October 7, 2013, existing DLA claimants who report a change in their DLA care or mobility needs will be asked to claim PIP. And claimants with existing fixed-term DLA awards due to expire after the end of February 2014 will be asked to claim PIP.

Young people turning age 16 will also need to claim PIP.

Between October 2015 and 2018, all the remaining eligible claimants in receipt of a DLA award will be invited to make a claim for PIP. The DWP plans to have contacted everyone by 2018. It will write to individuals in plenty of time to explain what to do. They don't need to contact DWP now.

The council's Money Matters and Citizens Advice Bureaux are bracing themselves for a big increase in the numbers of claimants turning to them for help with completing PIP applications, requesting reconsideration if PIP isn't granted and with appeals to the tribunals.

Money Matters manager Jackie Lawson explains: "Whenever benefits change, and new criteria are introduced, it has a big knock-on effect on appeals.

"It takes time for case law to determine how the new rules are interpreted and for things to settle

● If you're on Disability Living Allowance and want to apply for an uprating after October this year, because your situation has worsened, contact Money Matters or Citizens Advice for advice first. This is extremely important as you will be reassessed under the new PIP rules and these are different from the rules for DLA.

● If you have a fixed-term award that expires from the end of February 2014, you will be asked to apply for PIP approximately 20 weeks before your award is due to end. You should contact Money Matters or Citizens Advice for help.

● If you have a DLA award that is indefinite, there will be no change before October 2015 and it could be 2018 before you are asked to apply for PIP.

You will get notice in writing of anything you need to do.

● If you are already 65 on April 8, 2013 – you are not affected by these changes.

● Money Matters works closely with colleagues in Education to assist young people with Additional Support Needs on benefit claims.

● The most important thing to remember is that there is help available to assist you through this process.

If you are worried about the changes or you need advice and assistance then contact your local Money Matters Advice Service or Citizens Advice Bureaux.

● **If you are a carer, South Lanarkshire Carers Network is keen to know if you care for someone and have been affected by welfare reforms. Please contact 01698 285163 for further info.**

● **Contact information for Money Matters and Citizens Advice is on Page 48**

THERE are two components of PIP – Daily Living and Mobility – and both of these components have two rates, standard and enhanced.

There are 10 daily living activities covered in a PIP assessment: preparing food, taking nutrition, managing therapy or monitoring health condition, washing and bathing, managing toilet needs or incontinence, dressing and undressing, communication verbally, reading and understanding signs, symbols and words, engaging with other people to face-to-face and making budgeting decisions.

The mobility component looks at two activities – planning and following journeys and moving around.

Each activity contains a set of descriptors that define increasing levels of difficulty and each one is scored.

For both daily living and mobility components, if the scores add up to eight points, the standard rate of PIP is paid and where they add up to 12 points, an enhanced rate is paid.

# Appeals set to rise as disability benefit changes are introduced

down. We saw this when Employment Support Allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit two years ago.

"The success rate for those who appealed their decision and sought help with representation at their appeal hearing has been 70 per cent. The high success rate with ESA appeals indicates that many people who are too ill to work are being refused benefit at first, losing income they desperately need for months while their appeal is pending."

Disability organisations fear that many people, who currently qualify for DLA, will not qualify for PIP, or will qualify but at a lower rate.

However, it's hard to predict how things will work out in the long term as the regulations have been changing.

For example, the distance people can walk before qualifying

for the enhanced rate mobility payments has been reduced to 20 metres under PIP from 50 metres under DLA rules. Following representations from many disability campaigners, the Government announced at the end of January that individuals would be assessed on what they can do "safely, reliably, repeatedly and in a reasonable time period" but the 20-metre distance has been retained.

There is a great deal at stake because Disability Living Allowance acts as a passport to a range of other benefits. It determines whether a relative or friend qualifies for carers allowance to look after the person and whether they qualify automatically for a Blue Badge. If people lose Carers' Allowance, it will increase the numbers turning to Social Work services for more support, as carers losing income will need to return to paid work. The government estimates that there will be a reduction of 5000 Carers' Allowance claims as a result of the introduction of PIP by October 2015. South Lanarkshire Carers Network Chairman Robert Anderson says: "We will be keeping a close eye on how this develops and we're keen to hear from any carers who feel they have been adversely affected by the changes."

Most PIP applicants will need to attend an assessment that will consider an individual's ability to carry out a series of key, everyday activities.

But those diagnosed with terminal illness, with a life expectancy of less than six months, will be fast-tracked to benefits without a further medical in the same way as they are at present. Personal Independence Payments will not be paid on the basis of having a particular health condition or impairment but on the impact of this on the claimant's every day life.

**'WHENEVER BENEFITS CHANGE, AND NEW CRITERIA ARE INTRODUCED, IT HAS A BIG KNOCK-ON EFFECT ON APPEALS'**

# HAVING your say

FROM April 1, 2013 we are changing the way the council handles complaints.

A new two-stage process 'have your say' is being introduced that will make handling complaints simpler and more effective for customers and the council.

Every local authority is implementing the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman's new Complaints Handling Procedure, which has been introduced to ensure that, nationally and locally, complaints are handled in a simple, effective and more consistent way.

The key to the new process is ensuring that, wherever possible, complaints are resolved at the first point of contact.

The new procedure involves two stages, with the right of appeal to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

- Stage 1 – five-day resolution frontline/point of contact

- Stage 2 – 20-day resolution senior manager sign off

If, after this, the customer remains dissatisfied they can then appeal to the ombudsman.

The emphasis of the new procedure is on quick, frontline resolution.

And it is expected that 90 per cent of all complaints received will be resolved at the first stage.

In preparation, the council is rolling out training to employees who deal directly with the public and who receive complaints as part of their day-to-day work.

From mid March there will be more information about the new complaints procedure available in Council Offices, Q and A and from [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

- Complaints concerning Social Work **do not** come under the new Complaints Handling Process and are dealt with under a separate statutory process.

For further information please contact your local Social Work Office, or email [swcomplaints@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:swcomplaints@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

## Driving down arrears

AN awareness campaign to encourage council tenants to pay their rent and reduce arrears has hit the roads.

The council's campaign reminds people of the importance of keeping their rent up-to-date and directs them to where to find help if they start to fall behind.

The campaign is being promoted on local buses and mobile ad trailer.

For advice on rents call 0303 123 1012 or visit your local Q and A office. Info is also available at [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk).

WHEN OLD TYRES ARE NO LONGER FIT FOR THEIR ORIGINAL PURPOSE, IT'S NOT THE END OF THE ROAD THANKS TO A RISING NUMBER OF INNOVATIVE RECYCLING PROJECTS, INCLUDING REPAIRING ROADS RIGHT HERE IN SOUTH LANARKSHIRE, AS **JAMES DAVITT** HAS BEEN FINDING OUT





Work underway at Meadowhead Road in East Kilbride, where old tyres are being used as part of the rebuilding of the country road

# Driving forward with tyre recycling project

MORE than 100,000 worn tyres are discarded from vehicles in Britain every day.

And that adds up to a colossal 46million tyres annually.

Disposing of them is a major issue, especially in light of the EU Landfill directive that bans old tyres from being dumped at civic amenity sites.

And, while there are many innovative uses for recycled tyres, many still end up being stored at illegal sites and stockpiles which, if not managed properly, pose a threat to the environment and public safety, not least in terms of the fire risk they pose.

By their very nature, they are tough and durable, with the average tyre clocking up around 20,000 miles in its lifetime.

There are a growing number of innovative, eco-friendly uses that give tyres an extended life, including making stationary, shoes, sports surfaces and garden mulch.

Now South Lanarkshire Council is also helping to lead the way in the sustainable reuse of old tyres by using them in the rebuilding of a country road at Meadowhead Road in East Kilbride.

The tyres are bound into bales,

which weigh just under a ton and, along with stone-filled wire baskets, form the foundations that the surface of the new road will then be built on.

The environmental benefits are substantial as, otherwise, many old tyres simply end up at the incinerator.

They can also be sourced locally, reducing the carbon footprint and fitting in with the council's sustainability commitment.

Depute chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Enterprise Resources Committee, Councillor Graham Simpson, left, believes reusing old tyres in road construction is the way forward.

"This is a highly innovative and unusual method of repairing a road," he said. "We are the only council in Scotland that is doing this at the moment."

The road has suffered a number of problems in the past few years, mainly due to the level of heavy goods vehicles travelling on the C-class route. Investigations into the road over the years also revealed another problem – peat lies beneath the surface to a depth of up to 2.5 metres over a length of around 150 metres. Continual

problems with the road meant the council's engineers decided the best course of action would be to remove the peat altogether and replace it with a material that would better support the road surface.

The rubber bales are made by stacking discarded tyres in a press and, once compressed, binding the bundle with baling wire.

The bales are lighter than traditional materials, contribute towards recycling and were donated to the council for free by Clann Waste Management from Paisley. Excavators are removing all of the peat along the 180-metre length of road and lining either side of the trench with stone filled wire baskets.

Part of the trench is then being backfilled with compacted stone but the deepest 25 metre section is being filled with tyre bales surrounded in gravel.

Once the trench is completed the road is being rebuilt on top.

Councillor Simpson added: "Of course, with any new venture it is not without risk but, because the peat has been completely removed, our engineers feel there is a good chance this could work.

"I was surprised to come here and see the tyres and the way they are used.

"I imagined the process would involve churned-up bits of tyre, not the bales that are in cubes measuring roughly a square metre.

"We will closely monitor the road and see how things go over the coming months.

"If it is as successful as we hope, there is a real chance that this method could be used in other suitable roads across South Lanarkshire."

Councillor Simpson explained that Meadowhead Road was a suitable location for a trial of the bales because, although there is heavy goods traffic, it is not heavily used by the general public.

"I would like to thank Clann Waste Management for donating the tyre bales to us and the contractor Luddon, who are carrying out the work on our behalf," he added.

A paragraph 19 exemption was granted by SEPA for the use of bales under the Waste Management Licensing (Scotland) Regulations 2011.

Zero Waste Scotland are also supportive of the project.



Kenneth and Ann Gardiner joined their local Active health class and say it has helped to transform their lives for the better

# Exercise prescribed for health conditions

PIONEERING PROGRAMME HELPS PATIENTS RECOVERING FROM SERIOUS ILLNESS BACK ON THE ROAD TO FITNESS

AFTER suffering a heart attack two years ago, fitness fanatic Kenneth Gardiner was keen to get back into exercise as quickly as possible, *writes Annie Stuart.*

His wife, Ann, joined him at their local Active Health class to keep him company – and ended up transforming her own health into the bargain.

“I lost eight stone and practically cured my diabetes,” smiles Ann, 61. “I no longer need medication and I feel so much better – it is wonderful.”

Rutherglen couple Ann, a retired health and safety officer, and Kenneth, 63, an aromatherapist, are full of praise for the pioneering fitness programme, run by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire.

It launched four years ago to such acclaim that it now comprises more than 50 classes across the

region. It’s one of the first projects of its kind in Scotland to focus on bringing people with different health conditions together, as health development officer Lauren Logan explains.

“Active Health is a referral programme bringing together people recovering from heart conditions and strokes, for example, and those living with long-term illnesses, such as Parkinson’s Disease and multiple sclerosis,” she says.

“In February, we also plan to introduce a pilot for those with early onset dementia.

“There are plenty of tailored fitness classes for cardiac patients, for example, or those suffering the after-effects of stroke, but this is the first time one has brought everyone together.

“The response, when we launched it four years ago, was



incredible, and now most leisure centres across South Lanarkshire are running the classes.”

For many of the men and women attending Active Health classes, the social benefits are as important as the physical ones.

“We ask participants to complete an evaluation at the end of their

first 10 weeks, and people tell us that their quality of life has been dramatically improved,” adds Lauren.

“That is extremely rewarding. Many of the people who come along to the classes are struggling with confidence issues as they try to return to fitness after an illness.

“So being able to come along and have a chat and a laugh in their local leisure centre – rather than in a hospital environment, for example, makes a world of difference to them.”

For the Gardiners, Active Health has been a godsend. “Kenneth’s heart attack came right out of the blue,” recalls Ann.

“He didn’t smoke or drink and he kept fit – but it turned out he had a genetic condition.”

Kenneth explains: “I felt unwell one Sunday night, went to the doctor on the Monday, and that was it. It was a complete shock.

He smiles, wryly: “But if you’re going to have one, have it in the west of Scotland.

“The care I received was fantastic, and I was back on my feet very quickly.”

Kenneth attends Active Health at Eastfield Lifestyles in Cambuslang and Ann went along to keep him company.

“I loved it from the start,” she says. “It’s really friendly. Losing weight has helped my diabetes and my own doctors are delighted with the progress I’ve made.”

Kenneth and Ann are not the



The Active Health referral programme run by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire is making a big impact

only ones singing the praises of the class and its cheerful instructor Jackie Brown.

"This is a very enthusiastic class," explains Jackie.

"After a general warm-up, everyone splits into pairs and does circuits, at their own pace, to suit their own level of ability."

Coping well with the bicep curls, jumping jacks and torso twists is June Steven, 65, from Burnside.

"I was petrified about retiring, I had no idea how I would feel and what I would do with my time," admits June, who was a clerical officer in social work.

"Coming here has helped with my confidence and it has inspired me to take up other forms of exercise, like badminton and zumba. It has been amazing. I even kept my promise to learn to swim when I turned 65 and I love that, too."

She adds: "It's such a friendly environment – everyone makes you feel welcome from the moment you arrive."

Nancy Newton, 70, from Burnside, is recovering after surgery to replace a broken hip.

"This is perfect for me – it's a great class, and nothing like a gym, which can be quite unfriendly," she explains.

Marjory Burnett, who is in her 60s, agrees: "I don't like the idea of going into a gym, sticking on the headphones and ignoring everyone around you. This is much

more sociable and we have a good laugh together. I come because I love exercising and I want to keep fit – I have also started Body Balance classes, swimming and yoga."

Alex Eadie, 74, from King's Park, agrees: "It keeps you young! I had a triple heart bypass operation several years ago and, after the hospital rehabilitation programme, I was referred here to keep my fitness levels up.

"It works wonders."

Laurie Kayser, 74, from Burnside, is also recovering after heart surgery.

"I needed a bypass in 1997 because of my heart problems, and it took a lot out of me," he explains.

"But it was great to get back into exercise. I notice a huge difference.

"If I don't come for a few weeks because I'm on holiday, I start to notice the joints seizing up. Coming

here makes you feel so much better about things – it makes you feel alive."

Active Health is just one strand of the long-running partnership SLLC enjoys with NHS Lanarkshire.

It also includes Weigh to Go, a 10-week adult weight management and exercise programme, and support of the national Detecting Cancer Early campaign.

The year-long campaign is currently focusing on detecting the early signs of breast cancer, before turning its attention to bowel and then lung cancers later in 2013.

Lauren Logan explains: "The message behind Detecting Cancer Early is 'don't get scared, get checked', and that lumps and bumps are not the only signs, so we were keen to make it more than simply putting posters up on toilet doors.

"Our fitness instructors have a

unique relationship with clients – they build up a rapport with them and trust is an important part of that. So by involving them in spreading the key messages of Detecting Cancer Early, we can hopefully reach a wider audience."

Maria Reid, NHS Lanarkshire's assistant health promotion manager, says: "NHS Lanarkshire is delighted with the range of integrated health, wellbeing and physical activity programmes that are being delivered in partnership with SLLC.

"Some are well-established and have grown and changed in response to the needs of participants.

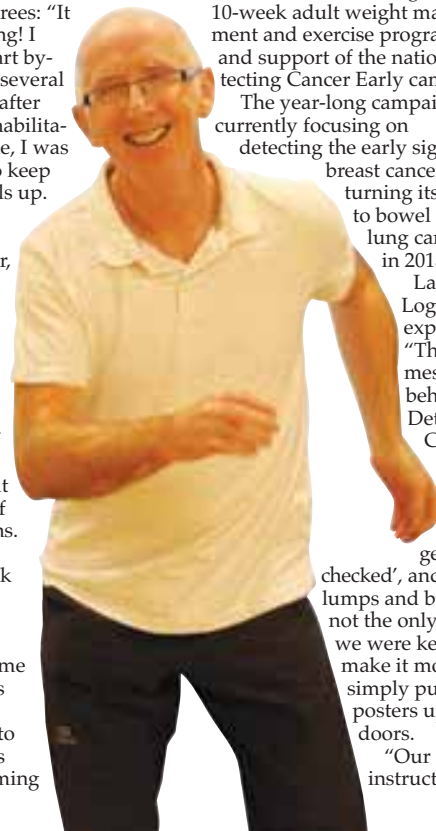
"Newer programmes, such as Weigh To Go, have been designed to support people to manage and maintain a healthy weight in a community setting by changing their diet, physical activity and lifestyle in general."

She adds: "The range of programmes on offer can support people who are living with conditions, such as heart disease, stroke and lung disease, and SLLC staff are supporting programmes outwith leisure centres that include walking, gardening and cycling.

"There really is something for everyone.

"NHS Lanarkshire values this partnership as it helps us encourage and support better health for the people of South Lanarkshire."

● For more information on Active Health classes visit [www.slleisureandculture.co.uk](http://www.slleisureandculture.co.uk)



# Wild about meadows



THE COUNCIL IS ACTIVELY ENCOURAGING BIODIVERSITY BY ALLOWING GRASSED AREAS TO GO TO SEED AND BECOME WILDFLOWER HAVENS FOR ALL MANNER OF BUGS, BUTTERFLIES AND BEES, AS CATHIE RUSSELL REPORTS





WILDFLOWER meadows teeming with butterflies, hoverflies, bees and insects that provide rich habitats for birds and other wildlife are becoming well established across South Lanarkshire.

From Cambuslang to Forth, communities have been joining forces with countryside rangers and grounds staff to identify grassed areas that could be managed in a different way to encourage biodiversity.

And the difference can be “phenomenal” explains community liaison and environmental education officer Gerry Devaney.

“In open spaces across the area, the housemartins and swallows that thrive on insects, blue tits, great tits, coal tits, flycatchers and wagtails are all sitting waiting on the restaurants opening and that’s what these new wildflower grasslands provide,” said Gerry.

“In the past, a lot of public space has simply been left with short grass, but this does little to encourage wildlife and this is a big issue for us all globally, as bees and other pollinators play such an important role in the food chain.”

Working with groups in Bothwell, Stonehouse, Forth, Cambuslang, Biggar and other areas, grounds maintenance staff and the countryside rangers have identified a number of areas as wildflower grasslands.

Brighter Bothwell’s project was a forerunner for this kind of approach.

Chairperson Dennis Walker explains: “We wanted to create a lovely nature trail through Bothwell and our volunteers cast a 5000 square metre area with Scotia seeds containing native Scottish wildflowers.

“We encouraged the grounds mainte-

nance teams to stop cutting the grass through the season.

“But, at the final cut in the autumn, they had to do a cut then leave the grass two or three days for the wildflower and grass seeds to cast.

“Then all the cuttings have to be collected to avoid too many nutrients getting into the soil. We have also rotavated some of the ground to give seeds a better chance.

“So, although these approaches cut down on some types of maintenance, you do need to invest in these schemes and manage them carefully.

“We’re really pleased this approach is being used across South Lanarkshire as we’re really seeing the benefits.

“What is now the nature trail used to be a bit of a no-go area and now it’s very wild and pleasant country walk.

“The orchids just exploded in carpets this year and we’ve planted 150,000 bulbs so that, in springtime, it’s ablaze with daffodils, crocus and primrose.”

Dennis said that, initially, they did get some resistance and some residents were unhappy that the grass wasn’t getting cut.

“But there are no complaints now, on the contrary, people appreciate how lovely it is,” he added. We’ve been undertaking habitat surveys and we’ve so much wildlife here

now. We also have a few ponds along the way where toads and newts are becoming established.”

Wildflower areas can have a

real wow factor as far as wildlife is concerned, even if they are not particularly colourful.

But winning hearts and minds tends to be a lot easier when areas become very colourful and attractive. At Castlebank Park in Lanark, for example, there’s a lovely mix of plants and, on the central reservation on Bothwell Road, poppies and cornflowers provided a

stunning vista for passing motorists.

One of Gerry’s favourites is Cambuslang Park, where the “short back and sides” grass gives way to a myriad of grasses that were “absolutely alive last summer”.

And the play area at Greer Place in Larkhall attracted very positive feedback from the local community.

“There are now pilots in every area of South Lanarkshire,” explains Gerry. “Some have been more successful than others.

“But we are evaluating them all carefully as we want to learn from each experience and work closely with local communities.

“Getting back into these natural habitats is so good for us all. Everyone involved in these projects from the grounds maintenance teams to the volunteers has got a real kick out of connecting with the natural life in the area.”



# Giving our children the write start ...

WITH THE LAUNCH OF A NEW LITERACY STRATEGY ACROSS NURSERIES AND SCHOOLS IN SOUTH LANARKSHIRE, AS **CATHIE RUSSELL** HAS BEEN FINDING OUT





## Making child's play of learning the curriculum

By Carolyn Mitchell

A MAJOR drive is underway in schools and nurseries in South Lanarkshire to implement the council's new Literacy Strategy.

Although most children across the area develop good standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening, the Scottish Government estimates that one in five children in Scotland (18.5 per cent) enter secondary school without the skills they need to tackle the curriculum effectively.

Janey Mauchline, who chairs the council's Literacy Strategy Implementation group explains: "The launch of our literacy strategy last October was a great success.

"And I've found everyone involved in education is very keen to capture all the excellent practice out there to make sure all our young people improve their levels of literacy and attainment in language."

The strategy was written by a multi-agency group co-chaired by Janey and Principal Psychologist Elizabeth King, and involved consultation with parents and key professionals.

Research shows that children from low-income backgrounds are particularly at risk of falling behind when it comes to literacy.

By promoting literacy throughout the early years, and identifying children who might have difficulties at a very early stage, the council aims to achieve better results all round.

The implementation group is putting a range of measures in place, from promoting early literacy skills and early support with very young children, a member of staff acting as literacy co-ordinator in each establishment and providing opportunities for

teachers across the board to share practice in teaching literacy skills.

One of the council's literacy pilot projects in Clydesdale has already developed additional training for newly qualified primary one and two teachers, and those taking on a younger class who have been teaching older children.

This covers classroom practice, assessment, models of reading development, reading resources and different approaches.

Staff also learn how to carry out phonological assessments that check children's ability to work confidently with the sounds that make up words.

These are followed up with reading tests in March to identify any children who need a little extra support at this early stage, which can pay dividends in the longer term.

The tests take just a few minutes to complete and there are a range of techniques included in the training that teachers can use with children who need extra support.

A booklet entitled 'Getting Ready to Read', which highlights how families and carers can help children prepare to read in fun ways, has been prepared by Education Resources psychological services to be distributed throughout all the nursery schools.

Parents and carers can encourage children a great deal by reading to them from a young age, helping them notice the sounds in spoken words, letting them see that reading and writing are important and helping them use more words, and understand what they mean.

And it makes a huge difference

if children see themselves as competent writers, even if they are just at the scribbling stage.

If children believe they are writing readable words and have things they want to write about, it boosts their confidence and motivation to develop writing skills.

Senior Educational Psychologist Jean Campbell explains: "We know that boys are much more likely to enjoy reading if they see dads and grandads read the newspapers or books.

"Even if they are not reading with them, children tend to model their behavior on the adults in their lives.

"We often find that parents who have struggled at school themselves can become very tense around issues like homework.

"They're desperate for their kids to do well but it's important to keep things enjoyable and positive.

"When children make mistakes pronouncing words or with spelling, it's important just to repeat things the right way – rather than telling them they are wrong, as this can be discouraging.

Janey Mauchline agrees that building up a child's confidence with language is important.

"I know from personal experience that people who don't develop a good level of literacy face barriers throughout their life.

"My young brother had literacy problems and has had to cope with people's lack of understanding and impatience his entire life.

"When he got up and spoke at the launch of our literacy conference, it was one of the proudest moments of my life."

● **The Literacy Strategy is available on the council's website at [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)**

CHILDREN in council and partnership nurseries follow the same Curriculum for Excellence that our schools use.

This not only gets them learning early but also helps ease them into the school environment when they start in P1.

The pre-school strand of the literacy strategy will also help them understand how writing fits into everyday life, as well as encourage a love for reading.

"In nurseries, there have always been labels on everyday items but now, if you look around you'll see that the labels have been written by the children," explains Vivienne Colquhoun, one of the council's Early Years Development and Support Teachers.

"Nursery staff will look for opportunities during the day to introduce the idea of words and writing, so that children will make the connection with the bigger world.

"For instance, their snacks will have their names on them or, if they were playing at shops, they'd be encouraged to 'write' a shopping list.

"We aren't teaching them how to write and spell, more encouraging them to hold a pencil or a pen and make a mark on the page.

"At this nursery, the children have shown an interest in other languages so, not only are they encouraged to write words in English, they've been trying French and Spanish, too."



Reshaping care for the elderly...

# Enabling older people to stay at home safely



## HOUSING OPTIONS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council provides a range of housing and support options to help the elderly maintain their independence as they get older.

### Help to stay at home

Many older people would prefer to stay in their own home rather than move into other accommodation. There are a number of services that can provide practical help to allow them to continue with independent every-day living.

### Equipment and adaptations

If you are having problems getting around your home, for example, climbing stairs or getting in and out of the bath, your home may be able to be adapted to make it easier for you.

If you are a council or housing association tenant, your landlord will do the work for you and, if you are a home owner or private tenant, you can apply for a grant of between 80 per cent and 100 per cent of the cost of the work, depending on your income.

For more information please visit the council's website.

### Community alarm service

If you live alone and/or are at risk from falls or sudden attacks of illness, you might want to think about getting a community alarm to alert staff when you are in difficulty. There is a small weekly charge for the community alarm service.

### Telecare equipment

There is also a range of equipment that can be linked to a community alarm, for example, to help people with dementia, known as Telecare equipment.

● You can also get information on all aspects of the council's elderly care services by visiting [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



Community staff nurse Jacqueline Fox visits patient Eileen Taylor

RESHAPING Care for Older People is all about increasing the independence of older people and providing more care at home or in a community setting.

By bringing together all the key service providers – health, local authorities and the independent and third sectors – one of the key aims of the programme is to prevent unnecessary, lengthy stays in hospital.

A new pilot is now helping older people avoid being admitted to hospital and, if they are admitted, is enabling them to return home as quickly as possible. The Integrated Community Support Team (ICST) cares for people from East Kilbride and Strathaven, over the age of 65, in their own home to ensure their health and social care needs are met.

The multi-agency team includes district nurses, physiotherapy, occupational therapy staff, social workers and home carers.

They also are forging very strong links with their colleagues in the hospital, mental health and other specialist teams.

Older people and their families can be put in touch with other supports in the wider community, such as lunch clubs and activities, as well as the newly appointed Carers Resource and Locality Voluntary officers.

Morag Dixon, ICST project manager, said: "No one wants to be in hospital, especially if they no longer need acute care.

"ICST helps those who are medically well but still require some

rehabilitation and assistance and this can now be carried out within their own homes.

"East Kilbride has an aging population and many of their families do not live close by. There is also the challenge of those living alone in third or fourth floor flats, who cannot get out due to struggling with the stairs and no lifts.

"The team helps patients to get back on their feet and become as independent as possible".

When Eileen Taylor, of East Kilbride, was admitted to hospital with renal failure, she required a lot of help to enable her to return home.

Since being discharged from hospital, she has had the help of district nurses and physiotherapists who work for ICST, and can contact at any time via one central telephone number.

Eileen said: "They first started visiting me when I was discharged from hospital.

"To enable me to return home, I needed injections on a weekly basis and I also needed dressings to be changed.

"I have an ulcer on my heel, which is taking a while to heal due to a problem with the blood supply to that area.

"Because of my renal problems, I also have dressings on my back that need changed and I have a pressure sore.

"I get a visit from the nurses three times a week to do all of this. I use a wheelchair, so the team also gave me physiotherapy to try to help strengthen my legs.

"I have had to go into hospital a few times but, the minute I came home, they would come to see me – I didn't even need to call them to let them know I was home."

Eileen also receives a home care package and says she couldn't manage without it.

"They come in four times a day to help me get washed and dressed, get in and out of bed and help me with all my meals," said Eileen. "I couldn't cope at home without them – they are exceptionally good and I am really getting to know them well."

Eileen is full of praise for the team who have helped her live at home.

"There's nothing I can fault. All of the nurses are great. You can even call up during the night and they will come straight to you," she added.

"Sometimes, I need to call them at night and it's never been a problem to them. You just call one number and they come to see you, it's very easy."

The team aims to maximise Eileen's quality of life in her own home.

Jacqueline Fox, Community Staff Nurse, said: "Working with the ICST team, you really form a bond with your patients. You get to know them and their families and they get to know you."

● The ICST team is based at Hunter Health Centre, Greenhills Health Centre and Strathaven providing care for those registered at GP practices in these health centres.

# More amenity housing for elderly

GOOD progress is being made in South Lanarkshire with the Change Fund programme to increase the supply of amenity housing.

Amenity housing offers the same internal features as sheltered housing – except there is no warden or common area – and is specifically designed to be suitable for the changing needs of people as they grow older.

Features such as handrails in bathrooms, non-slip flooring, raised electrical sockets and lower lighting switches may seem like small additions, but they can make a big difference in helping people to live

safely in their home. James and Beatrice Rennie, right, moved into an amenity house in East Kilbride and are delighted with its facilities.

James said: “Having a wet room for the shower is particularly helpful.

“We had an adapted shower before, which was good, but the wet room is ideal for anyone with mobility difficulties.”

Alex McInnes, Chair of Housing and Technical Resources, said: “A major challenge across Scotland, and in South Lanarkshire, in particular, is making sure that we can meet the increasing needs for suitably designed housing for older people and

can help people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible.

Beatrice said: “We hadn’t actually realised this sort of housing existed but we are so glad we were told about it. We had applied for sheltered housing but the lady from the council asked if we had thought about amenity housing, which was great, as it suits us perfectly.”

● Anyone wishing to apply for amenity housing can contact their local housing office or call into one of the Q & A offices for more details.



# Working with the voluntary sector

FIONA Dryburgh is the latest locality development officer to join Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire.

Fiona, right, took on the role for the Hamilton area after working as a cluster manager for the WRVS in Clydesdale.

In this role, she developed the community transport and good neighbour service, as well as establishing computer classes, camera classes and various other activities.

After leaving to become a stay-at-home-mum for 14 years, Fiona was able to spend many years volunteering full-time with the Church of Scotland and the Salvation Army.

This experience gave her an understanding and appreciation of how rewarding and important the role of a volunteer is.

“It was through my role as a volunteer that I found loneliness is a big issue for older people and can have a major impact on their health,” said Fiona.

“It doesn’t matter where you live, if you don’t get visitors and are not aware of what is out there, you can feel isolated.

“Helping to solve this issue pushed me to apply for this role.

“My role is about working with the wonderful community groups that are already in place, encouraging partnership working and helping develop further services that will help older people stay active for longer, which is at the heart of the Reshaping Care for Older People Programme.

“Having experienced just how fulfilling volunteering can be, as well as how vital a volunteer’s input can be for older people, I would encourage communities to get involved.

“I feel that, as part of a community, everyone has a role to play



and there are volunteering roles out there to suit everyone.”

Since Fiona has been in post, she has noticed a positive attitude among community groups, who are keen to work together to arrange activities on different days of the week.

“Although there are lots of groups out there, there are not many activities at night time,” added Fiona.

“This is partly due to the lack of community transport, which the Locality Officers Team aim to develop. The team is organising a DVD that will encourage people to

become involved with local volunteer car schemes.

“Many people consider volunteering when they retire but I would also highly recommend volunteering to younger people.

“There is no substitute for recent work experience and the wealth of skills that can be gained may well prove beneficial at a later date.”

Fiona lives with her husband and her three daughters in East Kilbride.

● Fiona can be contacted on 01698 300390 or Fiona.dryburgh@vaslan.org.uk

## HELPING HANDS FOR OLDER RESIDENTS

THE Council’s Home Care Service operates seven days a week and can help people to remain independent by providing support with daily living tasks such as washing, dressing, preparing meals and shopping.

There can be charges for some home care services but these are explained before agreeing to the service.

### Moving home

If you’re having difficulty managing in your home and it is not possible to adapt it, you may have to consider moving to alternative accommodation.

If you decide that moving home is the best choice for you, then you need to decide whether you wish to rent or buy a property.

### Housing for rent

If you want to apply for a Council or housing association home to rent, you can use our Homefinder service to find something suitable. Homes are also available to rent from private landlords or letting agents.

### Sheltered housing

Sheltered housing is for older people who would like to continue to live independently but would benefit from additional support.

It is usually a group of flats or bungalows specially designed for older people. You normally need to be over 60 years old to qualify for Sheltered Housing.

### Very sheltered housing

Very sheltered housing is designed to meet the needs of frail, older people who need additional support to live independently and could include a midday meal, support with personal care, for example bathing, or help with practical and domestic tasks.

● You can also get info on very sheltered housing and other aspects of elderly care by visiting [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

SOUTH Lanarkshire's sprawling geography, encompassing heavily urbanised areas, as well as scattered rural communities, makes it one of the largest and most diverse areas of Scotland.

With a population of more than 300,000, South Lanarkshire covers 180,000 hectares, stretching from just a few miles from the city centre of Glasgow to almost as far down as the Scottish border, with almost 80 per cent of land classified as rural.

This poses unique challenges for the council in terms of managing its resources, not least its massive fleet of essential vehicles, which includes everything from bin lorries to cherry pickers, diggers, large and small vans, road rollers and cars.

The council also operates 66 buses daily to support special needs pupils during term time, as well as providing day care transport for the elderly and vulnerable, and delivering meals to schools and other facilities.

Maximising the efficiency of such a massive fleet is obviously a huge logistical challenge and, to help improve performance, the council has installed a new telematics routing and tracking system in many of its vehicles.

The system was rolled out to council vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes following a successful pilot scheme and will help improve service efficiency, reduce carbon emissions and costs, as well as improving customer service. In total, 277

community. People may not be aware of the gradual changes taking place in the environment but everyone is potentially affected by them, as more and more low-carbon policies feature in areas, such as energy, transport, housing, waste management and planning," he said.

"It is right that the council plays its part in this transition, helps South Lanarkshire cope with the challenges involved and also enables people to benefit from the changes where possible."

Meanwhile, over the last year, South Lanarkshire Community Planning Partnership has taken part in the Scottish Government's Low Carbon Vehicle Procurement Scheme.

Thanks to grant funding from the scheme, the council added 12 battery powered electric Peugeot iOn cars to its fleet, plus two electric street sweepers and an electric Renault Kangoo van.

The cars alone have clocked up 53,564 miles and saved the council more than seven tonnes of carbon emissions.

Strathclyde Fire & Rescue is using a Peugeot iOn at its new community fire station and national training HQ in Cambuslang, while NHS Lanarkshire is using two electric vans to provide services to local hospitals.

The Plugged-in Places scheme is part of a UK-wide project that aims to develop charging points throughout the country to encourage more people to

# Using hi-tech to drive up vehicle efficiency

NEW SYSTEM IS HELPING COUNCIL TO BOOST PERFORMANCE OF MASSIVE FLEET OF VEHICLES, REPORTS MHAIRI ANDERSON

large vehicles, such as refuse collection, roads maintenance, including gritting lorries, road/footpath sweepers and buses have now had telematics installed.

More than 150 of the council's light vehicles are also currently being fitted with the telematics system.

According to Council Leader Eddie McAvoy, the authority is already reaping the benefits of having introduced the telematics system.

"The information delivered by the system is providing us with details allowing us to challenge and make informed decisions about how best to utilise and route our vehicles," said Councillor McAvoy.

"It also allows us to look at our driver behaviour such as idling, harsh acceleration and braking.

"And this increased awareness of vehicle and driver activity has enhanced the council's ability to accurately record CO<sub>2</sub> emissions data and fuel consumption, helping us to cut down on both."

The Council Leader added that the authority is constantly striving to ensure that it provides a sustainable environment for a sustainable

use electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. The council received £325,000 from the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and Strathclyde Partnership towards the implementation of this scheme in South Lanarkshire.

Scottish Transport Minister Keith Brown visited South Lanarkshire Council to see for himself how it and its community planning partners are helping bring about lower carbon transport for the future.

"Plugged-in Places has been a great success and I am delighted to see how well South Lanarkshire Council has put to use its funding from the scheme," said the Minister.

Council Leader Eddie McAvoy added he was delighted the authority was at the forefront of the project and pointed out that its charging network was the largest and most extensive of its kind in Scotland.

The Council has installed a comprehensive electric vehicle charging network throughout the area.

To date, 44 electric vehicle charging bays have been put in place and this is shortly set to increase to 74 bays.



The council has installed a new telematics routing and tracking system in many of its vehicles to help maximise efficiency of its massive fleet

AN AMBITIOUS PROGRAMME HAS SEEN  
SPORT AND LEISURE FACILITIES UPGRADED  
AS SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL.

# Invests in health & fitness

BY MHAIRI ANDERSON

CENTRAL to the council's commitment to making South Lanarkshire a great place to live, work and play is its stable of more than 30 community leisure facilities.

That's why it has invested heavily in the provision of brand new or upgraded sports, leisure and community facilities throughout the area in recent years.

The past 12 months, for example, have seen the council embark on an ambitious £775,000 outdoor recreation programme, including the upgrading of the pavilions at Kirktonholme and Ballerup Recreation Areas in East Kilbride and at Hamilton Palace Sports Grounds.

A pitch upgrade programme to replace pitches that are beyond their economic life and allow them to be developed to accommodate a range of sports for all tastes has also been undertaken.

A new 3G sports pitch for Hamilton Palace Sports Ground kicked off the programme in 2012. This £250,000 project was also helped by a grant of £100,000 from sportscotland's Sports Facilities Fund.

Replacing the full-size sand dressed pitch, the new 3G pitch is suitable for both full contact rugby training and football.

Also opening last year were the new synthetic pitches at South Lanarkshire Lifestyles – Eastfield and East Kilbride's Ballerup Recreation Area.

A £125,000 upgrade replaced the aging, sand-dressed courts and pitches, making them suitable for both tennis and football for many years to come, while five-a-side pitches and perimeter fence at East Kilbride's Ballerup Recreation Area were upgraded to the tune of £180,000. It can now be used for 7-a-side football and general training purposes.

Councillor Hamish Stewart, Chair of the Board of South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture – which manages all sports and culture on behalf of the council – said both individuals and teams would benefit from having top-quality sporting facilities on their doorstep.

"These improvements encourage participation in sport, as well as helping to nurture and develop the talents of our young people," he added.

"These are exciting developments for the whole of the council area and demonstrate the commitment of the council to improve the facilities and opportunities for sports for all in South Lanarkshire." The £3.5million John

Cumming Stadium in Carluke, which replaced the old Loch Park Stadium and The Fountain in Lesmahagow, opened in 2011.

This has been followed by the £1.7million Blackwood & Kirkmuirhill Community Wing, which opened its doors earlier than anticipated in October 2012.

The modern, multi-use centre replaces not only the Blackwood Hall but also the old Leisuredome, which had served the community well for more than 20 years.

The new centre, which cost £120,000 to fit out, now includes a fitness suite with the latest gym equipment, new community hall with kitchen and bar facilities providing a multi-purpose space for a wide range of community groups and social functions, as well as a small meeting room.

The centre is also home to a new library, an exciting new Digi Table, Active IT centre, offering free internet access, and a new expert bar where IT questions can be answered.

Meanwhile, the £5.35million restoration and extension of the Grade B listed Lanark Memorial Hall is progressing well and the completely refurbished facility is expected to open in 2013.

It has been designed as a multi-purpose facility that can accommodate a wide variety of community activities and events, as well as providing easy access to all areas for disabled people and accommodation for the Cargill Club.

A number of works have already been completed to the existing building, including external stonework, roof repairs, window replacement and new ceiling. Rot works have also been completed with electrical, heating and ventilation works well underway.

A partnership involving the council, SL Leisure and Culture Trust, Lanark Museums Trust and local schools is developing a timeline and electronic kiosk to enable local people to research their local heritage.

Ashgill's existing pavilion was demolished and replaced by a new £90,000 modular changing pavilion, which included changing area and dedicated referee's area.

Opened in 1995, Hamilton's Water Palace has been providing fitness and fun for almost 20 years and has just undergone a £450,000 refurbishment.

As well as structural repairs, the pool changing village was upgraded and features disabled facilities, family changing booths and school







class changing areas, repairs to the floating floor and a new sauna cabin and the health suite area has also been updated.

Also benefiting from an upgrading project costing £157,000 was Blantyre Leisure Centre's gym, bringing the total investment in the centre to £322K since December 2011.

It involved refurbishing the teaching pool and lighting at the main pool.

And the John Wright Sports Centre in East Kilbride was given a £174K upgrade, which saw improvements to the roof, windows and two dryside changing areas.

The Grade B listed Cambuslang Institute, home to a variety of sporting, cultural and meeting facilities, dates back to 1898 and is currently undergoing a £766k renovation.

Work began in September 2012 and is due to be completed by spring this year.

The council has worked closely with Historic Scotland to ensure that work to the historic building is carried out sensitively.

Funding for the project was boosted by a £56,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, which helped fund building repair works, as well as the research, interpretation and display of the "scavenging" maps of the County of Lanarkshire from 1800 to pre 1974.

This Lottery grant also helped to research significant historic events, such as the "Cambuslang Wark" gatherings of 1742.

The renovation project has rejuvenated a much-loved building, bringing it back to the heart of the community for everyone to use and enjoy.

It also demonstrates how a historical building, while providing an important link to a community's past, can also be adapted for the needs of today.

Built at a cost of £140,000, and complementing the recently completed Fernhill Community Centre, the new Fernhill toddler and junior play area opened in December.

The play area, built by the council's Ground Services, offers a range of equipment with extensive play experiences for children from two to 14, and has artificial safety surfacing.

The play facility is complemented by soft landscaping, tree planting and a new boundary fence with self-closing gates providing a safer environment for children to play.

And, three of our public parks in South Lanarkshire are scheduled for a revamp.

Repairs and improvements costing around £100,000 are taking place at Strathaven Park to improve both the infrastructure and enhance the features of the facility.

The work includes repairs and painting of the metal perimeter fencing, the metal internal fencing, and entrance gates, installation of new benches and bins and repairs to the Powmillon burn wall.

Overtoun Park in Rutherglen, will also see repairs and replacements costing around £100,000.

The work will consist of repairs and painting of the metal perimeter fencing and the entrance gates, as well as selective removal of shrub beds with areas being soiled and seeded.

New play equipment will be installed as will new benches and bins.

Hamilton's Bothwell Road Park is in line for £130,000 worth of repair and refurbishment.

This will include the removal of the existing red blaes roads with the areas being soiled and seeded afterwards. Selected tar paths areas will also be removed and thereafter soiled and seeded.

New play equipment will be installed, as will new benches and bins, with drainage works taking place at various locations in the park.

The council's ambitious spending programme supports the development of its communities through the provision of quality, sports and leisure facilities. It recognises that access to this type of facility is key to helping people lead healthier, more active lifestyles.



A PIONEERING PILOT PROJECT AIMED AT REDUCING PLAYGROUND CONFLICTS HAS HELPED TO TRANSFORM A BLANTYRE SCHOOL. AND, IN A SOUTH LANARKSHIRE FIRST, THE GROUND BREAKING YOUNG MEDIATORS SCHEME AT AUCHINRAITH PRIMARY IS INSPIRING OTHER SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS.  
**ANNIE STUART REPORTS**

THE yellow hats of Auchinraith Primary's young mediators are like little blobs of sunshine bobbing around the Blantyre school's busy playground on a gloomy winter day.

Working in twos, the band of primary six pupils is on hand each break time, ready to help solve problems before they escalate.

"You don't go up to problems, you let problems come to you," explains nine-year-old Rachel Steven.

"Our job is really to make everybody feel safe in our playground."

Her fellow mediators, Liam Balkwill and Nathan Smith, who are both 10, agree.

"Doing mediation training is a challenge but I like a challenge," says Liam. "I like the good feeling you get when you manage to sort out an argument."

Nathan adds: "People listen to us, because we are mediators, and that's great."

Auchinraith's head teacher Julie McCulloch introduced mediation training two years ago.

"Children take on lots of leadership roles in the school – junior road safety officers, eco committee members, pupil council and so on – and we wanted to find a way of bringing those skills into the playground," she explains.

"At school, it's always the little things that cause the most hassle – the daft wee arguments that suddenly become much bigger, and we wanted to get away from the whole notion that the way to solve an argument is to start a fight."

She adds: "The mediation training programme, where the children actually leave the classroom to participate in workshops and receive a certificate at the end of it, has been very successful, not just for the school, but for the pupils themselves."

"Our mediators are role models, held in high regard by their peers, who trust them and talk to them perhaps a little more than they would a teacher."

While many other schools have introduced mentoring programmes and smaller-scale mediation schemes, Auchinraith Primary believes it is the first to offer certified training.

It has been so successful that it has now been extended to include parents and the wider community.

Rob Milligan, Auchinraith's home school partnership worker, explains: "We ran a pilot group for parents in the local community centre and it had the best attendance of all our projects so far."

"The work being done here has already had a huge impact on families and we want to build on that and roll it out to the community. It has the potential to inspire



Youngsters are undergoing mediation training at Auchinraith Primary in Blantyre to help stop issues escalating among pupils

# PEER MEDIATORS ON HAND TO SOLVE PLAYGROUND DISPUTES

other schools to take part, too, Auchinraith Primary is a great role model for the rest of South Lanarkshire and beyond."

Marc Conroy, active schools co-ordinator for the Calderside learning community, agrees.

"I've been really impressed with how confident the young mediators are, and the teamwork and communication skills they have developed as a result of the training are fantastic," he says.

"A large part of the work we do in Active Schools centres around volunteering and the development of young leaders as they move up to high school.

"It's great to see the way Auchinraith is already doing that – it will really stand the pupils in good stead."

Patricia Neilsen and Alison Ebbit, of Neilson Consultants, provide the mediation training.

"Mediation is widely acknowledged as a successful and peaceful way of helping people resolve problems in a variety of settings, but it's fairly unusual in schools," explains Alison.

"Auchinraith has a forward-

thinking head teacher in Mrs McCulloch, as the skills the children learn are ones they can take with them throughout the rest of their lives."

Patricia agrees. "We were absolutely blown away by the enthusiasm and insight shown by Auchinraith pupils and we were delighted by the feedback we received from parents."

In fact, the initial response to the programme was overwhelmingly positive.

One parent described it as "invaluable for developing skills which are of benefit now and in later life", while another stated: "The children have taken on a great responsibility and are thriving on it."

Many more comment on how their children have become more confident as a result of being involved.

"Mediation training has created confident children who are able to keep things in perspective, and deal with their emotions," says Julie McCulloch.

"Our school faces a number of challenges but, in the time since

we have started mediation training, we are already noticing a shift in attitudes and a growing awareness of rights and responsibilities."

Back in the playground, a couple of pupils are pointing out a big yellow circle on the school wall.

"That's the mediation stop, where pupils can go if they need us to help them," says Colin Brannan, 10.

"We always work in twos, so we each take a person to one side and talk things through with them, and then we bring them back together.

"It can be about anything and usually if they just talk about it, it's fine."

Mrs McCulloch explains: "We never put children in a heated or uncomfortable situation, and there is adult support in the playground if needed.

"Our school has six core values, which we came up with in consultation with parents when I first came here four years ago.

"They are respectful, honest, responsible,

caring confident and helpful – and all of those are embodied by our young mediators."

Ten-year-old Amanda White and Nicole Kane, 11, sum up what the mediation training means to them.






























"It gives you a really nice feeling in your stomach when you help someone," says Amanda.

Nicole added: "I was quite shy before I became a mediator. But

people listen to me and I can help them, so I'm not shy any more."



# South Lanarkshire's Councillors

<b>1</b> Clydesdale West	 <b>Ward 1</b> Councillor <b>Lynsey Hamilton</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 1</b> Councillor <b>Pat Lee</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 1</b> Councillor <b>Eileen Logan</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 1</b> Councillor <b>David Shearer</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>
<b>2</b> Clydesdale North	 <b>Ward 2</b> Councillor <b>Ed Archer</b> <i>Independent</i>	 <b>Ward 2</b> Councillor <b>Catherine McClymont</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 2</b> Councillor <b>Vivienne Shaw</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	
<b>3</b> Clydesdale East	 <b>Ward 3</b> Councillor <b>Ralph Barker</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 3</b> Councillor <b>Bev Gauld</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 3</b> Councillor <b>Hamish Stewart</b> <i>Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party</i>	
<b>4</b> Clydesdale South	 <b>Ward 4</b> Councillor <b>George Greenshields</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 4</b> Councillor <b>Archie Manson</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 4</b> Councillor <b>Alex McInnes</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	
<b>5</b> Avondale and Stonehouse	 <b>Ward 5</b> Councillor <b>Graeme Campbell</b> <i>Independent</i>	 <b>Ward 5</b> Councillor <b>Margaret Cooper</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 5</b> Councillor <b>Isobel Dorman</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 5</b> Councillor <b>Bill Holman</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>
<b>6</b> East Kilbride South	 <b>Ward 6</b> Councillor <b>Archie Buchanan</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 6</b> Councillor <b>Jim Docherty</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 6</b> Councillor <b>Douglas Edwards</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	
<b>7</b> East Kilbride Central South	 <b>Ward 7</b> Councillor <b>John Anderson</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 7</b> Councillor <b>Gerry Convery</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 7</b> Councillor <b>Susan Kerr</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	
<b>8</b> East Kilbride Central North	 <b>Ward 8</b> Councillor <b>Anne Maggs</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 8</b> Councillor <b>Alice Marie Mitchell</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 8</b> Councillor <b>Chris Thompson</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 8</b> Councillor <b>Sheena Wardhaugh</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>
<b>9</b> East Kilbride West	 <b>Ward 9</b> Councillor <b>Janice McGinlay</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 9</b> Councillor <b>Graham Simpson</b> <i>Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party</i>	 <b>Ward 9</b> Councillor <b>David Watson</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	
<b>10</b> East Kilbride East	 <b>Ward 10</b> Councillor <b>John Cairney</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 10</b> Councillor <b>Gladys Miller</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 10</b> Councillor <b>Jim Wardhaugh</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	

To check which ward you live in, use the **Locate it** service on the council's website [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)  
Surgery and contact information is also on the website. If you prefer, call Members' Services on 01698 454366  
or email [councillorsenquiries@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:councillorsenquiries@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

<b>11</b> Rutherglen South	 <b>Ward 11</b> Councillor <b>Robert Brown</b> <i>Scottish Liberal Democrats</i>	 <b>Ward 11</b> Councillor <b>Gerard Killen</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 11</b> Councillor <b>Brian McKenna</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	
<b>12</b> Rutherglen Central and North	 <b>Ward 12</b> Councillor <b>Gordon Clark</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 12</b> Councillor <b>Edward McAvoy</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 12</b> Councillor <b>Denis McKenna</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	
<b>13</b> Cambuslang West	 <b>Ward 13</b> Councillor <b>Russell Clearie</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 13</b> Councillor <b>Clare McColl</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 13</b> Councillor <b>Richard Tullett</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	
<b>14</b> Cambuslang East	 <b>Ward 14</b> Councillor <b>Walter Brogan</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 14</b> Councillor <b>Pam Clearie</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 14</b> Councillor <b>Christine Deanie</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	
<b>15</b> Blantyre	 <b>Ward 15</b> Councillor <b>Hugh Dunsmuir</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 15</b> Councillor <b>Jim Handibode</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 15</b> Councillor <b>John McNamee</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 15</b> Councillor <b>Bert Thomson</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>
<b>16</b> Bothwell and Uddingston	 <b>Ward 16</b> Councillor <b>Maureen Devlin</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 16</b> Councillor <b>Anne Kegg</b> <i>Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party</i>	 <b>Ward 16</b> Councillor <b>Jim McGuigan</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	
<b>17</b> Hamilton North and East	 <b>Ward 17</b> Councillor <b>Lynn Adams</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 17</b> Councillor <b>Monica Lennon</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 17</b> Councillor <b>Davie McLachlan</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	
<b>18</b> Hamilton West and Earnock	 <b>Ward 18</b> Councillor <b>Allan Falconer</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 18</b> Councillor <b>Graeme Horne</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 18</b> Councillor <b>Jean McKeown</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 18</b> Councillor <b>John Menzies</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>
<b>19</b> Hamilton South	 <b>Ward 19</b> Councillor <b>Angela Crawley</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 19</b> Councillor <b>Bobby Lawson</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 19</b> Councillor <b>Joe Lowe</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 19</b> Councillor <b>Brian McCaig</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>
<b>20</b> Larkhall	 <b>Ward 20</b> Councillor <b>Jackie Burns</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 20</b> Councillor <b>Andy Carmichael</b> <i>Scottish Labour Party</i>	 <b>Ward 20</b> Councillor <b>Peter Craig</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>	 <b>Ward 20</b> Councillor <b>Lesley McDonald</b> <i>Scottish National Party</i>



It has weathered religious and political storms, survived bloody battles, and has been rebuilt twice. Now, as Bothwell Parish Church faces up to another enormous challenge – finding £2million to rebuild its crumbling quire, its minister hopes history will repeat itself and its congregation, near and far, will save the day. Annie Stuart reports

# Vicar's mission to save historic kirk

**T**HE Reverend Jim Gibson is a walking, talking history book as he strolls around the historic church that has been his second home for almost a quarter of a century.

He can tell you all about Bothwell Parish Church, from its distant origins as a shrine set up by St Kentigern in the sixth century, through the turbulent times of the Reformation, to more recent events involving Royal connections and links with local schools.

In his engaging, friendly way, he points out the artefacts and objects that help to tell the story of Scotland's oldest collegiate church still in use.

"The gravestone in the wall is thought to be of an English knight, one of the many who camped here in the time of Edward II as the army prepared to attack Bothwell Castle," explains Rev Gibson, pointing to the stone carving near the entranceway to the main church.

The stained glass above here was made especially in France for the church.

And here," he adds with a smile, "are the Bothwell embroideries – much more recent, created by around 600 local schoolchildren, depicting the social and cultural history of the town."

He adds in a whisper: "There are four gargoyle faces on them and one of them is supposed to be me!"

But while Rev Gibson is happy to chat about the church and its place in Scottish religious and cultural history, he is much more keen to discuss the huge challenge it faces over the next year.

The quire – the area at the east end of the church with its stunning stained glass window – is collapsing. Enormous, heavy roof slates – each weighing around 160kg or roughly two bags of coal – are forcing down on the walls, causing them to buckle.

The church needs to raise £2million by next summer to fund restoration works. So far, the Heritage Lottery Fund and Historic Scotland have made their joint maximum grant – £250,000 – and this, along with other donations, including £100,000 from LandTrust (Paterson's Quarries) has meant the church has already raised half a million pounds, leaving £1.5m still to be found.

A huge, international appeal has begun, targeting large trusts, foundations and corporate sponsors around the world. Audio-visual

teams from South Lanarkshire Council have made a video about the restoration, which is now available on YouTube, in the hope it will raise awareness – and funds – among congregation members, both in Scotland and around the world.

"We are extremely grateful for the council's support," says Rev Gibson. "The video is excellent and they have been wonderful, offering us help to market the appeal and raise awareness of the task we face here.

"We are also very thankful for the support from the kirk session and our congregation, and, of course, to the Heritage Lottery Fund."

He adds: "The council has been very good to us over the years, because they understand the importance of Bothwell Parish Church and its place in Scottish history.

It is the country's oldest collegiate church – meaning it had a group of priests rather than just one in its 1000 years as a Roman Catholic place of worship – and it has many Royal connections.

"The Provost of Bothwell was the head priest (if it had become a cathedral as originally planned, he would have been the Dean) who was also secretary to the King of Scotland, and Archibald the Grim's eldest daughter married the Duke of Rothesay."



**E**DINBURGH born Rev Gibson came to Bothwell from Grange-mouth in 1989, when restoration of the church nave had just finished. Since then, a new church office and flat has been created and the old hall has been converted into a popular church centre.

"We were considering further upgrading to the quire already, and then, in January, amid the high winds and heavy rains, we noticed bits of masonry falling off the quire wall," explains Rev Gibson.

"The current building is 600 years old, rebuilt in 1398 by the third earl of Douglas, Archibald the Grim."

He adds with a smile: "He wasn't particularly grim – apparently the name came from the scarring on his face from battle. He created the roof, which is very rare in Scotland because it is made from porous stone, it soaks up all the water, making it even heavier.

"When we realised there was a problem we called in the experts and they told us the walls are buckling under the weight. Some of the tiles

are slipping and the foundations have moved on their bed of clay – in some places, as much as 11 inches."

He pauses. "We had to act quickly. Either we could let this part of the church fall into ruin, or we could try to save it," he adds.

"And we felt very strongly that because of what Bothwell Parish Church has meant to Scottish history, we had to do something."

The quire is now covered in scaffolding and 'men at work' signs as the architects and engineers, who arrived "like the cavalry" earlier this year, get to work. The plan is to dig new foundations and create a steel structure within the roof to take the weight of the tiles.



**N**EWS of the appeal has spread, and it has attracted three very high-profile figures as patrons – the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow, Philip Tartaglia, his episcopalian counterpart, the Rt Revd Dr Gregor Duncan, Bishop of Glasgow and Galloway, and the Very Reverend John Cairns, Dean of the Chapel Royal.

"It's a sign of the importance of this church in mainstream Christian tradition that all three of these men are patrons," explains Rev Gibson.

"Bothwell Parish Church was a Roman Catholic place of worship until the Reformation in 1560, when the church in Scotland split. It was episcopalian for around 30 years after that before becoming part of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland."

If he is daunted by the task ahead, Rev Gibson does not show it.

"It is an exciting time and, of course, a huge responsibility," he says. "This is not about simply rebuilding a little part of our church – it is about restoring a part of Scots history and culture for everyone to come and see and enjoy.

"We get hundreds of visitors every year and are very lucky to have a lively, busy congregation – we are at the heart of our community.

"The church has been rebuilt twice in its history and, on both occasions, it has been the people of the day who have raised the funds to get the work done, as a sign of their love of the church and their faithfulness."

He adds: "I hope that is what will happen again and Bothwell Parish Church will remain a place of worship and sanctuary for many more years to come."



# It's good to know we made a difference

COUPLE RETIRE AFTER DEVOTING EIGHT YEARS TO PROVIDING A LOVING HOME TO CHILDREN IN DESPERATE NEED OF CARE AND STABILITY IN THEIR YOUNG LIVES

NOW that she and her husband Walter have retired from eight years of fostering, Eleanor Thomson has only one regret.

"I wish we'd started 10 years earlier," she says, "I think we'd have kept one or two of them for good.

"She wanted to try fostering since her own children Sharon, 42, and Steven, 40, were very young.

"We lived up the road from a lady who fostered and one of the children had really got to me," she remembers.

"She was just two and a half, and a tiny wee thing, with a baby brother and she spent a lot of time at our house with my daughter.

"Every time she fell or if she needed something, she came to me. The baby brother was adopted and the wee girl was adopted by another family. I know she went to someone who really loved her but I never got her out of my mind."

Caring, undoubtedly, comes naturally to Eleanor.

"I had nursed when I was younger and then worked in an office and I absolutely hated that," she explains.

"My dad was disabled and I became his carer and then, when my son had children, I was looking after them five days a week when their mum went back to work. My oldest grandson, Lewis, is an

absolutely wonderful boy, and autistic, so needed a lot of support.

"But he went to school and I knew his younger sister, Ruth, would be heading to nursery soon, so I kept wondering what I was going to do next, and fostering was in my mind.

"Walter wasn't as keen as me at first but he said I'd always supported him in everything, so he would do the same for me and he very quickly became as involved as I did."

Realising the anguish some children endure still shocks the Thomsons but giving them a warm and loving home was always their first priority.

"We were registered as short-term carers for the age group 0 to 12 and, at first, I thought we would just be providing emergency respite," says Eleanor.

"We did a lot of that but it was only a small part of it and many of the children coming to us needed a

home for months or even years.

"I thought we were prepared for anything but we simply couldn't believe the background so many of these children came from and, of course, that was reflected in their behaviour.

The couple candidly admit that, in the beginning, there were moments they found some of the children and their problems challenging.

"But you learn how to cope and it's such a good feeling knowing that you could help and make a positive difference to a child who has been let down all through their short lives," added Eleanor.

Some of her memories are funny, some simply searingly poignant but, throughout them all, there is recognition that they were offering not just a place of refuge but a loving home, with all the rules and structure that a family needs.

"Some of the older ones had





Eleanor and Walter Thomson retired recently after devoting eight years to fostering children from difficult and troubled backgrounds. Pictures below posed by models

# WHY DO WE NEED FOSTER CARERS?

WE need foster carers to look after children of all ages who cannot live with their birth families.

We provide a range of services and resources to help parents look after their children in the family home and while our aim is to help families stay together, there are many reasons why children need a period of fostering.

These include:

- a parent going into hospital
- a parent not coping because of substance misuse
- a parent not coping due to mental ill health
- bereavement
- a child being abused or neglected

Some children stay in foster care for only a few days or weeks until their families are able to care for them again. Sometimes it isn't possible for them to return home and alternative plans are made either through permanent fostering or adoption. Foster carers

offer children the opportunity to grow and develop in a safe and secure environment. Foster carers work as part of a team with the child's social worker, birth parents and any other agencies involved in the child's care.

Fostering is a commitment for both parties, if you are applying as a couple it is important that both of you attend preparatory groups and are actively involved in the assessment process.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent then call the Family Placement Team on 01698 454895 or email familyplacement@southlanarkshire.gov.uk



never been taught any boundaries," she explains.

"No one cared if they were running the streets until all hours, so it's not easy to get them to accept that, now they're living with you, that you want to know where they are and expect them to be in at a particular time.

"Getting that through comes down to patience and explanation, sitting down with them to tell them that you care what happens to them and that's why you want to know where they are and what they're doing."

Eleanor doesn't think anyone can be totally prepared for all the challenges involved in fostering but says that the training and support networks were extremely useful, especially in particularly trying circumstances.

"We had two wee brothers with us, who had been neglected and abused," she says.

"They were totally insecure and

left to fend for themselves, yet all they wanted was to get back to their dad.

"Children love their parents and usually all they want is for their behaviour to be different.

"So these wee boys had a pact together that, if they made as much mess as they could – and we're talking smearing faeces around the house – and as much noise as possible, that they'd be sent back to him."

One of the hardest experiences for the couple involved a three-year-old boy they'd cared for since he was a baby and was then adopted.

"He was simply lovely," says Eleanor. "He had Down's Syndrome and all sorts of health issues, including a bowel condition and constant infections.

"He's the most wonderful child and even when we were both shattered from lack of sleep, he gave so much love and affection

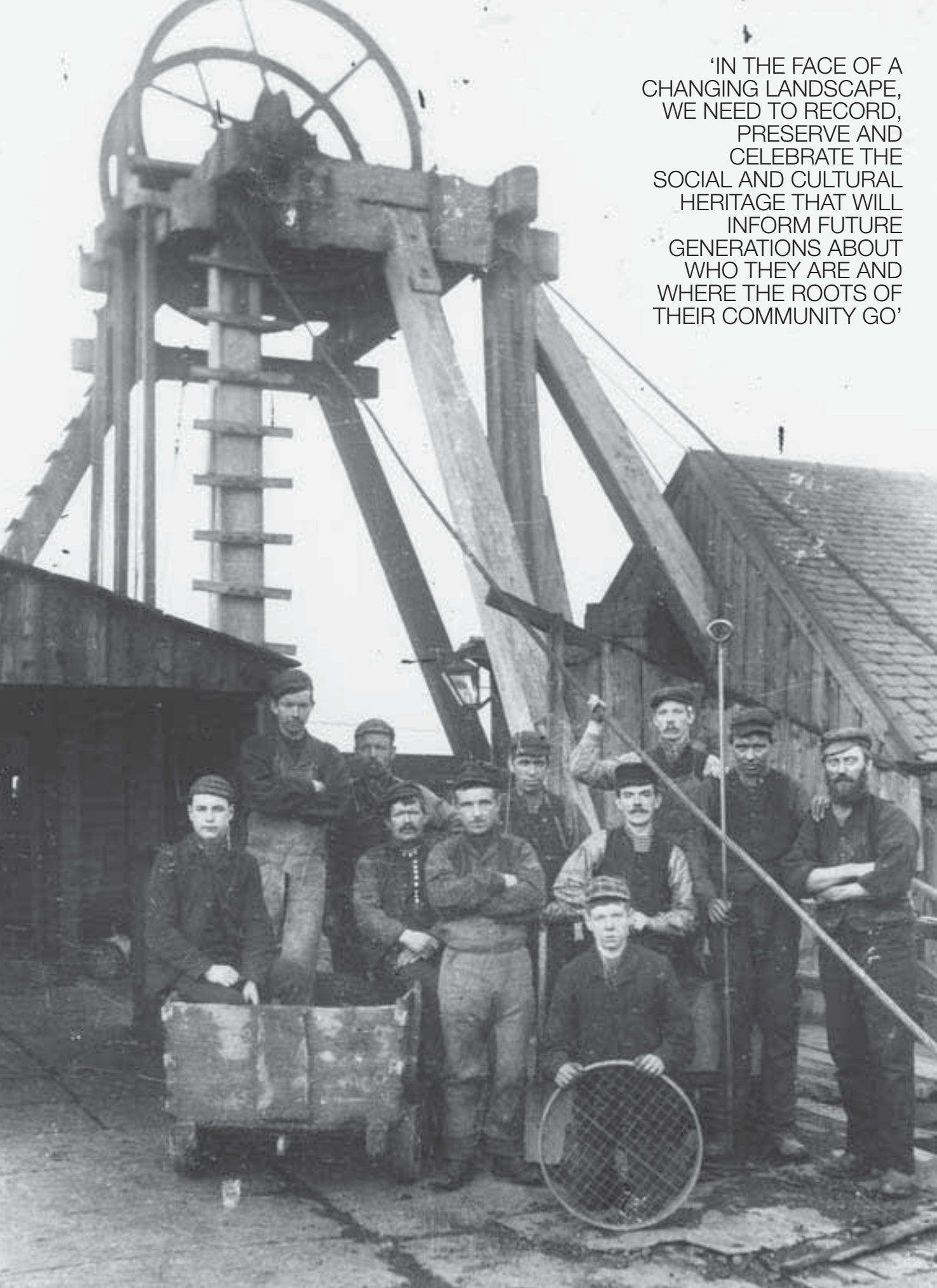
back, it was worth every minute. He was in constant pain and so brave and, when he left, it was like a bereavement – we could barely mention his name without crying.

"He was adopted by a fantastic couple who already have two boys and we still see him, which is great.

"We couldn't have chosen a better family but giving back a child like that is the hardest part of fostering – everything else is so minor compared to that.

"It's hard to leave it all behind but it's so good to know that we made a lasting difference to children who really needed us."

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# PEOPLE, PITS & PONIES



FROM the urban north to the upland south, there are few communities in South Lanarkshire that cannot trace an historical involvement in mining.

Now an ambitious project aimed at recording the human experience of that shared heritage is looking for your support.

The Heritage Lottery Fund has already awarded £20,700 in funding to support the development of the Pits, Ponies, People and Stories project's bid for £284,900 to back a two-year mass participation exploration of how mining has shaped modern day South Lanarkshire.

The project aims to recruit 6000 local people to research and celebrate their shared heritage and will offer opportunities for those involved to gain new skills, such as how to collect an oral history, filming and editing, performance, historical researching and more.

South Lanarkshire Council Cultural Co-ordinator Claire McGhee is one of the driving forces behind the project and said she wanted to ensure the area's mining heritage was preserved.

"I am sure that, like myself, many other people took our mining heritage for granted," said Claire. "But we were working on a project in a school in Hamilton and three quarters of a class of primary 4s said they did not know what coal was for.

"And then it struck us that we are growing more distant from the last generation of Lanarkshire Miners.

"While there are many historical records and documents relating to mining, the 'Pits, Ponies, People and Stories' aims to collect and record for the future the personal stories, the family anecdotes and the culture of the people from the mining towns and villages."

The project team's commitment to the people's story is underlined by the early inclusion of former miner Gilbert Dobbie, from Coalburn, on the Management Steering Group supporting the development of the Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

"The physical scars left by mining are starting to disappear from the landscape and, in many ways, that can be a positive thing," explained Gilbert. "But it is important that we

don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

"In the face of a changing landscape, we need to record, preserve and celebrate the social and cultural heritage that will inform future generations about who they are and where the roots of their community go.

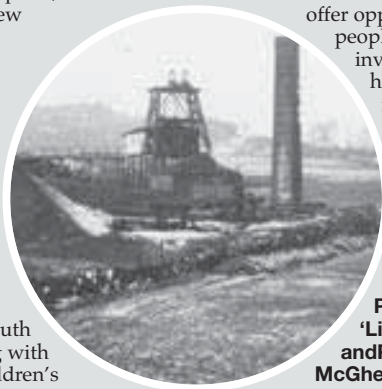
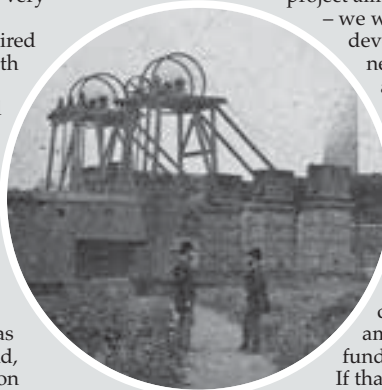
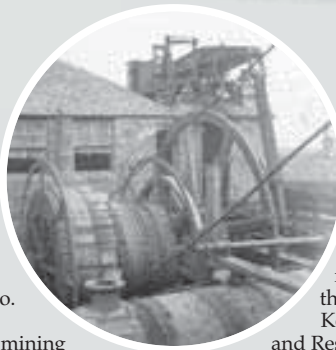
"And I know from my time working underground that, in mining communities, those roots go very deep."

The Steering Group is chaired by Kevin Mullarkey and, with so many threads to the project all needing to be tied together in one funding bid, he admitted to facing a daunting task: "We have a great team working on this and everyone that we have spoken to out in the community seems very excited by the idea so it is fantastic to be involved.

"But it does mean the ideas are coming thick and fast and, with a number of consultation events having already taken place, we are constantly hearing new thoughts and stories."

To help steer the development bid, the project has already been divided into four key goals, as Kevin explained: "We will be producing an Almanac, collecting together a written record of people's stories and memories, and recording heritage objects, locations and even events such as Miner's Galas.

"Local schools around South Lanarkshire will be working with the project to produce a Children's History, in book form, and also to develop heritage re-enactment, exploring how



life was lived during the mining years. A DVD, or possibly DVD collection, will offer opportunities for local groups to produce a film record investigating the themes of 'Pits, Ponies, People and Stories' and recording the activities during the life of the project."

Kevin added: "The Exhibition and Resource section of the project aims to do exactly what it says – we want to see something developed that can provide a new archive for research and also give an entry into the mining aspects of South Lanarkshire's shared heritage."

With the Heritage Lottery Fund already showing considerable support for the project, including the development grant, the team say they are confident that the massive amount of work going into the funding bid will pay off. If that bid is successful, it will be full-steam ahead for a project that will offer opportunities for thousands of people to have a hands-on involvement in bringing the heritage of South Lanarkshire mining communities to life and recording it for the benefit of future generations.

● **Further info about the proposed project can be found on Facebook by searching 'Pits, Ponies, People and Stories' and 'Liking' it or via Twitter@Pits and Ponies. Or contact Claire McGhee, Cultural Coordinator, South Lanarkshire Council on 0141**

**630 2520.**

adoption  
in South Lanarkshire

could you be  
my  
future?

Think about  
adoption **now!**

Contact South Lanarkshire Council  
adoption service on

**01698 454895**

or visit [www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



Social Work Resources

Come along to our open evening on **Monday 29 April** from  
**6pm – 8pm** in the Corporate Dining Room, West Wing Entrance,  
Council Offices, Almada Street, Hamilton, ML3 0AA



You can't book flights on our website...

but you **can** pay your rent or council tax



[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)

➤ The routine stuff is important too, so if you have internet access, please use our online payments for rent, council tax, parking fines and more. It's available at anytime day or night.

 **Don't have internet access?**

Here's a handy list of our main contact numbers

Payments	0303 123 1005
Housing repairs	0303 123 1010
Council tax and benefits	0303 123 1011
Council tax arrears	0303 123 1014
Housing enquiries (except repairs)	0303 123 1012
Social Work and Money Matters	0303 123 1008

Refuse, grounds maintenance and street cleansing	0303 123 1020
Conference and banqueting	0303 123 1009
Bereavement services (cemeteries and crematorium)	0303 123 1016
Parking	0303 123 1006
Other enquiries	08457 406080
Out-of-hours emergency repairs and homeless	0800 242 024

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs. Phone: 08457 406080 Email: [customer.services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)



## Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013

support

### The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 received Royal Assent on 10 January 2013.

The Act makes legislative provisions relating to the arranging of care and support (community care services and children's services) in order to provide a range of choices to individuals as to how they are to be provided with their support.

The Act provides general principles to guide and inform decisions made under the Act's framework of duties and powers. It introduces the language and terminology of self directed support into statute. It places a duty on local authorities to offer four options to individuals who they assess as requiring care and support under section 12A of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 ("the 1968 Act"), section 3 of this Act (support for adult carers) and section 24 of the Children (Scotland) Act 1995 ("the 1995 Act").

It requires authorities to provide information and assistance to individuals in order that they can make an informed choice about the options available. It provides a discretionary power to authorities in order that they can provide support to carers following a carer's assessment under section 12AA of the 1968 Act or section 24 of the 1995 Act (section 3). It repeals and reframes provisions relating to direct payments as currently contained within sections 12B and 12C of the 1968 Act.

The four options for self-directed support, which will be available to individuals when they are assessed as needing care and support or support as an adult carer are:

**Option 1:** Taken as a Direct Payment

**Option 2:** Allocated to a provider the individual chooses. The council or funder holds the budget but the person is in charge of how it is spent (this is sometimes called an individual service fund)

**Option 3:** Or the council can arrange a service chosen by an individual

**Option 4:** Or the individual can choose a mix of these options for different types of support

A number of workstreams are currently progressing the council's planning to implement the Act. The commencement date will be set by Scottish Ministers but is likely to be April 2014 at the latest.

Detailed guidance and training is being developed by the Scottish Government and partners to ensure frontline staff are knowledgeable of the new duties and embed self directed support and the principles of the act into practice.

Further information is available in **Social Care (Self-Directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 Explanatory Notes (and other accompanying documents)**.  
<http://bit.ly/WcGT14>

If you would like further information about Self-directed Support please contact

**Pat McCormack**, Self-directed Support and Planning Manager on **01698 453708** or  
**Claire Pearson**, Social Worker on **01698 453998**.



The Scottish Good Egg Guide to In-Car

**ChildSafety**



# Is **your** child sitting safely?

For **free** advice on your child's in-car safety please visit:

**[www.goodeggcarsafety.com](http://www.goodeggcarsafety.com)**



For further information on Road Safety in South Lanarkshire, please contact the Road Safety Team on 01698 453620

***Arnold Clark***.com



Community and Enterprise Resources



 /scottishgoodegg  
 /goodeggsafety

# Benefits are changing – could this affect you?



## Benefits are changing for people of working age

**The UK Government's Welfare Reform Act is making big changes to the benefits system. This may affect you if you are of working age and on benefits or claim benefits from time to time.**

**This is what's due to happen this year:**

- From April, housing benefit will depend on the size and age of your family. For example, if you live alone but have two bedrooms, you will not get housing benefit for the extra room. The Council and housing associations have been writing to 5,200 tenants who are affected.
- From April, a Scottish Welfare Fund will replace crisis and community care grants previously dealt with by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Scottish councils are putting arrangements in place to deal with these requests.
- The Scottish Government is taking on responsibility for council tax benefit from the DWP. Councils will continue to administer the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme and there will be little change in the first year at least.
- From 10 June, Personal Independence Payments (PIP) will replace Disability Living Allowance for all new claimants aged 16 to 64. From 7 October, existing DLA claimants who request an uprating or who have fixed awards due to expire after the end of February 2014 will be asked to claim PIP. (The majority of DLA claimants will not be affected before October 2015.)
- From September 2013, a benefits cap will limit the amount of money households can receive, reducing the income of some larger families and people in more expensive accommodation. It's estimated that about 100 residents will be affected.
- From October, a new system of Universal Credit which brings together a number of benefits is due to be rolled out across the UK. At first this will only be for new claims, but eventually, it will apply to everyone of working age on benefits. This will be paid calendar monthly in arrears and tenants will be responsible for paying their own rent, it will not be paid directly to their landlord.

**The switch to managing money monthly in arrears is not going to be easy, particularly for people who are receiving less help because of the new housing occupancy rules. There are some steps people can take that will help them cope better in the months ahead.**

- Join a Credit Union and try saving a small amount every week. Credit Unions provide a safe and convenient place to save your money and allow access to low-cost loans.
- Open a bank account if you don't have one.
- Keep a budget of what things cost – like your weekly food shop, electricity bills and rent.
- If you are already finding it difficult to pay debts and they are mounting up, contact Money Matters or Citizens Advice and they will help you look at options to make things more manageable.
- Pay-day loans, credit from doorstep lenders or shops doing weekly payments can be very expensive. If you need a new washing machine, TV or other essential goods, your local Credit Union is a much cheaper option.
- If you are on benefits and considering moving house, check out the housing occupancy rules and avoid taking on rooms you will not get any allowance for.
- People need to apply for the new benefits online. There is free access to the internet and advice on courses at libraries and young people can use Universal Connections Centres.
- Try to keep healthy and well – but if you are feeling low, Lanarkshire's Well Connected programme makes it easier to take part in activities and services to improve your well being. Visit [www.elament.org.uk/self-help-resources/well-connected-programme](http://www.elament.org.uk/self-help-resources/well-connected-programme).
- If you are trying to get back to work, contact South Lanarkshire Works 4U. There are a number of schemes that can help you prepare for this.

## Useful contacts

### South Lanarkshire Council

**Housing enquiries** 0303 123 1012  
*(for information on occupancy rules)*

**Money Matters** 0303 123 1008  
*(for advice on benefits and debts)*

**Council tax and benefits** 0303 123 1011  
**South Lanarkshire Works 4U**  
0800 731 0444  
*(for support with returning to work)*

### Citizens Advice

**Hamilton** 01698 283477

**East Kilbride** 01355 263698

**Rutherglen/Cambuslang**

0141 646 3191

01555 664301

**Clydesdale**

### Credit Unions in South Lanarkshire

#### Scotwest

[www.scotwest](http://www.scotwest) 0845 634 7634

*Open to anyone who lives/works in West of Scotland*

#### BSL (South Lanarkshire)

[www.blantyrecreditunion.org.uk](http://www.blantyrecreditunion.org.uk)

**Blantyre** 01698 711112

**Larkhall** 01698 884156

#### Cambuslang Credit Union

[www.cambuslangcu.org.uk](http://www.cambuslangcu.org.uk)

0141 641 0888

**Hamilton Credit Union** 01698 282200

#### WHEB, Burnbank

[www.whebcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.whebcreditunion.co.uk)

01698 307334

#### East Kilbride Credit Union

[www.ekcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.ekcreditunion.co.uk) 01355 224771

#### Rutherglen Credit Union

[www.rcu.org.uk](http://www.rcu.org.uk) 0141 647 4756



[www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk](http://www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk)