

TheView

All the news from YOUR South Lanarkshire Council

SPRING 2016



**HOLY CROSS
GIVES GIRLS
A SPORTING
CHANCE**

Picture: Anne-Janine Nugent

INSPIRING: Abigail Shaw from Holy Cross High School, Hamilton, is one of a number of pupils at the school who are involved in a new poster campaign to encourage more girls to take up sport - **see page 8 for full story**

SERVICES SECURED BY BUDGET DEAL

KEY council services have been protected despite unprecedented pressure on local authority budgets, says the Leader of South Lanarkshire Council.

Eddie McAvoy made the comment after local councillors approved plans

for the area's £663m 2016/17 revenue budget. This outlines how money will be spent in areas such as schools, roads, care homes, refuse collection, recycling and council housing.

Mr McAvoy said: "I have now been balancing the council's budget for 20 years and it has never been as difficult as it was this year. The Scottish

Government has reduced funding for local authorities by £350m and our grant has been severely cut.

"We have already been forced to make more than £100m in savings in the last five years and this year we're having to find another £43m. We're already efficiently run so any more

► Turn to Page 2

INSIDESTORY EASTERFUN

PAGE 3



Keep little ones occupied - from traditional Easter fun to craft and activities

SCALINGUP



PAGES 4-5

£857m Primary Schools modernisation programme at the final stages

INCONFIDENCE



PAGE 6

Trader scheme gives boost to local businesses and consumers



USEFUL CONTACTS

Editor

Tom Little

News editor

James Davitt
01698 454747

Cover photograph

Anne-Janine Nugent

Publisher

South Lanarkshire Council
Produced by Communications
and Strategy
Floor 7

Council Offices Almada Street
Hamilton ML3 0AA

Phone 01698 454747

www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Payments

Phone 0303 123 1005

Council tax and benefits

Phone 0303 123 1011

Council Tax arrears

Phone 0303 123 1014

Housing repairs

Phone 0303 123 1010

Housing enquiries (except repairs)

Phone 0303 123 1012

Social Work and Money Matters

Phone 0303 123 1008

Refuse, grounds maintenance and street cleansing

Phone 0303 123 1020

Conference and banqueting

Phone 0303 123 1009

Parking

0303 123 1006

Bereavement services (cemeteries and crematorium)

Phone 0303 123 1016

Fraud helpline

Phone 0303 123 1013

For all other enquiries

Phone 0303 123 1015

Out-of-hours emergency repairs

Phone 0800 242 024

Out-of-hours Social Work emergencies

Phone 0303 123 1008

If you are hard of hearing

you can use minicom on

0303 123 1017

If you need this information

in another language or

format, please contact us

to discuss how we can best

meet your needs.

Phone 0303 123 1015

Email: equalities@

southlanarkshire.gov.uk

£34M COUNCIL HOUSE INVESTMENT TO CONTINUE IN SOUTH LANARKSHIRE

A funding deal will see investment in new build council houses and existing stock in the year ahead.

Councillors have approved the £34.1million Housing Capital Programme budget for 2016/17.

To finance the plans and following wide consultation with tenants a 3% rent rise was also approved along with the

next phase to harmonise rents across the area.

Rent charges for South Lanarkshire council tenants remain the sixth lowest of the 46 social landlords in Scotland with 3,000 or more houses. The average rent in 2016/17 will be £63.06 per week.

Council Leader Eddie McAvoy is committed to providing the best quality possible for tenants

in South Lanarkshire's 25,400 council houses.

He said: "Our housing stock has already seen more than £430million spent on new modern kitchens and bathrooms, new central heating systems, roofing, doors, windows and insulation.

"And continuing investment in new build council housing sees us on track to build 600 new

council houses by 2020."

The council is working towards harmonising rents ensuring that all tenants in the same size and house style pay the same rent.

Tenants paying above the harmonised rent level will have their rents reduced by up to £2 per week and tenants paying below the level will pay up to an additional £2 per week.

'We worked hard to minimise the impact of cuts and protect frontline services'

► From Page 1

cuts are into bone, and that can only mean there will be an impact on some services.

"However, the administration and council officials have worked hard to minimise that impact and continue to protect the key frontline services that people depend on, especially the young, the elderly and the vulnerable.

"I want to thank everyone who has played a part in this, including trade unions for taking a constructive approach and their suggestions, our council workers, and those political groups which offered their ideas."

A special meeting of the council was held on 1 March at which the Revenue Budget for 2016/17 was approved. The meeting also confirmed that local Council Tax rates will be frozen.

The council also agreed that South Lanarkshire should continue to lead the way on the Living Wage. From 1 April 2016 the council's minimum pay rate will be £8.44 per hour, which will increase the annual wages of the lowest-paid workers by £463, based on a 37-hour week.

The council's Executive Committee had earlier removed a number of savings options which had previously been under consideration.

Members approved Mr McAvoy's plan to continue providing free transport for pupils who live more than two miles from school, and to keep funding transport provision for

13 organisations, including a number of groups for the elderly and the disabled.

The Council Leader also won approval to scrap other savings, including social work closures, and cuts to funding for gala days and Christmas lighting.

The revenue budget approved by the full council confirmed education, and particularly schools, as the council's biggest financial responsibility, with £311m in spending expected this year.

Social Work accounts for £133m, while £102m is allocated to Community and Enterprise

Resources to deliver services such as roads, leisure, and waste collections and recycling. More than £24m will go towards housing and Technical Resources.

These sums do not include the council's capital investment. In 2015 a two-year £172m

programme was approved which will continue the schools modernisation programme, roads and lighting improvements, and other investments.

The Executive Committee on 24 February also agreed the council's Housing Revenue and Capital Account Budget, which laid out plans for £34m to be invested in housing capital projects in 2016/17.

Among other schemes, this will see work continue to improve energy efficiency in council houses and buildings through heating upgrades and new insulation, plus new kitchens and bathrooms fitted and refurbishments in sheltered housing. The council will build 600 new council homes in the next few years.

Mr McAvoy said it was important that the council continued to invest in South Lanarkshire's future despite the pressures on annual budgets.





Have an EGGciting Family Easter across the county

BY SARAH BURROWS

HAVE an EGGciting Family Easter in South Lanarkshire.

There are lots of options over the Easter weekend to spend some quality time with the family.

Activities can be as active or as relaxing as you want them to be and there's lot's happening indoors in case the weather turns out to be more wintry than springy.

At Chatelherault Country Park in Hamilton there will be Easter themed craft activities, quizzes, Easter egg hunts, face painting and fairground rides from Friday 25 to Monday 28 March from 12pm – 4pm each day. There will be something to keep children of all ages occupied.

On Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 March between 10am and 12pm there's a chance to have breakfast with the Easter Bunny himself. A full breakfast is on offer with tea or coffee for only £5.50 for adults and £3.50 for kids. Booking for this is essential – call the cafe on 01698 543402 to reserve your table.

For the fitness fanatics who want to work off those Easter Eggs there's an Easter "Bunnet" race on Saturday 26 March. There is a 1k event for active 5-9 year olds, a slightly longer 3k for 9 – 15 year olds and a more challenging 5k route for ages 15 and over.

There's also an adult 10k trail to ensure that the whole family can get involved. For more info or to book log on to www.entrycentral.com

And on Easter Sunday at Chatelherault there's the old family favourite of decorating eggs and rolling them down the banking in front of the Hunting Lodge. This is a fantastic chance to get some family photographs with the magnificent building in the background and to enjoy the fantastic views over Hamilton. The Easter Bunny will be making a

Also running during the school holidays are the ever popular ACE Camps for primary aged pupils.

The camps run from 10am – 3pm each day and cost: £14.40/£7.20 Concession/ACE

Hamilton Town House

Thursday 7th April and Monday 11th April

Rutherglen Town Hall

Monday 4th April and Wednesday 13th April

Lanark Memorial Hall

Tuesday 5th April and Tuesday 12th April

East Kilbride Arts Centre

Friday 8th April and Friday 15th April

EASTER TREAT:

Jacob Jackson is all set for the many activities taking place this Easter (main pic) while his twin Oliver meets Chatelherault's Easter bunny (inset)



few appearances to oversee these activities at various times throughout the day.

At Calderglen Country Park in East Kilbride there's also lots of activities on offer to celebrate the holiday long weekend – either in the great outdoors or if the weather is poor, in the tropical heat of the conservatory.

An Easter Egg Treasure Hunt will run from 24 March right through to 17 April from 10am- 4pm daily. Children and adults of all ages will enjoy exploring the conservatory, ornamental gardens and zoo, answering questions to get all the clues to solve the Easter puzzles. This is a sure fire activity to bring out the competitive streak of all members of the family.

On Mon 28 March from 11.30am – 1.30pm there's a Mad Hatter's Tea Party planned, which looks set to be a

To book or for more information

visit www.sllcboxoffice.co.uk

Or call:

Chatelherault: 01698 426213

Calderglen: 01355 236644

Hamilton Townhouse: 01698 452299

Rutherglen: 0141 613 5700

Lanark Memorial Hall: 01555 667999

EK Arts Centre: 01355 261000

EK Village Theatre: 01355 248669

Low Parks Museum Hamilton: 01698 328232



fun family event with stories, crafts and even a walk through the rabbit hole.

On 24, 25, 28 and 29 March from 11.30am – 3pm there will be a special animal Easter event in the Conservatory for some fun filled, self-led activities.

And for your chance to get crafty – there will be Craft Workshops on 26 and 27 March from 2pm – 4pm in the conservatory, which look like they'll be very eggciting indeed.

Good practice recognised at traveller sites

SOUTH Lanarkshire's two Gypsy/Traveller sites have been highlighted for good practice in an independent report by the Scottish Housing Regulator.

The report looks into how landlords are meeting their obligations in relation to Gypsy/Travellers under the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2012.

South Lanarkshire Council manages two sites - one in Larkhall and one in East Kilbride and has been highlighted for positive practice across four areas:-

Equalities - the communal facility at the Larkhall site has been used effectively for multi-agency working with agencies such as health, education and Scottish Fire & Rescue.

Communication - reflecting consultation with site residents in developing the allocation policy and occupancy agreement.

Participation - the council introduced a satisfaction survey of all Gypsy / Traveller site residents and has used this to develop an improvement action plan.

Rents and service charges - SLC has established annual consultation events with residents on its Gypsy / Traveller sites to discuss issues such as rent setting and site investment.

The 2015 customer satisfaction survey revealed that residents were 100% satisfied overall with their site.

Annette Finnan, Head of Area Services for Housing and Technical Services, welcomed the findings in the report. She said: "Our aim is to be a model of good practice in the provision of our Gypsy/ Traveller sites and the findings in this report are indicating that we're on track to achieve this. It is very encouraging to receive positive feedback – both from the Scottish Housing Regulator and most importantly, from our service users. We intend to build on this to maintain our high standard and improve even further where we can."

CAMPAIGN SUPPORTS VULNERABLE ADULTS

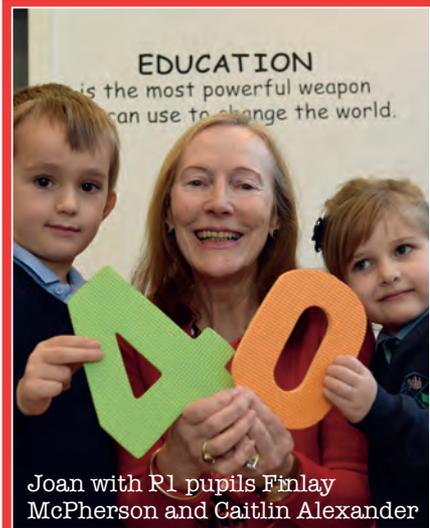
A NATIONAL campaign promoting Adult Protection was run throughout February.

Supported by South Lanarkshire's Adult Protection Committee the aim was to raise awareness of the suffering and abuse many vulnerable people suffer at the hands of others.

Alistair Walker, Adult Support and Protection Co-ordinator, said: It's a sad fact that there are many adults in our communities who are at risk of harm or abuse, but it's not always easy to tell when someone is in trouble.

"The message we are keen to reinforce is to trust your instincts – if something feels wrong, say something."

■ If you are being harmed or know of someone who is, it's important to tell someone. Call Social work on 0303 123 1008 or local police on 101 or in an emergency, 999. For further information and advice go to www.actagainstharm.org



Joan with R1 pupils Finlay McPherson and Caitlin Alexander

Teacher marks 40 years at school

AN East Kilbride teacher celebrated an unusual landmark recently after chalking up 40 years teaching at the same school.

Principal teacher Joan McQueen has been a teacher at Castlefield Primary School in Greenhills, East Kilbride, for the past four decades.

Joan, who also lives in East Kilbride, began teaching at the school in November 1975. Since then she has taught over 1,200 pupils, covering all age groups from nursery to primary seven. Those she has taught include three generations of local families and she still keeps track of some of her first pupils.

Ringling the changes, Joan says that teaching today is much more active and much less formal than it was when she started out over four decades ago. But one thing that hasn't changed is her love of teaching.

Joan said: "I enjoy teaching today as much as I did when I started out.

"Every child has something to offer and I love the challenge and

I believe that if we equip them with the fundamentals in education and help them to develop as responsible young citizens

the opportunity to help unlock their potential. The world changes so quickly and pupils today will have jobs in the future that don't exist now.

"I believe that if we equip them with the fundamentals in education and help them to develop as responsible young citizens, then we're preparing them to make the most of the opportunities that will come their way in life. What job could offer greater satisfaction than that?"

Castlefield's Head Teacher, Penny McLaughlin, said: "Forty years service is a fantastic achievement and it's quite unusual for it to be gained in one school. The knowledge and experience that Joan has of both the school and the local community is invaluable and a great support to me as Head Teacher.

"On behalf of our school I'd like to congratulate Joan and thank her for her contribution and commitment."

Council's £857m primary school investment

A HAND UP

BY LYNNE CARSTAIRS

NINE out of ten primary pupils in South Lanarkshire are now being taught in new modern schools.

And with just two years' left until the completion of the UK's largest schools building programme, that number will only continue to grow.

After 12 years of continuing investment, the council's £857m Primary Schools Modernisation Project is on schedule to deliver a modern learning environment for every South Lanarkshire pupil by 2018 with 114 of the 123-strong primary schools estate now complete.

Not only that, the programme has also delivered five new stand-alone nursery schools, the next of which to open will be the £3m First Step Community Nursery in Hillhouse, Hamilton in April this year.

Primarily funded and delivered by council resources, the £857m fund has been protected despite unprecedented cuts in Local Government finance.

Councillor Eddie McAvo, Leader of the Council, explained: "We committed to the Primary Schools Modernisation project 12 years ago and I am very proud that, despite a very challenging economic climate, we have stuck steadfastly to that pledge and are now nearing successful completion.

"Every new school provides light and bright surroundings creating an ideal place for children to learn and staff to teach in the 21st century. By replacing old, outdated buildings with attractive, modern structures we have also changed scores of our local neighbourhoods for the better, with many providing inclusive facilities for those communities.

"Added to the £318 million Secondary Schools Modernisation Programme which was completed almost a decade ago, I firmly believe that our commitment to providing young people with the very best education possible – from nursery to secondary - has paid off, and will continue to do so for generations to come."

Over the last year the following primary schools have been completed at a total cost of £65.7m

■ Bankhead Primary School, Rutherglen



MOVING ON UP: Woodside Primary pupils Eva Fox and Fraser Livingstone at the school's climbing wall (main pic) and Auchengray Primary's brother and sister, James and Annabel Dunbar with new cook Mrs Scott

- Carnwath Primary School
- Muiredge Primary School, Uddingston
- St Bride's Primary School, Cambuslang
- Woodside Primary School, Hamilton
- Biggar Primary School
- Gilmourton Primary School
- New Lanark Primary School

- Auchengray Primary School
- Libberton Primary School
- Machanhill Primary School, Larkhall

Most recently re-opened, the £2.7m Auchengray Primary school has one of the smallest school rolls in South Lanarkshire





on track for 2018 completion

FOR PUPILS



How the schools are thriving

■ The Primary Schools Modernisation Programme is scheduled to finish in 2018 having rebuilt or refurbished the 123 schools in the South Lanarkshire primary estate, along with five nursery schools.

■ The smallest school on the programme is the 13-pupil Wiston Primary School in Clydesdale whilst the biggest is Mossneuk Primary in East Kilbride with a school roll of 482.

■ Auchengray Primary is a zero carbon school as it has been designed to be powered by an eco-friendly ground source heating system.

■ Following the completion of the secondary schools programme, every pupil now in our 17 high schools and two ASN secondary schools has only every been taught in a new, modern environment.

She explained: "Our old school was around 150 years old and a very traditional schoolhouse building. We used the church hall next door for gym and had our lunches delivered pre-cooked each day. Now everything has changed. We have our own gym hall and kitchen, and the whole space is about three times the size of what we had. What's also lovely is that some of the original stone and slate were retained and have been used to enhance our new building."

The community around the school is also reaping the benefits, courtesy of a MUGA pitch which can be used by local people out of hours.

Meanwhile over at the Woodside Primary in Hamilton, the school's 423 pupils have settled well in to their £9.1m state-of-the-art campus.



SETTLING IN: Pupils from Auchengray Primary are delighted with their new school (top) and East Milton Primary pupil Hamzah Ahmed in one of the school's new classrooms

Headteacher Jan McKeran describes the new school as an "amazing building" which boosts Woodside's 'already strong and vibrant ethos'.

She went on: "At the design and build stage, we had a lot of say on how the school would look and its layout and features. The children were also able to decide on theme and graphics.

"We wanted it to be bright and warm and welcoming, and for the space to flow in a way that works for us. We're thrilled that it turned out so well for us. It's a spacious school and our staff, pupils and parents just love it.

"The technology in each classroom and across the school enhances learning and we have a school that is fit for the demands of modern education. It's a real privilege to spend our days here."

Testament to our hard work and care

A SOUTH Lanarkshire high school is the first in Scotland to win a prestigious national award for its work supporting children and young people struggling to overcome troubled early years experiences.

The Nurture Group at Trinity High School in Rutherglen encourages pupils to develop a relationship of trust with staff and to engage with their peers so they feel safe and supported at school and can get the most from their time in education.

Now that work has been recognised by the charity Nurture Group Network with its Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark Award, making Trinity the first Scottish high school to achieve the honour.

The award takes its name from the pioneering psychologist behind Attachment Theory – the basis for the nurture group approach.

Early life trauma, bereavement, family breakdown and other traumatic events have left the children who join the Trinity Nurture Group requiring support to develop their skills, build their confidence and handle their emotions.

Chief Executive of the Nurture Group Network Kevin Kibble said: "Trinity High School runs an outstanding



Sixth year pupils show their support for the Nurture Group project at Trinity High (l to r) Kelsey Nicol (17), Sean O'Neill (17), Head Teacher Peter Bollen, Chief Executive of the Nurture Group Network Kevin Kibble, Niall McHugh (17) and Rachel Fraser (17)

Nurture Group and the benefits are felt by the children, their families and the wider community every day."

Head teacher Peter Bollen said: "This award is a testament to our hard work, commitment and care. It will act as a catalyst for developing our nurturing practices within and beyond the school and help many young people to improve their life chances.

"To give one example we had a pupil who began first year barely speaking to staff or fellow pupils, so much so there were discussions around a transfer to an additional needs school but with nurturing support that pupil made a success of school and went on to higher education."

– teaching 18 pupils (p1-7) from the communities of Auchengray, Tarbrax and Woolfords.

Principal Teacher Jennifer Alexander is delighted with the new campus which the students moved in to at the beginning of this year.



FIRST CLASS: Colin believes the scheme compliments his business' ethos

HIDDEN CORNER OF RUTHERGLEN GETS £5M PARK

THIS spring will see the launch of a new £5m park in a little-known, remote and previously difficult to access corner of Rutherglen.

Cuningar Woodland Park has been developed for the past two years thanks to the combined efforts of Clyde Gateway and Forest Enterprise Scotland.

The land at Cuningar, which extended to 30 hectares in size, had last been used as a landfill site for rubble from the demolition of tenements in the 1970s and to begin the process of creating the new park, the entire site was transferred over to Clyde Gateway by South Lanarkshire Council.

The area has traditionally been known as Cuningar Loop and is situated behind showpeople homes just off Downiebrae Road, but the lack of any pathway or road onto the site made it something of a secret.

More than 15,000 trees have been planted together with an extensive path network, a riverside boardwalk and a large meadow and series of picnic areas. There is also plenty on offer for those who want to be particularly active with an adventure play area, a bike skills track and Scotland's first ever bouldering park.



CLIMBING: Scotland's first ever bouldering park is sure to be a huge hit with youngsters

The park sits in the ward of Council Leader Councillor Eddie McAvoy. He said: "I'm particularly pleased to see this fantastic level of investment coming into Rutherglen."

Cuningar Woodland Park is currently open to the public every Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 4pm.

■ **More information is available at:** <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/visit/cuningar-loop>

BUSINESS IS BOOMING

MEMBERSHIP of South Lanarkshire Council's approved trader scheme is paying dividends for companies across the authority.

In fact, according to Colin Chambers, Director of MacDonald Builders and Joiners and Platinum Property Maintenance, business has been booming since they joined Buy with Confidence at the end of last year.

Designed to boost consumer protection and promote fair trading practices, Buy with Confidence (BWC) is the largest scheme of its

Every business that displays the BWC logo in the area has been rigorously assessed by the council's consumer watchdogs

kind in the UK, with up to 60 local authorities now members.

Here in South Lanarkshire there are now 44 companies on board, and the list of diverse trades is growing all the time.

Colin Chambers believes the benefits to business are just as varied: "I heard about the BWC Scheme through word of mouth and having two relatively new companies, liked the idea of having Trading Standards approval. I saw this as a means to not only project the right image of our companies but believed it fitted well with our business ethos and commitment to providing first class services."

"Since becoming members of Buy with Confidence, we have secured contracts with a national company providing property maintenance services for a portfolio of more

than 300 private landlord properties. The Trading Standards BWC team also helped in setting up contacts with the council's Regeneration Team who have provided a great range of advice and assistance on employability and grant funding opportunities."

Every business that displays the BWC logo in the area has been rigorously assessed by the council's consumer watchdogs to ensure compliance with a variety of criteria, offering peace of mind for anyone trading with them.

■ **Anyone looking for more information on the scheme can contact Trading Standards on 01698 455696 or bwc@southlanarkshire.gov.uk Applications can be made at www.buywithconfidence.gov.uk**

Local communities to benefit from city deal investment

A NEW primary school, 1500 new homes and a local retail centre are to be built in Newton thanks to the £1.13 billion Glasgow and Clyde Valley City Deal.

The Newton Community Growth Area project will also see improvements to roads in and around the area, enhanced park and ride facilities at Newton station and sustainable improvements to the local environment.

Further Community Growth Area projects

are planned for Hamilton, Larkhall and East Kilbride.

The Leader of South Lanarkshire Council, Councillor Eddie McAvoy, said: "I am delighted that we are now moving forward with the first of our exciting Community Growth Area projects."

The proposed school will have 18 classrooms, nursery class provision and indoor and outdoor community facilities

including an all weather pitch, changing rooms, meeting space and hall, with the total floorspace more than 4000 square metres.

As well as the Community Growth Areas, the other City Deal projects in the South Lanarkshire area are the construction of the Cathkin Bypass, capacity improvements along both Greenhills Road / A726 in the south of East Kilbride and through the Stewartfield Way corridor to the north of East Kibride.



DEAL: School will have 18 classrooms



New initiative lets animal lovers treat their favourites thanks to wishlist

TOYS AND GIFTS ENRICH LIVES OF ZOO ANIMALS

A NEW initiative has been launched to enable animal lovers to fulfil a 'wishlist' for the inhabitants of the children's zoo at Caldergleng Country Park.

One of the most popular visitor attractions in South Lanarkshire, the zoo is home to more than 50 species of mammal, reptile, insects and fish in the heart of the new town.

And, according to Animal Keeper and Education Officer, Natalie Martin, the idea is to give visitors a chance to buy toys and other items to enrich their habitats.

Compiled via online retailer Amazon, the wish list contains items that can be bought and donated to the zoo. Ranging in price from £1 to more than £200 it contains something for just about every animal.

So far, says Natalie, the meerkats and monkeys have benefited most from the idea which she came up with after setting up her own birthday list on the website.

She went on: "The zoo has a limited budget which we need to spend on food and shelter. So we had to come up with a way to fund more enrichment items for the animals, things that improve their quality of life.

"We've been delighted with the response so far and we have pledged to post pics and videos where we can of the animals playing with the toys so that those who donate can see that we have received them and are making good use of them.

"We are grateful for all and any support we get and the wish list provides another way for us to boost the health and wellbeing of the animals we are privileged to work with."

Caldergleng Children's Zoo also hosts a variety of events throughout the year to give visitors the chance to



EXPERIENCE: Kerrie is building up her knowledge thanks to her time at Caldergleng Zoo

get closer to its animals which include meerkats, emperor tamarin monkeys, wallabies, porcupines, guinea pigs, snakes, insects and many species of birds.

These include children's birthday

parties, 'zookeeper for the day', 'wild breakfast' and 'meet the meerkats'.

■ **For more information on these and the wish list initiative, contact the park on 01355 236644.**

ANIMAL MAGIC

Student volunteer Kerrie Macaulay spent many childhood days visiting Caldergleng Park with her family. And now the 23-year-old is "loving every minute" of working behind the scenes at the hugely popular children's zoo just 20 minutes from her home. Currently in year one of a three-year course in Zoology at the Paisley campus of University of the West of Scotland, she is helping out the team at Caldergleng once a week to build her experience working with more than 50 species from across the globe.



SUPPORT: There are a variety of ways to get in touch with the council

Modernising Customer Contact

TO ensure it keeps up to date with the latest online developments, South Lanarkshire Council has been looking at how it can make its online processes quicker and easier to use for its customers.

With a huge increase in the number of people using the council's website last year, it has been reviewing its web pages, removing documents that are no longer relevant. This is helping to make information clearer and easier to find.

It has also improving the transfer of information from our web forms so that web requests will be dealt with more effectively, saving time and money.

Patrick Murphy, Head of Support Services in Housing and Technical Resources, is leading these changes. Patrick says it's about following the customer's lead in how they prefer to contact the council: "We're living in a digital age and we have to ensure that our methods of contact keep up with the expansion of new technology and customer preferences. People expect and want to have their business dealt with as simply and quickly as possible. We need to manage those expectations and

We have to ensure that our methods of contact keep up with the expansion of new technology

respond as best we possibly can."

Contacting the council by phone also remains popular with around 1.5 million calls received each year. We've been analysing these to make improvements – again using the latest technology. This will help reduce the number of unanswered calls and expand the use of automated phone services.

The number of UK households using mobile phones now exceeds those with land lines, with customers receiving information and accessing services on the move. That's why the council is also exploring text messaging as a means of contact.

For those who don't have online access or a phone at home, Q and A offices located across South Lanarkshire provide free PC and public access telephones. Blantyre, Carluke and Rutherglen Q and A offices will be moving this summer to be co-located with the local library – remaining in the heart of the community.

New ice rink at heart of leisure development

WORK is now well underway with the new £2.3m state-of-the-art ice rink at East Kilbride.

The new rink will complement a substantial redevelopment within the Olympia Mall at East Kilbride town centre.

A new leisure hub will be created, featuring a variety of family-orientated restaurants, a new commercial gym, the existing cinema complex and the refurbished ice rink.

The East Kilbride Task Force

has worked closely with the Town Centre on the plans for the leisure hub.

The Task Force includes representatives from South Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Enterprise, Business Gateway Lanarkshire Enterprise Services, Skills Development Scotland, Lanarkshire Chamber of Commerce, South Lanarkshire College and Orion Capital Managers, on behalf of East Kilbride Town Centre.



HUB: New look will transform part of EK town centre



Picture: Anne-Janine Nugent



POSTER GIRLS

BY SARAH BURROWS

WHY search further than you have to for role models? That's the thinking behind a new poster campaign at Holy Cross High School in Hamilton.

The school's PE department decided the best way to encourage girls to take part in extra-curricular clubs was to use sporting role models from the school that younger girls could aspire to be like. The girls are now the focus of a series of posters which show them participating in their chosen sports.

Erin Gallagher participates in ballet and

contemporary dance and studies ballet at the Conservatoire in Glasgow. Fellow dancer Rachel Lees specialises in ballet and modern at a local dance school and Abigail Shaw also dances with a local company, excelling in Highland dance.

Up and coming netball star Anna King plays in the National Development squad and Anna Wilson has played in the U17 team. Adele Baillie plays for Cadzow netball and is the senior school team captain.

Adele Baillie says: "I was really delighted to be asked to take part in the poster project. It is such an honor. I'm passionate about encouraging other girls to take up sport as I enjoy it so much, so if the posters motivate

others than I am happy.

"Getting our photos taken was great fun and it's been strange but interesting seeing the photos be made into posters."

PE Teacher Marianne Bradley who led the project within the school is delighted by the response of the posters. She said: "I decided to use our own girls on the posters so that it would be more relatable for those who were beginning to lose interest in PE and sport.

"Lots of girls have commented on the posters and it's been great to see an increase in girls' participation rates in PE and in extra-curricular clubs.

"It's been a great way to highlight the successes of some of our pupils and so far the feedback has been very encouraging. Hopefully the new girls we have encouraged will become the sporting stars and poster girls of the future."



ENCOURAGING OTHERS: Holy Cross pupils Adele Baillie, Anna Wilson and Anna King (main pic) and Rachel Lees, Erin Gallagher and Abigail Shaw (left)

Hamilton to go extra mile for Sport Relief

HAMILTON is set to host its third Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile this month.

Local heroes will be walking and running themselves proud to raise life-changing money for Sport Relief 2016 on Sunday 20 March.

Hosted by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) the event kicks off from the Mausoleum. The Hamilton Mile will then pass through the Hamilton Palace Sports Grounds for what promises to be an incredible event.

Gerry Campbell, General Manager, SLLC, said: "Sport Relief 2016 runs from 18-20 March and there are more ways than ever to take part, change lives and feel proud.

"The Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile in Hamilton has been a big success over the past two years and we have seen everyone from little ones with their mums and dads, to runners up against the clock taking part on the day.

"We look forward to hosting this fantastic community event once again and hope that as many people as possible come along and get involved.

"Whether you get sponsored to enter an event at the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Games



SUCCESS: Participants enjoying last year's Sport Relief Mile in Hamilton

or fundraise with friends and family at home, work or school, you'll help people living incredibly tough lives. In fact, half of all the money raised by the public is spent right here at home in the UK, with the other half used to make a difference in the world's poorest communities."

■ The cost of entry is £7 for adults, £3 for under-16s and £17 for a family of 2 adults and 2 children.

■ For more information on the Hamilton mile contact event co-ordinator Craig Allardice: craig.allardice@southlanarkshireleisure.co.uk

■ Full details on everything going on for Sport Relief 2016 are available at www.sportrelief.com

PUPILS EMBRACE CHINESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

In just three years an initiative to teach Chinese language and culture has spread from Hamilton Grammar across South Lanarkshire to ensure ever more young people are benefitting.

The Confucius Hub is the local base for the Confucius Institute of Scotland which is the national centre to promote educational, economic and cultural ties between Scotland and China.

At the last count four secondary and 23 primary schools were

involved in the Hub, and Universal Connections also delivers learning opportunities through South Lanarkshire's network of youth centres.

A Chinese Spring Festival at SLC Headquarters in Hamilton saw performances of Chinese dance, poetry and song by pupils from Uddingston Grammar; St Bride's Primary, Bothwell; St Cadoc's Primary, Cambuslang; St Hilary's Primary, East Kilbride; Hamilton Grammar and Universal Connections.



EVENT: Some of the people taking part in the Chinese Spring Festival