



NEW START: Isa is delighted to receive the key to her new home from Council Leader Eddie McAvoy

Picture by: Anne-Janine Nugent

NEW HOUSING IS KEY TO SUCCESS

BY ANGELA McMANUS

THE council's house building programme has taken a major leap forward with the completion of 70 new-build homes in Fernhill.

Built on the same site as the previously demolished tenement flats on Galloway Drive, the high quality development provides a mixture of one and two bedroom apartments and two and three bedroom semi-detached homes. The light, airy properties have fitted modern kitchens and

bathrooms, as well as generous sized, easily maintained gardens that are fully turfed and completely fenced-off.

The houses exceed the latest energy efficient building standards, keeping fuel bills down with well insulated floors and walls. Photovoltaic roof panels also supply low-cost, environmentally friendly energy sourced through light. Hard-wired smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detectors also provide tenants with peace of mind.

So far five properties have been let to tenants, who have already started moving in. Isa Russell from Fernhill was the first to receive her keys which were presented by Councillor Eddie

McAvoy, Leader of South Lanarkshire Council, to mark the occasion.

Isa, who was excited about moving into her new home, said: "The flat is fantastic. This is the first time I've had my own front door and I'm absolutely delighted. I'm closer to my family here and more able to help out with my grandchildren who are equally excited about my new home - especially the garden. I'm closer to the shops as well and will be able to walk round for a few messages rather than jumping on a bus, which is great. It feels like the start of a new adventure."

The properties are built to an

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INSIDESTORY MARATHONMAN

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On course to run the 26.2 mile distance every day for 401 days

YOUNG ATHLETES



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Runner Mhairi Hendry became the face of the Lanarkshire games

HEALTHYLIVING



Reaping the benefits of a unique partnership to improve health



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'These new homes provide a high standard of living space and will make a real difference to tenants'

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extremely high quality and conform to Housing for Varying Needs Standards, making them suitable for a wide range of particular needs. They can easily be adapted to suit the needs of tenants with a disability, with wider doors to enable wheelchair access, lower light switches, higher sockets, covered radiators and wet rooms.

Councillor McAvoy said: "These new homes provide a high standard of living space and will make a real difference to tenants' quality of life, as well as to the whole community. They are a vast improvement on the old tenement flats

'The people of Fernhill have really embraced this whole plan and have been pivotal in creating a community they can be proud of'

which were difficult to let, with the empty properties creating quite an eyesore.

"Alongside the other new developments in the area, these new homes makes a major contribution to building a vibrant new neighbourhood. The people of Fernhill have really embraced this whole plan and have been pivotal in creating a community



SETTLING IN: Isa and Eddie enjoy a cuppa in her new home

they can be proud of."

The Fernhill Masterplan was approved eight years ago following considerable community consultation and engagement. Developed in collaboration with local residents, the

Masterplan set out an ambitious vision, reflecting the views and aspirations of the local community, to improve the quality and range of housing, retail and community facilities in Fernhill. Input from local residents has been ongoing through the Fernhill Neighbourhood Management Board.

This latest phase of new housing for the area will bring the total number of new homes built to date to 240, with the first phase completed in 2009 in partnership with the West of Scotland Housing Association. Since then, new shops and a new community centre, a 7-a-side synthetic pitch, and play area have been built on Fernhill Road, creating a focal point for the community.

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EFFICIENT: Photovoltaic roof panels supply environmentally friendly energy

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

SOUTH Lanarkshire Council's Planning Service has recently approved the South Lanarkshire Development Plan Scheme for 2016 and begun work on a new South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan.

As part of this, a consultation and engagement exercise has been approved to assist in the preparation of the second South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan (SLLDP2) and a call for sites which could be considered

for development.

Councillor Hugh Dunsmuir, Chair of the Planning Committee, said: "We are pleased to start the initial process for consultation for the new local development plan and to approve the South Lanarkshire Development Plan Scheme for 2016. This document will now be sent to the Scottish Government. The council is committed to ensuring widespread public awareness as

the plan progresses and to seek the views of a wide range of interested parties."

Meanwhile, South Lanarkshire Council has appointed its first Head of Planning and Economic Development.

Originally from Fife but coming to the West of Scotland via the north of England and Wales, Pauline Elliott's appointment brings the posts of Head of Planning and Head of

Regeneration together.

She said: "I am delighted to be home working in Scotland after so many years away. I have inherited not one but two wonderful teams here at South Lanarkshire and I know that as we go forward there will be many benefits to be had for the people of South Lanarkshire by bringing together a broad base of knowledge and expertise in planning and economic development."



Time to book for SUMMER

BY ANDREW THOMPSON

EARLY May's mini-heatwave brought a timely reminder that summer is just around the corner and it is a good time to start planning ahead to take full advantage of the packed programme of activities and events on offer in South Lanarkshire.

For parents in particular thinking about how to fill the school holidays can spark feelings of dread, but South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) and South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) have plenty on offer to help beat the boredom and not break the bank.

SLLC's ACE membership for under 16s is £23.60 a month offers unlimited access to a wide range of sport and arts activities and classes including music, drama, casual golf, swimming and much more – full details can be found on the ACE pages of the SLLC website.

SLC youth centres known as Universal Connections (UC) provide a summer programme of activities developed in partnership with young people. To get full details of what's happening when and where, please drop in or contact UCs through the Council website or alternatively through each UCs Facebook page.

The Summer Programme for the James Hamilton Heritage Park and the Outdoor Resource Base has an exciting mix of adult and junior courses and activities for the budding outdoor enthusiast including mountain biking, gorge walking, open water swimming, kayaking, sailing, power boating and much more.

Cultural venues Hamilton Town House, Rutherglen Town Hall, Lanark Memorial Hall, The Village Theatre and East Kilbride Arts Centre have plenty on offer to cater to your creative side and information on classes, courses, events and shows.

There's also plenty to do if you prefer less formal activities. South Lanarkshire's parks and country parks have plenty of scope for walks, bike rides, play and picnics with added attractions such as Calderglen Zoo, Strathaven's boating pond and model railway and

FUN: Among those ready to take advantage of all the ACE cards have to offer are Lilly, 6, from St Kenneth's Primary School (main pic) and 7-year-olds Ethan and Katie (inset)



Chatelherault's Hunting Lodge (and don't forget the cafes and playparks).

South Lanarkshire's network of Lifestyle centres, sports centres and swimming pools will be open throughout the summer providing further opportunities for activity and exercise.

If you want to start the summer with a bang do not miss the East Kilbride

Summer Festival on Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 June at the East Kilbride Arts Centre, with this year's event promising plenty of Roald Dahl themed fun.

■ To find out further information about all the summer activities available visit: www.slleisureandculture.co.uk and www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk



CHANGES: The white cattle at Chatelherault will be keeping a keen eye on the project

Project set to transform woodland

A MASSIVE woodland project is underway at Chatelherault Country Park.

Almost 20 hectares of non-native plantation conifers are to be removed and native woodland regenerated, as well as the restoration of spectacular historical views and features.

The park, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), will remain open at all times during the work, although access from the western side will be disrupted from now until late September this year.

This work is being funded by South Lanarkshire Council and Heritage Lottery Fund supported Clyde and Avon Valley Landscape Partnership (CAVLP).

Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Community Services Committee, Councillor Hamish Stewart, said: "This work is absolutely essential to allow us to manage the woodland which makes up the spectacular setting that is Chatelherault Country Park.

"The park will of course remain open, the only difference will be some paths may not be accessible while the work is ongoing. Visitors should check the signage or go to the visitor area for more information.

"The tree felling will leave the area in question looking very sparse for the first couple of years, but we know from experience the native tree regeneration is very rapid in Chatelherault's fertile woodland soils."

A slam dunk to coaching success

REACH for the Sky Basketball is looking to recruit 10 young people between the ages of 16-24 to take part in their 2016 Coach & Volunteer Pathway (CVP) programme.

The CVP offers participants – who must live in South Lanarkshire – a fun environment, the opportunity to increase confidence, meet new people, gain 13 qualifications, a reference and valuable work experience ... and get some exercise at the same time.

If you are interested in applying for this year's CVP, contact graham@reachfortheskybasketball.com. Candidates will be required to fill in an application and those that make it through to the next round will be contacted and asked to come in for a short interview.



ENCOURAGED: Ben is cheered on by 4-year-old Murray Clark



South Lanarkshire welcomes 401 marathon man

CARLUKE'S John Cumming stadium welcomed '401 marathon man' Ben Smith as he completed his 208th marathon in as many days.

The 33-year-old is on course to run the 26.2 mile distance every day for 401 days with a target of raising £250,000 for anti-bullying and equality causes in the UK.

In Carluke, he was accompanied along the route by various runners from local club Clyderunners and on the last leg by young athletics leaders of Law and District Athletic Club. Both groups are part of the Carluke Community Sports Hub where, in partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture (SLLC) they provide health and exercise opportunities to the community.

The marathon – which was facilitated by SLLC and Clyderunners – was the finale of a larger event showcasing sports and play opportunities across South Lanarkshire for toddlers to teens and beyond.

Gerry Campbell, General Manager of SLLC, said: "We were delighted to be a part of Ben's charity event, which as well as being a huge personal challenge for him, is a great example of his unstinting

'I want to offer huge thanks to everyone involved in welcoming Ben to South Lanarkshire, and we wish him every success for the completion of his challenge'

commitment to raise support and awareness of equality issues. I want to offer huge thanks to everyone involved in welcoming Ben to South Lanarkshire, and we wish him every success for the completion of his challenge."

And Ben himself was quick to thank the Carluke community, adding: "I had a simply amazing day thanks to clyderunners and Carluke Leisure Centre. Lot of gifts, such great support and even though the weather wasn't that great spirits were high. We also chalked up two personal bests, which was awesome. I truly have loved every minute of it."

■ Ben's challenge sees him take in 309 locations throughout the UK with the majority being organised by local running clubs. For more information on events available at the Carluke hub, contact 01555 751384.

Determination to strive for personal goals and a

FACING UP

BY ANDREW THOMPSON

IN August 2011 some 1,500 young athletes from around the globe gathered in Lanarkshire for the 45th International Children's Games (ICG) bringing the world's biggest multi-sport event for under 15s to Scotland for the first time.

Lanarkshire ICG 2011 featured teams representing some 80 cities from more than 30 countries competing in three days of events including athletics, football, swimming, judo, sailing, golf and volleyball.

Officially sanctioned by the International Olympic Committee, the Children's Games began in 1968 when Slovenian PE teacher Metod Klemenc decided to start an international sporting event aimed opening a gap in the Iron Curtain that had divided post war Europe, to offer young people a vision of a better future.

South Lanarkshire first sent a team to compete in 2000 when the Canadian city of Hamilton hosted the games and invited Hamiltons from around the world to come.

Eleven years later the games came to Scotland for the first time with North and South Lanarkshire Councils joining forces to host the event.

The spectacular opening ceremony saw thousands of spectators pack into Motherwell's Fir Park stadium to welcome the 1,500 competitors who came from across the world to participate in the games over three days in August.

After the event, International Children's Games officials with many years involvement described the Lanarkshire games as the best ever.

Runner Mhairi Hendry became the face of the Lanarkshire games featuring on promotional publicity including a massive



billboard in Scotland's busiest station Glasgow Central.

Mhairi's early talent as an athlete is underlined by the fact that she has the unique distinction of competing in the International Children's Games on three separate occasions, the 2011 event being the last year that she was

below the age bar.

Now studying for a degree in Prosthetics & Orthotics, Mhairi was last year's Scottish Women's Champion for 800m, was part of the Team GB under 20s squad at the European Junior Championships and aims to build on that success this year. She said: "I was



Jennifer Scott, 20 from Larkhall

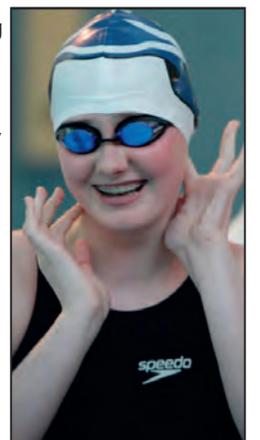
Sport: Swimming coach
Career: Swimming Teacher

ICG was an amazing opportunity and I felt very proud to have been selected to represent Lanarkshire at the Games. It was the first time I had competed against people from outside of Britain and it is an experience I will never forget. Walking into the stadium at the opening ceremony was unbelievable seeing everyone cheering and all the excitement surrounding it.

The feeling of strangers cheering on you as you competed in the relay race is hard to put into words. Looking back it was one of the best experiences of my life.

After the Games I did continue to swim competitively at district and national events but due to university commitments I have just recently stopped competitive swimming, however I still train as a master with Larkhall Avondale to keep up my fitness.

I also became a volunteer coach with Larkhall Avondale swimming club when I turned 16 which was very rewarding and fulfilling, I enjoyed giving back the knowledge that I had gained to the new members of the club.



and a desire to inspire the same grit in others, now that's a legacy

TO THE FUTURE



Mhairi Hendry, 20 from Hamilton

Sport: Running - 800m
Career: Selected to run 800m for the GB under 20 team 2015 in the Loughborough International & the European Junior Championships in Eskilstuna, Sweden. 2015 winner Scottish Senior Women's 800m championship. 2015 2nd in the British Universities Women's 800m championships.

I am very grateful for the support I receive from SportScotland Institute of Sport, University of Strathclyde Elite Athlete Bursary and Jack Dunlop Scholarship SportsAid Scotland and the Ron Pickering Memorial Fund.

Competing in the ICG reinforced my ambition to compete at the highest possible level in athletics. I am hoping to continue my success in the 2016 season.



SPECTACULAR: Athletes at the Games closing ceremony

Avondale swimming club to keep up my fitness."

She does however, remain involved in sport and is in her own way helping deliver the legacy of the children's games by coaching the next generation of Lanarkshire athletes. Jennifer said:

"After the Games I did continue to swim competitively at district and national events and I also became a volunteer coach with Larkhall Avondale swimming club when I turned 16. I have found coaching to be very rewarding and fulfilling and really enjoy giving back the knowledge that I have gained to the new members of the club."

When each of the athletes was asked what was the biggest lesson they took from involvement in the International Children's Game the almost identical reply from all was a confidence and determination to strive for personal goals and a desire to inspire the same grit in others. Now, that's a legacy.

fortunate to take part in the Children's Games in Athens, Bahrain and here on home soil. It was a great experience and being part of the ICG reinforced my ambition to compete at the highest possible level in athletics."

Twin brothers Kade and Alec Thomas are also balancing a successful career on the track with higher education, with both currently for an HND in Sport Therapy. Kade said: "ICG gave me the opportunity to try new things and opened my eyes to the fact that anything is possible."

"The experience has helped me achieve academically and in sport the fact of being chosen for the ICG squad gave us the belief that helped us take gold in 4x100 relay."

In terms of track success Alec is currently in the lead receiving a third call up for the Scotland squad at the Loughborough International this May. He said: "ICG is not a competition to be missed, it's a life changing experience!"

"Looking back five years ago, I can still feel the thrill of competing, the whole lead up to the games was a complete rush - knowing that you're about to compete with other countries and represent your county was a great feeling. It feels like the ICG was the foundation to my current success in sport."

Away from the running track 20 year old Jennifer Scott was a member of the Lanarkshire swim team at the 2011 games and

is still involved in the sport. She said: "At the time it was an amazing opportunity and I felt very proud to have been selected to represent Lanarkshire at the Games."

"It was also very exciting as it was the first time I had competed against people outside of Britain."

"Looking back now it is an experience I will never forget. Walking into the stadium at the opening ceremony was unbelievable, seeing everyone cheering and all the excitement surrounding it. Then the feeling of strangers cheering on you as you competed in the relay race is hard to put into words. Looking back it was one of the best experiences of my life."

Like Mhairi and Alec, Jennifer is currently a student. She is studying Pharmacology at Glasgow University but, unlike her former team mates she no longer competes. She said: "Due to university commitments I have just recently stopped swimming competitively. However I still train as a master with Larkhall



DOUBLE SUCCESS: Alec and his twin Kade competed at the Games

Alec Thomas, 20, from Burnside

Sport: Running - 60m, 100m, 200m, 4x100 Relay
Career: Team Scotland - Belfast International May 2016, Loughborough International May 2016.

I remember at the ICG knowing that you're about to compete with other countries and represent your county was such a great feeling and it feels like the ICG was the foundation to my current success in sport.

ICG has left me with the ambition to strive to compete at an even higher level, and aim for the commonwealth games in 2018.

I think my experience at the it also contributed to my success outside of sport, ig gave me a never-ending ambition to succeed academically, and more importantly to make sure and enjoy the journey every step of the way.

Looking back five years ago to the thrill of competing at ICG always re-invigorates my love to challenge myself, both inside and outside sport.



Up Skilling aims to reduce in-work poverty for South Lanarkshire



NEW SKILLS:
David is now cooking for 30 residents at a care home

MAKING WORK PAY FOR LOW PAID WORKERS

BY ANGELA McMANUS

SOUTH Lanarkshire's Works4U programme offers a range of initiatives to help people into work and to enhance skills and promotion prospects for those in low paid or low skilled employment.

One such initiative is Up Skilling, which is funded by South Lanarkshire Council's Tackling Poverty Programme and the European Social Fund. Up Skilling aims to reduce in-work poverty for South Lanarkshire residents by providing training and support as a route out of low incomes and poor contractual terms, such as zero hours contracts.

In the pilot phase to April 2016 16, the service has engaged with 115 people, with 26 people completing training and increased earnings on average by £1000 per annum. Another 22 completed short, job-focussed training, with 56 still taking part on programmes.

David Morrice, 34, from Blantyre is one of the beneficiaries. Because of his learning difficulty, dyslexia, he had always been employed in low paid, insecure jobs with limited contractual terms. Employed part time in a care home in Hamilton as a cleaner, David boosted his earnings by working any extra hours available in



'Before I did my SVQ, I didn't have two pennies to rub together. Now I have a wee Mini Cooper on the road and have savings towards my first house'

the laundry, pantry and kitchen. Despite always being keen on cooking, he never had the opportunity or finances available

to gain the necessary qualification to pursue this as a career. Although he was working very hard, David still relied on welfare benefits and was keen to be self-reliant. The Up Skilling Coordinator, Peter Shiels, worked with the care home manager to look at options to support David realise his ambitions and help the employer retain a good member of staff. David completed an SVQ in Professional Cookery and now cooks for 30 residents.

His manager has also seen a significant and positive change. He has grown in confidence and fulfils all aspects of his role, from costing menus to consulting with residents. His earning capacity has also increased and he is better off on a 34-hour contract.

David himself cannot believe how far he has come: "Before I did my SVQ, I didn't have two pennies to rub together. Now I have a wee Mini Cooper on the road and have savings towards my first house. I'm delighted"

Find out more...

If you are either an employee or an employer in South Lanarkshire and think Up Skilling might benefit you, visit www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk or contact Peter Shiels, 01698 453652, peter.shiels@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Changes are underway for four Q and As

Q and A facilities in Larkhall, Carluke, Blantyre and Rutherglen are modernising this year as part of a wider review to improve customer access to the council, which also includes phone systems, web and text services.

The previous Q and A model had been in operation for 18 years. However, over recent years, the number of residents using Q and A facilities has significantly decreased, while advances in technology mean that more and more people are going online to do business with the council.

Larkhall was the first of the four Q and A offices to move to a new operating model last month and will be followed by Carluke on 27 June, which will move from Kirkton Street in the town to the local library within Lifestyles on Carnwath Road. Blantyre will be the next to change on 29 August and Rutherglen on 24 October, with both also relocating to their local library.

The modernised Q and A facilities have been redesigned to connect customers to council services through computer and phone booths that are free and easy to use.

Although the emphasis of the Q and A service is changing, a Customer Service Assistant (CSA) will still



POPULAR: New phone booths are at Larkhall Q and A

be on hand to advise members of the public on the best way to carry out their business with the council – which in most cases will be either online or speaking directly to the relevant service.

■ Details of all Q and A facilities are on the council's web site at www.southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Fiona and team get set for New Lanark

THE BBC's Antiques Roadshow will set up at the New Lanark World Heritage site in July.

Hosted by Fiona Bruce, the Sunday night favourite calls upon more than 30 experts to offer free advice and valuations to visitors, who are invited to raid their attics and bring along their family heirlooms, household treasures and car-boot sale finds to the 18th century mill village on Thursday July 28th.

No pre-registration, tickets or appointments are needed on the day, and the entire event is free to attend. There's more information on planning your visit to Antiques Roadshow at bbc.co.uk/antiquesroadshow

■ If you have a large, heavy or particularly unusual/interesting object to bring along, email: antiques.roadshow@bbc.co.uk or write to Antiques Roadshow, BBC Broadcasting House, Hiteclades Road, Bristol BS8 2LR.

'My advice to others in the same position is to take time and invest in yourself'

James and Sheila turn back the clock

BY SARAH BURROWS

AN Uddingston gym member in his 90s is reaping the benefits of a unique partnership approach to improve fitness and health.

James Gall, 92, was referred by local physiotherapists to join a Hamilton Water Palace fitness class aimed at improving strength and balance.

The Active Health Programme is a partnership between South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture and NHS Lanarkshire to ensure that older members of the community and anyone else recuperating from an injury or illness can benefit from keeping active.

James was referred to the programme to help him recover from a joint replacement and osteoarthritis. He wanted to improve leg strength and overall mobility. He took



FIGHTING FIT: James and Sheila are put through their paces by Gary

part in 20 group sessions and now attends the gym twice a week.

He said: "I was slightly apprehensive about going into a gym setting but I have to say that everyone was so nice and extremely encouraging. I really enjoyed the group class and made some friends while I was exercising, so it didn't feel like hard work. I have kept up the

gym and have been enjoying it and I am considering adding more exercises to my regime so I can keep pushing myself.

"My advice to others in the same position is to take time and invest in

yourself. Age certainly shouldn't be a barrier."

Sheila Graham, 78, was also referred by her physiotherapist as she started to recover from a broken pelvis. She struggled to walk without a zimmer frame

when she started the group class but can now walk unaided... with a noticeable spring in her step.

After taking the first step into fitness she also learned to swim as it was something she had always wished she could do.

She said: "The initial group class gave me back my movement and developed my confidence with exercise. I still go to the gym a couple of times a week and now thanks to the centre staff I can now swim, which I do at least once a week."

Both gym members speak very highly of the Water Palace's Health and Fitness Officer Gary Taggart who in turn is very proud of the pair's achievements.

He said: "I am delighted that Sheila and James have continued to exercise and I look forward to helping them develop their programme as their fitness continues to improve.

"All my members are inspirational but none more so that Sheila and James. Well done."

The Active Health programme was launched in 2010 and is available to all those who are recovering from injury or illness that would benefit from improving strength and stability and also general fitness, health and wellbeing.

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE SCHOOLS ARE TOP OF THE CLASS

SOUTH Lanarkshire schools and teachers have beaten off stiff competition from across Scotland to be selected as finalists at this year's Scottish Education Awards.

In fact five of the awards' shortlisted nominees are from across the authority.

Daniele Timmons, teacher at Saint Vincent's Primary School in East Kilbride is a finalist for the prestigious Teacher of the Year Award, and St Blane's Primary School in Blantyre is in the running for the Making Languages Come Alive Award.

The ESOL Family Project, a

Hamilton-based programme aimed at families whose first language isn't English and who have children attending nursery and primary school, has been shortlisted for the Transforming Lives Through Partnerships Award.

Additionally, Louise Summers, parent of a Long Calderwood Primary School pupil, and the Promoting Roles of Father Figures (PROFF) Group have each been named as finalists for the Parents as Partners in Learning Award. The group consists of dads, stepdads, granddads, uncles and

older brothers, and has been praised for having a positive impact on male carers in the Blantyre and Hamilton areas.

Jim Gilhooly, Executive Director of Education Resources, said: "Schools and nurseries in South Lanarkshire are hotbeds of creativity, talent and diversity and this makes them strong and successful.

"The Scottish Education Awards give us all an opportunity to celebrate the success of our teachers and all who work in our schools, and for us to say thank you for the positive contribution that they

make to the education of our children and young people.

"I would like to congratulate everyone who was nominated this year for an award and to take this opportunity to wish our finalists my best wishes on reaching this stage of this highly prestigious event in the education calendar."

■ **The Scottish Education Awards 2016 is managed by the Daily Record and delivered in conjunction with Education Scotland. To find out more, go to www.scottisheducationawards.org.uk.**



MARKING 20 YEARS IN THE COMMUNITY

BY LYNNE CARSTAIRS

THIS year marks 20 years since the inception of South Lanarkshire Council.

As the fifth largest unitary authority Scotland, South Lanarkshire picked up where Strathclyde region and four district councils – as well as East Kilbride Development Corporation – left off.

Stretching from Rutherglen in the North to Abington in the South, the council is



also one of the most diverse in the country, incorporating both urban and rural communities and a population of more than 300,000.

In those 20 years these communities have benefited from significant regeneration and investment in housing, roads, infrastructure and economy, whilst retaining much that is individual and unique.

And over the last decade South Lanarkshire has overseen two of the biggest public sector programmes in the UK – Home Happening and the Schools Modernisation Programme.

Council Leader, Councillor Eddie McAvooy has been at the helm since 1999, when the first council leader Tom McCabe became the first MSP to be elected to the new



Scottish Parliament.

He said: "It is a great source of pride to me that South Lanarkshire Council has led the way in so many innovations over the past 20 years. Yet, at the heart of what we do as a council, and for each one of us as elected members, is to focus on what is best for those who live and work here."

"Since I was first elected in 1996, so much has changed locally and nationally but our communities, like our people, remain diverse and vibrant, and as a council we continue to strive to reflect that in everything that we do."

"I know I speak for every one of my colleagues when I say how privileged I am now, as I have always been, to represent South Lanarkshire and its citizens."

FLASHBACK: The first ever intake of councillors following the local government elections in May 1996 (above), The groundbreaking £857m Schools Modernisation Programme (below), which will deliver a modern learning environment for every pupil by 2018 and the Home Happening programme to improve council homes (below left).

Free books for commuters

PLATFORM 2 of Hamilton Central Station was the place to 'read all about it' recently.

For a team from South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture's Library Service joined in the national celebration of World Book Night by giving out free books to commuters.

Librarians Sarah Liddell, Janice Russell and Clare Walatis set up stall in the busy station with 250 copies of the 15 listed books to give away. And Sharon Docherty picked up and read her free book on the go as she waited for her train.

World Book Night is a UK-wide annual celebration of reading, led by the Reading Agency, a national charity inspiring people to become 'confident and enthusiastic readers'.

Each year a list of 15 diverse titles is drawn up and those books handed out free across the country. The list covers a range of genres from crime and sci-fi to



GIVEAWAY: The free books were a big hit with commuters

quick reads, fantasy and contemporary fiction, including teenage fiction.

Gerry Campbell, General Manager of South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, said: "World Book Night is a great opportunity to promote the value of reading. Finding the right book can be the key to opening up a lifelong love of literature and all the health and wellbeing benefits that it brings."

SELL OUT SHOW AT VILLAGE THEATRE

VERTIGO Theatre is a youth-work based drama group for young people aged 7-25 from throughout South Lanarkshire. Their most recent production was a sell out performance of Disney's Beauty and the Beast Jr. at East Kilbride's Village Theatre.

South Lanarkshire Council's Spokesperson for Youth, Councillor Davie McLachlan, said: "The recent show was an astounding success."

"I have attended many excellent productions by Vertigo and on this occasion they have absolutely excelled."

"The show brought together over 50 members of the youth drama group who were involved in all aspects of the production– from theatre set design

and build, art work, stage management to assisting with costumes.

"The actors were fantastic and many of the group who were not on stage were busy behind the scenes working to ensure that their production went as smoothly as possible. Well done to all involved."

Many young people who have come through 'Vertigo Theatre' over the years have gone on to study theatre and music based subjects at accredited drama and music schools and colleges and are doing well within the profession as actors, stage managers and musicians. Going by this recent performance there are many more 'stars in the making'.



CLASSIC: Vertigo's take on Beauty and the Beast was very popular