

# TheView

All the news from YOUR South Lanarkshire Council

MARCH 2018

## Year of Young People 2018 is taking off in South Lanarkshire

**THE talent and potential of South Lanarkshire's young people was on display at a series of showcase events celebrating the Year of Young People 2018.**

Scotland is believed to be the first country in the world to officially dedicate a year to raising the profile of the positive contribution young people are making to their communities every day and to highlight their potential for the future.

Year of Young People celebration launch events for primary schools, secondary schools and young people 26 and under were held at council headquarters in Hamilton on Wednesday 14 March.

Nearly 1,000 young people attended the events and took to the stage in the council Banqueting Hall in a showcase of the amazing depth of talent across South Lanarkshire.

► **Full story: turn to page 3**



**IN THE FRAME:** Abbie Morris (7) from Carluke's Victoria Park School (front) with (l-r) Laura Toye, Loch PS, Rutherglen; Murdo Muircroft, Maxwellton PS, East Kilbride and Max Kerr, Woodside PS, Hamilton.

## INSIDESTORY BUDGETBOOST

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More teachers and launch of lunch clubs

## SNOWBOTHER



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How council staff helped beat the 'Beast from the East'

## JUSTTHETICKET



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School becomes first to have every pupil as library member

# CASH FOR WAR MEMORIALS TO MARK WWI CENTENARY

**WAR memorials across South Lanarkshire are to be improved thanks to a boost from this year's council budget of £100,000.**

The money will go towards stonemasonry, hard and soft landscaping and one off repairs.

This year will see the centenary of the end of the First World War on 11 November.

Leader of South Lanarkshire Council, Councillor John Ross said: "Everyone at South Lanarkshire Council is aware of the extra importance of Remembrance Day this year.

"We have extremely significant and well-maintained war memorials across the area but we felt it was important that we made sure extra funds were available given the significance of the 100-year anniversary.

"We must never forget the ultimate sacrifices made by so many to enable us to enjoy the freedoms we do today."

In total there are 44 war memorials across South Lanarkshire's villages and



**IMPROVEMENTS:** Uddingston war memorial is among those that will benefit.

towns which will benefit from the extra money announced.

The memorials commemorate those who have lost their lives while serving their country and the council is responsible for maintaining them.

The war memorial in Uddingston was voted Champion of Champions in the Best Kept War Memorial category in 2014 and then again in 2017 by the national veteran's charity Legion Scotland.

Uddingston was chosen from more than 80 entries across Scotland.

The extra funding towards war memorials was part of a budget package agreed on 28 February.

► **For more information on the budget please turn to page 2**



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**DELIVERING:** More staff  
will be recruited in schools  
following the budget  
approval

# BUDGET BOOST FOR RESIDENTS

**A BUDGET which includes new initiatives that will provide a massive boost for the young, older people and the most vulnerable has been approved by South Lanarkshire Council.**

The budget will mean 65 more teachers and classroom assistants will be recruited for local schools, while 50 additional staff will be trained to work in nurseries and another 50 to help care for the elderly.

More local pupils will also receive free school meals and clothing grants, while plans will progress to introduce breakfast clubs in schools and free lunches during the holiday periods.

Approval of the budget was welcomed by Council Leader John Ross, who said: "A lot of hard work and thought has gone into preparing a budget which makes the very best use of the resources available to the council.

"And what could be better use than making sure that we do everything we can to give our young people the best start in life, make sure those who need it most are fed and clothed, and in doing so help close the attainment gap?"

"This budget does all this and more, thanks in part to a better than expected financial position due to our Scottish Government grant being better than anticipated, but also because the council is well-run and we have been able to target efficiencies which do not hit frontline services.

"The result is what I think most people will agree is the most progressive budget for South Lanarkshire Council for many years. By transforming and modernising our services we will continue to make sure that resources are available to help

transform lives, especially those of the youngest, eldest and most vulnerable in our communities."

The budget was approved in a package of reports presented to the Executive Committee, with key parts and a 3% increase in Council Tax then also approved by the full Council.

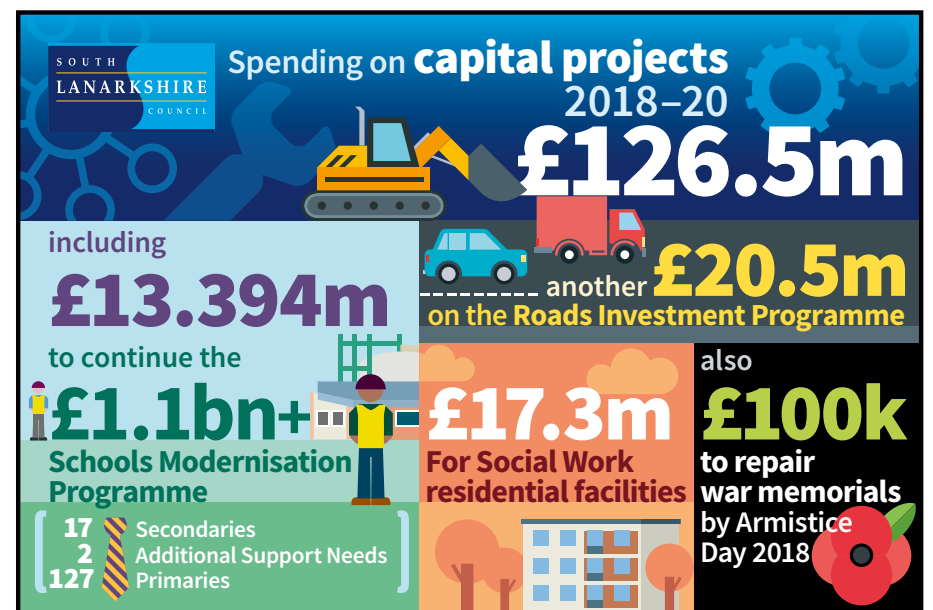
The package included auto enrolment for pupils who are entitled to free school meals and clothing grants. The latter will also rise by 50% to £75.

The package also included a reduced package of savings and efficiencies for 2018/19 totalling £15.245m across the council.

The savings reduced or removed from earlier proposals included reductions in budgets for road surfacing, which will now be maintained in 2018/19, and also libraries, employability programmes and a proposal to remodel Adult and Older People Day Care.

The Council also approved an ambitious £126.478m capital programme for 2018/19 and 2019/20. Among other projects, this will continue the £850m-plus primary schools modernisation programme and the £126m Roads Investment Programme.

**For full details on the budget go to:**  
<https://bit.ly/2l0ba1Z>



As well as the 2018/19 revenue budget, councillors approved an ambitious capital programme on 28 February

## Council committed to reducing use of plastics

**REDUCING the use of plastics, especially single use items such as straws, continues to be a focus for South Lanarkshire Council.**

A council-wide action plan is also being developed which will look at removing single use items completely, or if this is not practical, identify a suitable replacement item which has less of an impact on the environment.

A number of actions have been taken by the council recently, including the removal of all plastic straws from corporate catering venues.

Plastic cutlery has also been removed from the same venues – they now need to be requested by customers.

Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Community and Enterprise Resources Committee, Councillor John Anderson, said: "We have all become increasingly aware of the serious threat posed by plastics to the environment.

"We are determined to take action on this and ensure that, where possible, we ensure that single use items are no longer available."

# Showcase for young people



**LAUNCH:** Minister for Childcare and Early Years Maree Todd, Leader of the council John Ross and Communic18 Ambassador Rachael McCully

## HUNDREDS of primary school pupils from across South Lanarkshire assembled at the council's Hamilton headquarters to officially launch the Year of Young People.

Three events were held on 14 March with the focus firmly on young people. The morning event was for primary schools, the afternoon one for secondaries and the evening event for anyone up to the age of 26.

The council's Youth Learning Services supported the organisation of all three events.

The Scottish Government declared the Year of Young People 2018 as an opportunity for generations to come together and celebrate Scotland's young people. Minister for Early Years and Childcare Maree Todd opened the launch celebrations in South Lanarkshire.

She said: "Year of Young People 2018 is not just about activities and events, it is a real opportunity to give

young people a voice, for generations to work together and to give young people a real mainstream role in decision making."

South Lanarkshire Spokesperson for Young People, Councillor Julia Marrs said: "These three launch events have been a wonderful showcase for the very talented young people that we are lucky to have as part of the South Lanarkshire community.

"The events reflect the aspiration for the whole year, to give young people a platform and encourage older generations to listen to what they have to say, to recognise their many talents and abilities and to support their participation in community life."

Chair of South Lanarkshire Youth Council Reece Harding said: "The Year of Young People (YoYP) is a great opportunity for young people across South Lanarkshire. We are the heart of our communities and YOYP gives us a

unique opportunity to be heard.

"I am also delighted to learn that Scotland is the only country in the world to dedicate a full year to Young People. I hope that other countries adapt this same idea to recognise the importance that young people play in their communities and most importantly democracy."

**For more info go to:**  
[www.facebook.com/SLYoYP2018](https://www.facebook.com/SLYoYP2018) or [twitter: @SL\\_yoyp2018](https://twitter.com/SL_yoyp2018)



**CLIMBING:** Niamh McMillan from Law PS



**PROUD:** Murdo Muircroft (11) piped in the Year of Young People 2018 in South Lanarkshire as the first performer at the launch celebrations

## Young People's Cabinet will help promote democracy

**CHILDREN and young people in South Lanarkshire have been invited to "join" the council, as part of an initiative to promote local democracy.**

At the launch of the area's Year of Young People events, Council Leader John Ross revealed plans to create a Children and Young People's Cabinet, whose members will shadow politicians and council officers.

Councillor Ross said the idea was to mentor a new generation of young people as a sign of the council's commitment to promote engagement in local government.

Cllr Ross said: "The Year of Young People is a fantastic national initiative to celebrate young people and inspire all of Scotland through our children. It aims to give them opportunities to shine locally, nationally and globally.

"Specifically, during the Year of Young People we at the council want to add to the opportunities for young people to learn about, and engage in, the democratic process. That is why we are going to set up a Children and Young People's Cabinet.

"This will involve young people from across the area coming together to see how the decisions are made that affect their lives, and the lives of every local resident. They will work alongside actual councillors and senior officers as they make those decisions.

"They will shadow our Resource chairs and spokespeople, attend group meetings and cabinet meetings, and they will be able to observe committee and full council meetings too."

Councillor Ross said the council would develop the scheme in partnership with young people, with a view to starting the scheme after the council's Summer recess.



## GO AHEAD FOR NEW WALSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

### PLANS for a new £4.4m Walston Primary school have been approved.

South Lanarkshire Council's Planning Committee gave the go-ahead for the replacement campus which will be built on a new site in the village of Elsrickle.

The move from the current traditional school house will allow construction to begin on a larger school fit for 21st century learning.

Access to a 16-space car park will be from the A721, where a pedestrian gate will also be created. Land has also been allocated for a footpath link to a proposed housing site nearby.

Councillor Alistair Fulton, Chair of the committee, said: "This is a significant application, as not only does it mark a new chapter in the lives of this small community, but it marks an important chapter in the Primary Schools Modernisation Programme.

"Over the past ten years, this committee has considered and approved the rebuild or refurbishment of schools across South Lanarkshire, a milestone of which we are all rightly proud.

"As a result, the schools estate we now have is providing tens of thousands of young people with the best possible start in life."

Work on the new school will begin this year with the 32 pupils moving in by summer 2019.

### The proposals include:

- A 1000 sq. metre single storey timber frame building
- Two classrooms
- A nursery class
- Gym hall
- Library and kitchen/dining facilities
- A MUGA pitch



# SNOW PROB STAFF DESP



“Despite the awful weather conditions, those who needed our services continued to receive them.”

**Council Leader John Ross**

**TRUE GRIT:** The council has spread more than 10,000 extra tonnes of grit on our roads than it would in a typical year

## AS the recent bitter cold snap made its way across the country, much of South Lanarkshire shivered under a blanket of snow.

A red weather warning was issued for parts of Scotland for the first time, with police advising not to travel.

Despite the conditions, employees from resources across the council still managed to deliver many vital services – and the gritting crews battling the elements kept main roads moving as the “Beast from the East” swept across the country.

Contingency plans worked well across the area, with all council buildings open, though with depleted numbers because some staff were unable to travel because of the conditions.

Schools were closed for three days when the weather was at its worst, teams from various departments were out in 4x4s delivering meals, and home care workers managed to get support to the most vulnerable in remote areas.

The gritting crews were out 24/7 during the most extreme conditions, using specialist weather information to target the hardest hit areas.

A total of 6,345 tonnes of grit was spread during the week when the “beast from the east” was at its most severe. This meant that more than 45,000 tonnes of grit had been used by the council up to that point – in a typical winter 35,000 tonnes is used.

Bin collections were also impacted by the harsh conditions, with some collections having to be rescheduled. Crews worked tirelessly to clear the backlog and ensure minimum disruption for residents.

School janitors and local communities also went out of their way to ensure pupils could return to

lessons after the three day closures, many of them clearing snow to create paths around their schools.

One example of these everyday heroes was the council gritting crew who helped get paramedics to the home of a little boy who had collapsed in one of our towns which had been worst-hit by the weather.

A fairly unusual request was also dealt with by council staff following a message to our Facebook page. Diane McLeod was faced by snowdrifts up to five feet deep at her home in Auchengray – where she had been looking after her sister Fiona Stevenson’s wedding dress. With only 24 hours to go to the big day Diane was concerned Fiona would be left with no dress for the wedding.

Luckily enough Roads and Transportation Services had staff and equipment in the area and were able to clear a path through to allow a council van to pick up the dress, then deliver it to the bride in Hamilton.

Police also helped out by taking Diane and her family to the hotel they were staying in for the wedding and the happy couple were able to celebrate their big day as planned.

Leader of South Lanarkshire Council, John Ross said: “I would like to thank employees for all the efforts they made to ensure that the council’s services continued to be provided in very trying circumstances.

“Staff from other Resources were helping our roads crews who faced perhaps the most high profile challenges. Many other individuals and teams, particularly in Social Work and other areas, did so much to ensure that the council’s work continued.

“This was a marvellous collective effort which ensured that our road networks were kept open and that, despite the awful weather conditions, those who needed our services continued to receive them, particularly the most vulnerable.”

# BLEM FOR TE WEATHER



**DETERMINATION:** Home care worker Anne Caffie battles through the snow in Biggar (left) and the wedding dress begins its journey as Diane hands it over (below)



The gritters and snow ploughs also helped a specialist health and social care team reach some of the most vulnerable patients in South Lanarkshire.

South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership's (SLHSCP) Integrated Community Support Team (ICST) support people, the majority of whom are older, in their own homes.

Conditions range from those with complex care needs to people with less serious conditions - which could, however, require hospital admission if left untreated.

Marilyn Aitken, SLHSCP's locality manager for the Clydesdale area, explained how the team's vital work was only made possible by the power of partnership working - and heavy plant.

She said: "The council's roads and transportation services worked tirelessly to blaze a trail through the very worst of the snow to ensure our frontline staff, including district nurses and home carers, were able to reach their patients."



## MY GRATITUDE FOR VITAL VISITS



By Tom Brown

**AS a national newspaper journalist, I covered many stories of heroism and outstanding public service. Yet it is the unsung local heroes - most often heroines - who matter most and make the real difference to the lives of others.**

The everyday commitment of South Lanarkshire's home carers, visiting clients in need at all hours whatever the conditions, is too often taken for granted. But their efforts during the recent appalling weather deserve special recognition.

In blizzard conditions on treacherous surfaces when other road-users gave up, these ladies made their routine daily visits in spite of the difficulties they faced.

My wife Marie, a stroke victim, relies on the morning calls from South Lanarkshire home care staff to attend to her and help her get ready for the day ahead.

When she saw from her bedroom window how snowbound our home in Bothwell was and how alarming the conditions were, she said it would be understandable if the carers did not visit.

However, their commitment is such that her regular carers Marlene Beglin and Kay Canning turned up unfailingly every morning, cheerful and considerate as ever.

The same will apply to their colleagues throughout South Lanarkshire who administer to hundreds but given the condition of many of their clients, they will not receive the thanks they deserve.

These visits are vital for so many who cannot help themselves and the caring staff should know their efforts are appreciated.

We have asked South Lanarkshire Council to put on record our admiration and deep gratitude for the efforts of the home care staff and I am sure we speak for many in a similar position who rely on these daily visits from our local heroines.

**Tom Brown is an award-winning journalist who worked for the Daily Express and the Daily Record, among other national newspapers.**



## First Red Cross worker killed in active service honoured with sculpture

**HAMILTON** man John McIntosh was the first Red Cross worker to be killed on active service.

And now, 148 years after his death on active service, a bronze bust of John has been unveiled in the Hamilton Town House Library.

The new bust in the library has been gifted by sculptor Frank Casey, who is originally from Hamilton but now lives in St Albans. Mr Casey said: "I had actually been researching the story of another Red Cross volunteer in another war when I

came across a mention of John McIntosh. There was very little information but it did say that, like me, he was from Hamilton so I was intrigued.

"I contacted Low Parks Museum and Hamilton Town House Library and the staff there helped uncover a wealth of information and a quite tragic family story that ends with John's widowed mother outliving all her children and the McIntosh line ending with her."

Councillor David Watson, the chair of South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, said: "We are very grateful to Frank for

creating this tribute to John McIntosh and for generously gifting it to be displayed in the library.

"John McIntosh showed remarkable heroism to voluntarily travel from Hamilton to a European war, not to fight but to deliver vital medical aid to the wounded. His story is all too tragically short but the message it carries about human spirit resonates down through the years."



**HONOURED:** Librarian Scott Man, Councillor Watson, Sculptor Frank Casey and his assistant Laura Robain

# 'WHEELY' GOOD WAY TO SHED ISOLATION



**ON THE ROAD:** Charles Lamburt, Councillor McGuigan, David White and Jim Gallacher as the shed stopped off in Hamilton

**AN innovative programme aimed at tackling isolation and loneliness in older men recently took to the road in South Lanarkshire.**

'Men's shed' provides opportunities for older men to socialise, build confidence and get involved in workshop activities as part of a project designed to reduce feelings of loss, isolation and loneliness.

Now, in what is a Scottish first, and thanks to £117,000 from the Big Lottery Fund, the 'mobile men's shed' has spent three weeks travelling through communities bringing that programme even closer to those who need it.

Cllr Jim McGuigan, South Lanarkshire's Spokesperson for Older People, was one of the first to visit the refurbished mobile library when it stopped off at Hamilton Accies football stadium. He is full of praise for the initiative: "The Men's Shed model has proven particularly successful so far at engaging with individuals who might traditionally be seen as hard to reach.

"And while we are delighted with

progress to date, the aim of the mobile shed is to take that one step further. As the first council in the country to launch our shed on wheels, we are excited about the opportunities it has given to support communities to establish their own static sheds that will be there for men long after the mobile shed has gone."

Cllr Gladys Miller, Chair of the Finance and Corporate Resources Committee, stopped off to visit the refurbished mobile library when it pulled in to John Wright Sports Centre in East Kilbride.

She added: "Becoming a member of a Men's Shed provides a safe and busy environment where men can meet in an atmosphere of friendship. And, importantly, there is no pressure. Men can just come and have a chat and a cuppa if that is all they're looking for.

"The response we've had since taking the mobile shed on the road has been amazing – people everywhere seem to think it is such a good idea."

Paul Creechan, Development Officer

for Men's Shed, is delighted to have such a unique way to promote the vital programme.

He explained: "The Men's Shed programme began in Australia in response to research which highlighted that most men don't talk about feelings and emotions. This can result in older men being less healthy than women, drinking more, taking more risks and suffering more from isolation, loneliness and depression.

"We encourage people to go along to the existing Men's Sheds to try it out, and we can also advise others on starting one up in areas where there isn't one running yet, so there are ample opportunities for people to take advantage of this really popular way to get out of the house, enjoy a hobby and mix with great people."

**For more information about the project contact the Seniors Together office on 01698 454105 or email [seniorstogether@southlanarkshire.gov.uk](mailto:seniorstogether@southlanarkshire.gov.uk)**

## Classic Disney singalong fun

**THE newest Disney classic is stopping off at Lanark for a special interactive screening – just in time for the Easter break.**

As part of a national UK tour, Beauty and the Beast will be stopping off at Lanark Memorial Hall On Saturday, 7 April 2017.

Following on from the phenomenon of Sing-a-long-a Frozen, this unique, interactive screening of another Disney favourite, with live host, free prop bag, fancy dress and lyrics on screen, rolls into town for one day only.

The film is full of wonderful songs from "Be our Guest", "Belle", "Gaston" and not forgetting the "Beauty and The Beast", making it an ideal chance to sing your heart out with hundreds of other people. It's the formula that has made the Sing-a-long-a phenomenon so popular around the world.

Sing-a-long-a Beauty and the Beast is an irresistible celebration of this wonderful family film, full of tears, laughter and magic moments.

The live action film was a box office smash and features Emma Watson as Belle and Luke Evans and Dan Stevens as Gaston and the Beast respectively.

Tickets are still available at £15 full price, £10 concession, £42 for a family of 4 and £33 for a family of three. Call 01555 667999 or visit [www.sllcboxoffice.co.uk](http://www.sllcboxoffice.co.uk) to book yours now.

## Provost Twitter account goes live

**A NEW social media account has been set up to bring you the latest news on South Lanarkshire's Provost, Councillor Ian McAllan.**

The Provost's Twitter account will feature details of his latest visits, including Diamond Wedding Anniversaries, 100th birthday celebrations, official functions and much more.

Provost McAllan said: "It's important that we use every tool available to us to keep in touch with the public.

"Social media is obviously one way of doing exactly that, and I look forward to being able to give people a small insight into what being a Provost is all about.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed my time as Provost so far and it has been an absolute privilege to travel the length and breadth of South Lanarkshire, meeting people from all walks of life and finding out a little bit more about what makes our area such a great place to

live, work and have fun in."

You can follow the Provost's account by going to Twitter and searching for: [@SLCprovost](https://twitter.com/SLCprovost)



# BANKHEAD PRIMARY BOOK PLACE IN HISTORY

Every pupil in school is signed up for local library

**BANKHEAD Primary School in Rutherglen has become the very first school in South Lanarkshire to have every child registered with their local library.**

To mark this fantastic achievement a special event was held in the school and each pupil was presented with their very own library card so that they could borrow their favourite book in time for World Book Day.

Councillor Katy Loudon, Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Education Resources Committee, said: "The children at Bankhead Primary have certainly risen to the First Minister's Reading Challenge and there is most definitely a positive reading culture within the school. By working in partnership with the local library they have managed to achieve something truly remarkable.

"We are all very proud of this achievement. It means everyone in Bankhead Primary can enjoy the wonderful resources on offer in the library and all the pupils will be able to develop a lifelong love of books and reading. Well done to all the school and library staff involved and long may this fantastic partnership continue."

Primary 2 pupil Layla Bradley was super excited to get her new library card. She said: "I like reading all types of story books and I look forward to going to the library more now that I have my very own card. My brother Sam and I love reading and this will encourage us to go more often to borrow new books."



**DELIGHT:** Pupil Layla loves reading books (top), Councillor Loudon and Bankhead head teacher Gerry Hamill with the pupils (left)



## New £10m school and community facility in Strathaven nears completion

**A NEW joint facility located on the site of the former St Patrick's Primary School is scheduled to be completed in the Spring.**

At a cost of over £10m, the School and Community Facility is being constructed by South Lanarkshire Council Building Services, and will replace the previous St Patrick's Primary School, current Ballgreen Hall and Strathaven Library.

The name of the community element of the facility has recently been announced as Avondale Community Wing.

Individual room names were developed in liaison with the local community. They are Powmillon, Kype, Calder and Goodsburn, which are all bodies of water that run in the Avon.

Responding to the wider needs of the local community, the multi-use centre will offer:

- A new community hall and lesser hall supported with kitchen and bar facilities. The adjoining school gym hall can open up to form a much larger hall totalling over 350m<sup>2</sup>
- A new innovative library offer where technology sits comfortably next to the more traditional book lending service. With an exciting children's area suitable for lots of fun activities or quiet reading as well as a comfortable seating area and coffee offer there is something for everyone
- Flexible community rooms suitable for a variety of activities, such as training, meetings and craft activities
- The project will also complete the car parking and landscaping to the front and additional car parking on Cochrane Street.

Bookings will shortly be taken for forthcoming events and existing users of Ballgreen Hall have already been contacted to discuss their requirements for the new facility.

**Any enquiries please phone: 01357 521167**

# New office development to bring thousands of jobs

**AT least 12,000 jobs could be created at a new industrial estate at Shawfield.**

Magenta at Clyde Gateway is set to become one of the UK's largest office locations, set on 27 acres next to the River Clyde and M74 motorway network.

The £9m Red Tree Magenta – the first building at Magenta – is currently under construction by contractors Robertson, and is due for completion in summer 2018.

Investment funding is being provided jointly by Clyde Gateway, the Scottish Government and South Lanarkshire Council.

Red Tree Magenta is a four-storey, 40,000 square foot building which will offer Grade-A business suites ranging in size from 100 to 7,125 square feet. It is aimed at encouraging the growth of SMEs and collaborative working and marks the third Red Tree business incubator in the Clyde Gateway area, joining those at Rutherglen and Bridgeton.

The business suites will be attractive to companies in the media, communications, IT, training and engineering sectors. When fully occupied, Red Tree Magenta has the capacity to create 250 new jobs. It will benefit from superfast broadband and will offer up to a

gigabit of bandwidth. As well as the business suites, the building will also feature a conference room, meeting rooms, breakout spaces, kitchen areas, a café and a 70-space car park - offering accommodation to suit the needs of a solo business looking for desk rental, right up to a full office.

Ian Manson, Chief Executive of Clyde Gateway, said: "This £9 million investment marks the beginning of what will be a remarkable and eye-catching regeneration of Shawfield."

Desk rental starts at £22 per week. For more information contact [www.redtreebusinesssuites.com](http://www.redtreebusinesssuites.com) or telephone 0141 276 1573.



**Impressive:** How the new building will look when completed



## Former Blairbeth Golf Club plan drives forward

**ALLOTMENTS, a mountain bike track and natural habitat areas are all included in plans for the former Blairbeth Golf Course which have been approved.**

Detailed proposals for the redevelopment of the site as an urban park won the backing of South Lanarkshire Council's Planning Committee.

Chair of the Planning Committee Councillor Alistair Fulton said: "These plans for the Blairbeth site were developed following consultation with the local community and reflect an imaginative

approach to delivering real benefits for the community and environment.

"Transforming the former golf course into a natural parkland, planted with native species, will be a positive step to support biodiversity and to create new opportunities for outdoor activity while the inclusion of allotments and a junior mountain bike track will encourage community involvement in the site."

The 18.6 hectare site has been underused since Blairbeth Golf Club closed in 2015.

The redevelopment will be supported by funding from Scottish Natural Heritage through the European Regional Development Fund Green Infrastructure Programme.

Consultations on the future use of the site included a number of public events and stakeholder workshops which saw widespread local support for improvement works.

A further public consultation on the naming of the site is now planned.

# MUM'S PRAISE FOR AUTISM 'LIFELINE'

**A SERVICE providing support for people with autism and their families in South Lanarkshire has been described as a 'lifeline' as it nears its second anniversary.**

The Autism Resources Co-ordination Hub (ARCH) in Hamilton, established in May 2016, offers a range of supports and can signpost people to specialist services.

But one mum who uses the service, run by South Lanarkshire Council, has described how the community-focused ethos of ARCH has proved to be life-changing.

"When my daughter Rebecca (11) was diagnosed with autism in 2016 it was an extremely emotional time," explained Michelle Graham from Larkhall.

"There's a sense of desolation. You have so many worries for your child and although there is a general awareness of autism, it's very different when it affects someone so close to you. You feel no one really understands.

"Entering a service where people, from the staff, volunteers and other families, have complete empathy has been a lifeline for me and many others."

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects how people perceive the world and interact with others. ARCH provides support to everyone affected by autism throughout their lifespan.

Since its inception, ARCH has been focused on facilitating the development of services in South Lanarkshire



**EMPATHY:** Michelle is delighted with the support for her and daughter Rebecca

communities - many of which are delivered by communities themselves - alongside partners in the statutory, private and third sectors.

Parent Carer support groups, for example, are held on a weekly basis and are delivered collaboratively between parent carer volunteers, Lanarkshire Carers Centre and ARCH staff who deliver guidance, signposting and support. Times are scheduled for both mornings and evenings to suit caring and employment commitments

Michelle continued: "I remember the first time I walked into the ARCH centre. One of the first things we did was an introduction to autism course which equipped me with a sound understanding of how Rebecca was processing things.

"That dispelled that sense of being in the great unknown. There's many groups and meetings where you can be signposted into various health and

care supports. But simply being around other people who are living similar experiences is extremely reaffirming at - whatever stage of the journey people are on."

South Lanarkshire Council's Ramon Hutchingson, Co-ordinator of ARCH, said: "We're listening and being informed by a genuine engagement with the autism community in South Lanarkshire. From that grassroots, bottom-up feedback we're building capacity around those very needs in close collaboration with a spectrum of agencies and organisations.

"This service has been about people - and will continue to be about people as we reach our two year milestone."

Liam Purdie, Head of Children and Justice Services of South Lanarkshire Council said: "ARCH is a compelling example of our commitment to promoting greater community involvement in the provision of services."



**LISTENING:** Ramon Hutchingson from ARCH

## How do I access ARCH?

All you need to be is a South Lanarkshire resident who is affected by autism, either directly as a parent carer or sibling. You can access the ARCH service simply phoning 0344 225 1111 or coming into the centre on Reid Street, Hamilton ML3 0RQ, for an informal chat. For more information on community involvement and SLHSCP's Building and Celebrating Communities Programme, visit [www.slhscp.org.uk](http://www.slhscp.org.uk)

## LIBRARY OFFERS SUPPORT



**PEOPLE affected by cancer in South Lanarkshire now have access to cancer support on their doorstep, following the opening of the new Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service in Hamilton Library.**

Macmillan Cancer Support is working in partnership with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture to provide much needed support services in libraries throughout South Lanarkshire for people affected by cancer. Hamilton Town House Library is the first drop in service to open, with East Kilbride following later in the year.

The service will be run by a group of highly trained volunteers who can provide emotional and practical advice, access to information materials on various types of cancer and its treatment, or simply a listening ear.

As well as specialist cancer information and emotional support, the service can refer people onto other services, including benefits advice, complementary therapies and counselling.

Macmillan's Head of Services in Scotland, Janice Preston said: "A cancer diagnosis brings with it all kinds of questions and uncertainty for patients, their families and friends.

"It affects every area of people's lives, and having access to information and emotional support at this stressful time is vital. Being able to access services locally is also important. Working with South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture is allowing us to deliver this and without partnerships like this we wouldn't be able to provide this much needed support to people affected by cancer locally.

"It is also thanks to the hard work and dedication of our supporters in Lanarkshire who raise so much money for us that we are able to introduce such vital services and we're incredibly grateful for their continued support".