

VIEW

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Clackmannanshire Council
www.clacksweb.org.uk

New political leadership at the Council

Clackmannanshire Council has a new political administration, a new Leader and its first female Provost.

At a special meeting of the Council in January, Councillor Tina Murphy was elected as Provost, Councillor Gary Womersley was elected Leader, with Councillor Mark English elected to the role of Deputy Leader. Councillor Janis Paterson was elected Deputy Provost.



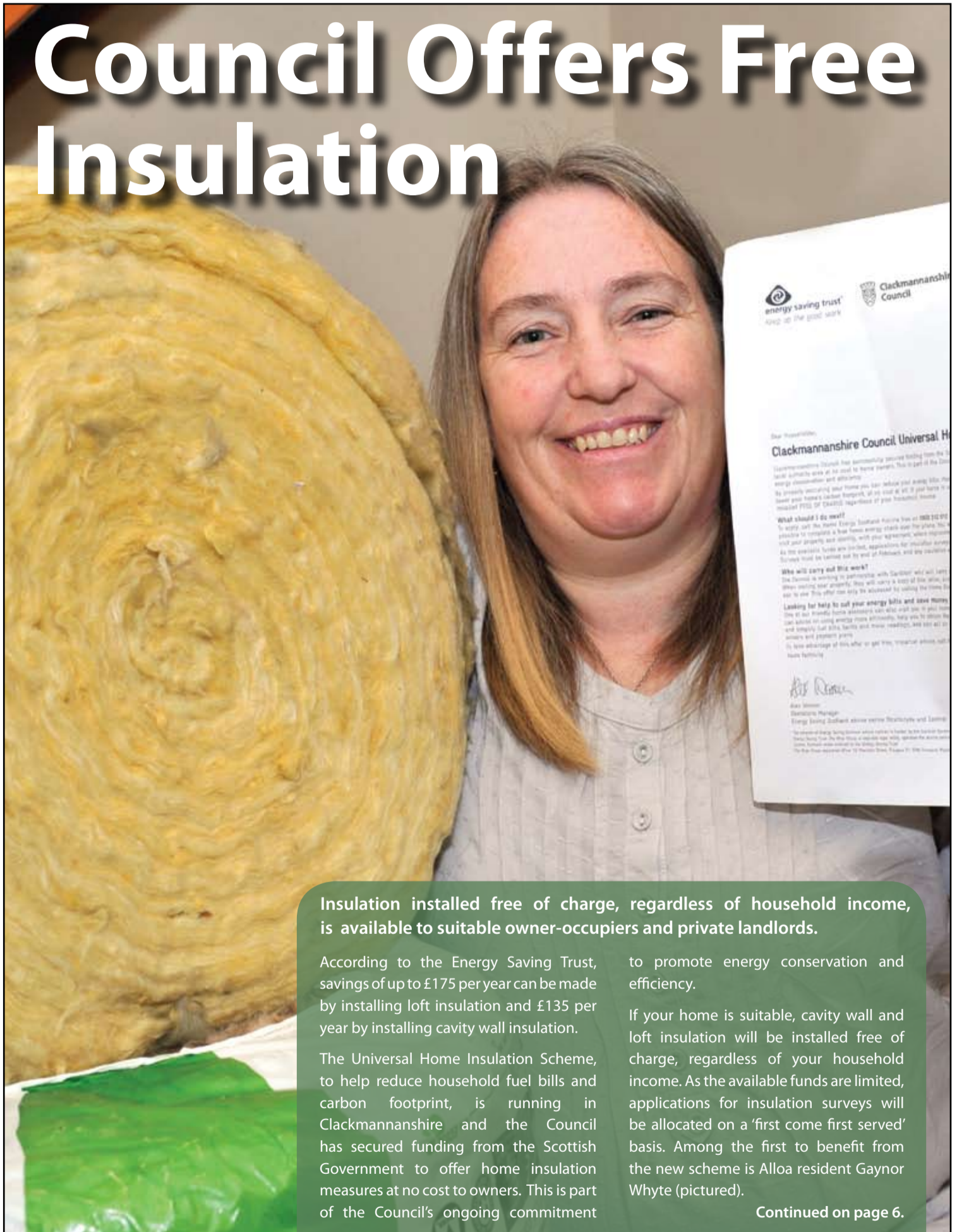
Cllr Womersley

The meeting also saw changes to the Council's portfolio holders, with Councillor Mark English appointed portfolio holder for Inclusion, Councillor Irene Hamilton appointed portfolio holder for Regeneration and Councillor Craig Holden portfolio holder for Partnership. Councillor Eddie Carrick remains as portfolio holder for Sustainability.

Council Leader Gary Womersley said: "I am delighted to lead a new administration at Clackmannanshire Council.

"Our priorities will be good financial stewardship, robust governance and, above all, a strong sense of ambition and long-term strategy to further the interests of all residents of Clackmannanshire. I look forward to working with all across the county to move the area forward."

Council Offers Free Insulation



Insulation installed free of charge, regardless of household income, is available to suitable owner-occupiers and private landlords.

According to the Energy Saving Trust, savings of up to £175 per year can be made by installing loft insulation and £135 per year by installing cavity wall insulation.

The Universal Home Insulation Scheme, to help reduce household fuel bills and carbon footprint, is running in Clackmannanshire and the Council has secured funding from the Scottish Government to offer home insulation measures at no cost to owners. This is part of the Council's ongoing commitment

to promote energy conservation and efficiency.

If your home is suitable, cavity wall and loft insulation will be installed free of charge, regardless of your household income. As the available funds are limited, applications for insulation surveys will be allocated on a 'first come first served' basis. Among the first to benefit from the new scheme is Alloa resident Gaynor Whyte (pictured).

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Youth spaces p7

How to vote on 3rd May

The voting system

Single Transferable Vote.

Who am I voting for?

Three or four councillors to represent your ward on Clackmannanshire Council.

How to vote

Always read the instructions for filling in the ballot paper carefully, even if you have voted before.

The ballot paper lists the name of each candidate along with their party name, if appropriate, party logo and their address.

Rank the candidates in order of preference. Put a 1 next to your first choice candidate, a 2 next to your second choice, a 3 next to your third choice, and so on. You can rank as few or as many candidates as you like.

If you make a mistake then you can ask the polling staff to give you another ballot paper.

Who is elected?

To be elected a candidate must reach a set amount of votes known as the quota.

The votes are counted electronically in stages. In the first stage only first preferences are counted. Anyone who reaches the quota is elected. Any votes received over the quota are not needed by the elected candidate and so are transferred to the second preference. If not enough candidates have then reached the quota, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated and all of their votes are passed to the next preference on the ballot papers.

This process is repeated until three or four candidates have been elected.

Did you know?

Although there have been changes to the make-up of the Ochil constituency, we've maintained higher voter turnout levels than the rest of Scotland and the UK for the last three elections. In 2010 there was a 67% turnout in the Ochil constituency (64% in Scotland and 65% in the UK as a whole). Men are slightly more likely to vote than women (66% of men voted in 2010 and 64% of women, across the UK). The statistics also suggest that the older you are, the more likely you are to vote, with 76% of over 65 year-olds voting across the UK in 2010, in contrast to only 44% of 18 to 24 year-olds.

Survey reveals residents are happy and healthy

The Clackmannanshire Alliance has released the results of its regular Clacks 1000 survey, revealing that more people feel Clackmannanshire is a good place to live. 81% said they were satisfied with Clackmannanshire as a place to live, up from 76% in 2006. Furthermore 89% said they were satisfied with their own neighbourhoods. Some of the things that residents are not happy about in their communities are litter and rubbish, young people hanging around with nothing to do and speeding traffic.

Over three-quarters (78%) rated their experience of public services in Clackmannanshire as either 'very good' or 'fairly good', with high levels of satisfaction for GP services and hospitals, schools, libraries, police, refuse collection and recycling and street lighting.

The latest survey of 1000 panel members covered topics such as communities in Clackmannanshire, elections, community safety, health and Clackmannanshire's image.

In relation to perceptions of Clackmannanshire, very positive views were recorded among panel members for improving its accessibility (66%), providing good opportunities for community-based adult learning (56%) and being a cost effective living and business location (54%).

There has also been an improvement in the perception of panel members, particularly in relation to Clackmannanshire as a safe community (up from 16% in 2009 to 46% in 2011) and a cost effective living and business location (up from 31% in 2009 to 54% in 2011), and the way that public agencies work together

in Clackmannanshire (up from 14% in 2009 to 30% in 2011).

A high proportion of panel members said they feel either 'very safe' or 'quite safe' (94%) walking in their neighbourhood during the day. Fewer residents in Clackmannanshire are fearful about becoming a victim of crime compared with last year, particularly those in the most populated communities in Clackmannanshire.

Panel members' attitudes to their current health and wellbeing are very positive, with the vast majority (87%) describing their health as 'good' or 'fairly good'. In 2009, almost three quarters of panel members (71%) described their general mental or emotional wellbeing as either 'very happy' or 'fairly happy'. By 2011, this has risen significantly to 85%.

Councillor Craig Holden, partnership portfolio holder, said, 'I'd like to thank the panel members who have consistently taken the time to let us have their views. This encouraging result shows that moves made by this Council, the local health services, Central Scotland Police and our other partners to improve neighbourhoods are having an effect.'

Views from the Clacks 1000 are used by the Clackmannanshire Alliance to help decide what needs to be done to improve public services in Clackmannanshire and to measure what has worked well over the past year. All partners that make up the Alliance use the views and opinions in the Clacks 1000 to shape how public services are delivered to Clackmannanshire's communities.

Full results of the latest survey, and all previous surveys, are available on Clacksweb.



(left to right) Nicole Mutter, Michael Thomson and Kayleigh Murphy from Alva Academy demonstrating the STV voting method

Will you be able to vote on 3rd May?

The new Register of Electors was published on 1st December 2011 and you can only vote in the council elections if you are included in the register.

Brian Byrne, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), has advised that the Clackmannanshire electorate has fallen by 1797, from 39,042 to 37,245 on 1st December.

These 1797 electors have been removed from the register and have lost their right to vote.

If you didn't respond to the annual canvas or have had a change of address or eligible electors at your address contact him NOW to make sure you are still registered and will be able to vote for your local councillors on 3rd May. There is still time to register as changes are made each month to reflect additions and deletions from addresses, changes in name etc.

If you are unsure whether you are registered you can check the copy of the local register in your library or telephone 01786 892289.

Other Ways to Vote

Around 11% of electors vote by post, but research shows that the main reason electors didn't vote on polling days was that they were too busy.

Anyone can choose to vote by post rather than in person at their allocated polling station. Postal voters receive their ballot papers approximately eight days before polling day and have until the polls close to return their ballot papers to the Returning Officer (they even have the option of returning the completed forms to any polling station in their area on polling day.)

Make sure you don't lose your vote. Apply NOW to register or to vote by post or by proxy if you are unable to vote in person.

Forms are available in local libraries as well as to download from www.saa.gov.uk/central

Telephone enquiries to 01786 892289, fax 01786 892255, email clackmannanshire@centralscotland-vjb.gov.uk

Know your ward

There are 5 wards in Clackmannanshire:

- Ward 1**
Clackmannanshire West (Cambus, Tullibody & Menstrie)
- Ward 2**
Clackmannanshire North (Alva and Tillicoultry)
- Ward 3**
Clackmannanshire Central (The Whins and Gaberston areas of Alloa, Sauchie, Fishcross and Devon Village)
- Ward 4**
Clackmannanshire South (Alloa)
- Ward 5**
Clackmannanshire East (Clackmannan, Dollar and Muckhart)

The last council elections were held on 3 May 2007.

At the last election, the method of voting in the council elections changed to a form of proportional representation known as Single Transferable Vote (STV). With the introduction of STV, larger multi-member wards have been created which are served by several councillors, each ward electing either three or four councillors for a term of four years.

Clackmannannan Primary School

Casting the net on PC learning

All 33 pupils in Class P7 at Clackmannannan Primary School have been given an Intel netbook to use in class and at home to enhance their learning in different areas of the curriculum.

The year-long pilot project, investigating the impact of one-to-one learning, is a joint venture between Clackmannanshire Council, Intel and education software company, Promethean.

The school's head teacher Janette Wiczorek, said: "This is an exciting project for the pupils and the aim is to measure whether access to a personal learning device, in this case an Intel Classmate Netbook PC, improves educational attainment, and pupil engagement.

"All evidence shows that one-to-one learning vastly improves pupil motivation, involvement and attitude, resulting in a more enjoyable and productive classroom environment. The P7 project combined with a Curriculum For Excellence and Glow (the national intranet for

schools) will give pupils access to one of, if not the most, advanced educational platforms in the world."

Councillor Mark English, inclusion portfolio holder, added: "The Council takes great pride in its aspiration to be recognised for our innovative use of ICT in schools and in particular as one of the leaders in wireless networking. It is therefore very rewarding to be approached by the Scottish Government to partner Intel and Promethean and take this project forward."

Tim Hatch from Intel, who is leading on the project, said: "We are really excited about working with the local authority and the children at Clackmannannan Primary school. ICT in the classroom is changing so much and the way that children interact with technology is changing even faster. Youngsters use technology in their lives at home, they communicate with friends on personal devices and they expect that same level of access in school. The aim of this pilot is to understand how the Intel Classmate PC can be an integral part of the curriculum delivery and have real tangible positive outcomes to their education across all subjects and at the same time foster collaborative and research based skills



that they will need in their adult life."

Stuart Fraser, Promethean's Head of Scottish Business, commented; "It is a great pleasure to be working on this project which we believe will increase productivity and engagement within the classroom. For children who have grown up with technology it is natural for them to bring these skills into the classroom and we expect great results from the use of this interactive technology.

"Virtually all jobs available in the future will require the mastery of information technologies. Scotland's ability to compete in a global economy will be predicated upon the country's commitment to educating, training and re-training a highly skilled workforce. It is hoped that by taking part in this project we will gain valuable insight into ways in which we can ensure our children leave school with the 21st Century skills necessary to succeed in today's world."

Did you know?

Improvements like this will assist schools in increasing the percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more level 4 standard grades, which was 76% in both 2009-10 and 2010-11, though this was slightly below the target of 78%, which is also the Scottish average.



Stars of Education sought for national acclaim



People across Clackmannanshire are being called upon to help find the county's brightest education stars who are worthy of recognition at the Scottish Education Awards 2012.

The awards, which celebrate hard work and innovation in Scottish classrooms, were launched in December.

The awards are open to all publicly funded schools, including secondary, primary, nursery and special schools. There are also categories to recognise and reward the dedication of teachers, headteachers and support staff across Scotland.

This year there are a number of new categories including the Active Nation Award, Parents are Partners in Learning Award and Gaelic Language and Culture in Learning Award.

Councillor Mark English, inclusion portfolio holder, said: "I am particularly proud that this council aspires for education services across Clackmannanshire to be recognised for some very innovative and creative ways of achieving improvements in pupil engagement, motivation and attitude which result in a more enjoyable and productive classroom environment.

"These Awards are a fantastic opportunity for us to celebrate the hard work, innovation and excellence of standards of schools, teachers, headteachers and school communities across the country. I know that people across

Clackmannanshire will get behind this campaign and I have every confidence that there will be no shortage of nominations for our schools and individual members of staff to achieve further recognition in the Scottish Education Awards 2012."

Do you know a local school that shines within the community or an exemplary teacher who motivates and nurtures pupils to become confident learners? If so, this is the opportunity to ensure that deserving schools and education stars from Clackmannanshire are recognised.

For further information and to make a nomination visit www.scottisheducationawards.co.uk or monitor the progress of the awards by visiting <http://www.engageforeducation.org/> or following @engagefore on twitter.

Nominations close on 2 March.

Feel Safe and Secure at Home

Clackmannanshire Doorstep Crime Partnership is reminding residents to stay safe and secure in their homes this winter and to only answer your door if you are sure of who is on your doorstep. The Partnership's message is 'Safe and Secure, Open when Sure'. The Partnership aims to raise awareness and give people confidence in their home and control over who they answer the door to and allow into their home.



The Partnership suggests that you look out a window to see who is there and use a spy-hole or door chain if fitted and only answer the door if you are sure. Every stranger should be treated with caution and if you are suspicious about a caller then call the police. Always remember that doorstep criminals may appear plausible and persuasive and may claim to need help in some way. If you are unsure of a caller's identity, don't let them in. It isn't rude to keep unknown callers out and genuine companies will never pressure you into letting them into your home.

Some examples that Trading Standards have received complaints about are people claiming to be officers from the council, the police or a utility company such as the gas board. It is important that you always ask for identification. Identification can be checked by phoning the organisation that the person claims to be from. You should always look up the phone number yourself and do not rely on a number given to you by the person on your doorstep. And again if you are suspicious do not let them into your home.

Another common complaint is workmen claiming that urgent work is required on your house, such as the renewal of roof tiles. If this happens, then always seek a second opinion and remember that just because this person knocking at your door has highlighted an issue, doesn't mean that they have to be the person to fix it.

Scam emails and telephone calls are also an increasing problem. Always remember not to give out personal details including passwords and usernames. More information, including how to register with the telephone preference service, can be found in the booklet that the Partnership has produced. The booklet also gives general advice on staying safe in your home and useful contacts such as Care and Repair. Copies of the booklet are available at Council Offices, libraries or by contacting Lindsay McNeil, Trading Standards on 01786 443067 or email mcneill@stirling.gov.uk

New school for Alloa West

Plans for a £8.7 million new primary school for Alloa West are being developed.

The new school will be built at Redwell and will house pupils from St John's and Claremont Primary Schools.

The Council has been allocated funding of £4 million from the Scottish Future's Trust for the new building and is currently working on a project brief for the new campus prior to appointing a contractor to design and build the school.

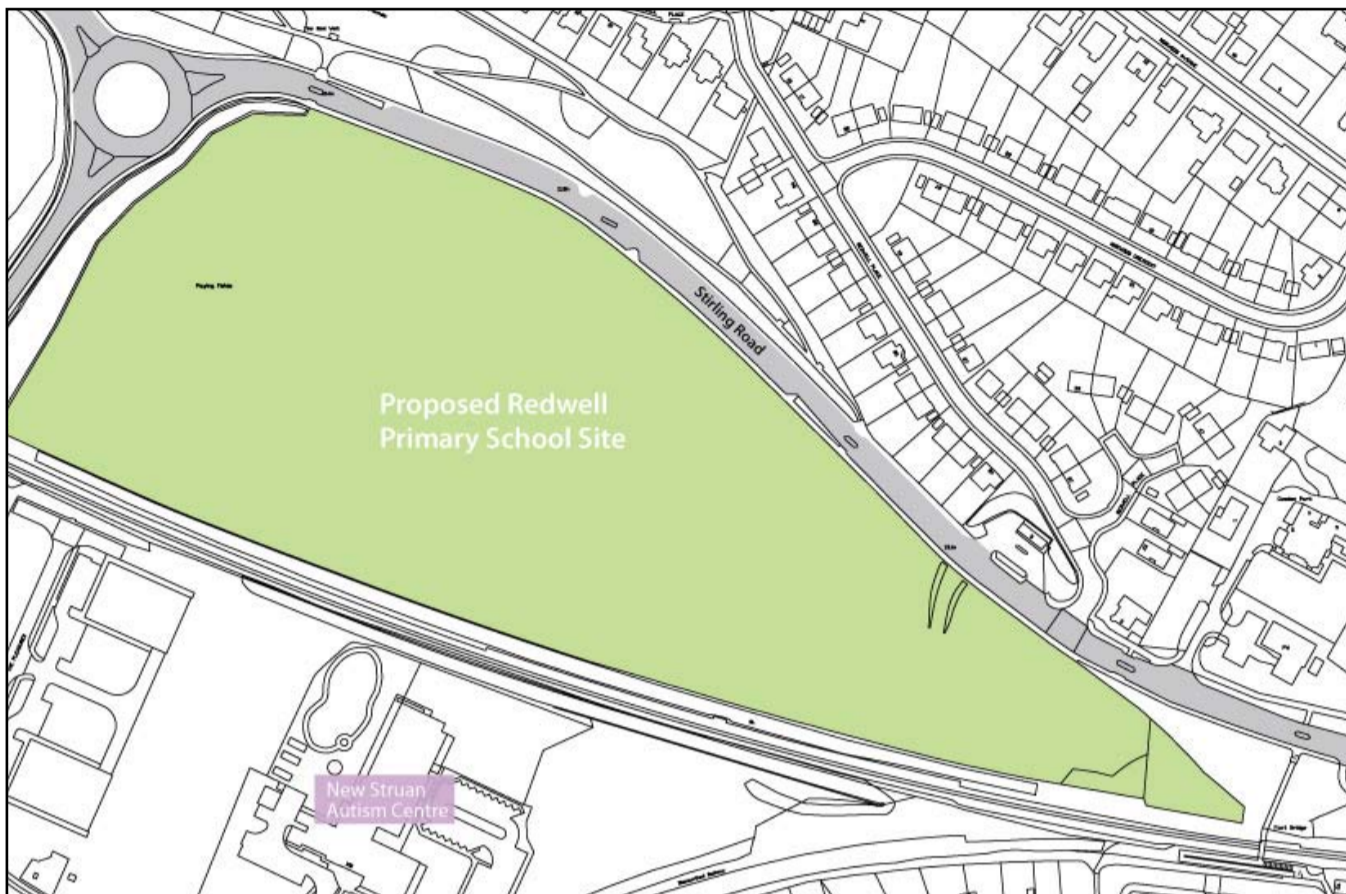
During November in-service days, staff at both schools embarked on initial workshops to help shape the new school. Pupils, parents and a range of Council services will be participating in activities over the coming months to help shape the project brief and inform the contractors of any specific requirements.

Councillor Mark English, inclusion portfolio holder, said: "Work will begin on site in

spring 2013 and construction will take about 14 months. While this construction work progresses, the existing St John's and Claremont schools will continue to be maintained and repairs made.

"The new school will provide educational benefit to the maximum number of pupils in Alloa West. It will allow for the very effective implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence by making use of flexible learning areas, indoors and out, and promoting interdisciplinary learning across stages and areas of the schools."

Staff from St John's and Claremont have visited a newly built merged primary school in Midlothian and similar visits will be offered to parents to help them envisage what the new Alloa school will be like.



Consultation about the identity of the new combined school will also be undertaken.

Alloa Campus Ideal for Community Computer Learning

Forth Valley College's new Alloa Campus has inspired three local residents to learn how to login, become keen on the keyboard and get interested in the internet.

Hawkhill residents Jane Grzebien (46), Albert McLure (57) and Liz Elliott (45) have been attending the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) basic computer course at the college since September and they are gradually getting to grips with the world of IT.

All three work closely with the Hawkhill Community Association (HCA), but were previously wary of computers to such an extent that they all claim they couldn't even turn one on. Now they are working through the course at their own pace and looking forward to exploring the internet when they return in the New Year.

Jane, who works as an administrator and a cleaner at the HCA, said: "The course has been ideal for us. It has helped me because I am more confident around computers now. It means I am able to keep in touch with my daughter who works as a mental health nurse in Cardiff

via e-mail and that saves on phone bills. I would definitely recommend it to other local residents and an added advantage is that this great campus is sitting on our doorstep."

Gail Harris, FVC Associate Principal with responsibility for the Alloa Campus, said: "Jane, Bert and Liz are a real inspiration and I am proud of them for starting and sticking with the ECDL, particularly as they were complete novices around computers.

"The local community of Hawkhill and the wider residents of Alloa have been very supportive of our new state-of-the-art campus and it's great that they are taking advantage of this excellent facility and the range of part-time and evening courses we offer."

For information on courses available please call 0845 634 4444 or visit www.forthvalley.ac.uk



(From left to right) Liz, Bert and Jane are much more confident after studying on the course.

Cochrane Hall Transformation Complete



The £344,000 refurbishment of Alva's popular Cochrane Hall is complete.

The extensive refurbishment programme means the future of the Hall as a community facility is secured in the long-term for the people of the Hillfoots.

The refurbishment started with the building's exterior and included repairs which will prolong the Hall's lifespan and which have improved its appearance. A total of 17 windows have been replaced, meeting with Historic Scotland's requests, and the entrance doors have been overhauled. Repairs have also been carried out to the roof.

Internally the improvements include the Hall being rewired and a performance standard lighting and sound system has been installed. Two large, wall-mounted televisions have also been put up and the acoustics have been improved. We have invested in a modern, efficient heating system and new fire and security alarms have been fitted. A new office has been created, all the toilets have been upgraded, the kitchen has been upgraded and new toilets have been created in the Green Room. The floor of the main hall has been sanded, repaired and revarnished and linings

for a badminton court have been applied. The Hall has been redecorated throughout. CCTV has also been installed.

The work was carried out by local company Marshall Construction following a competitive tendering process.

The Hall is well-used by the local community, and the first event in the newly refurbished hall was a Hogmanay party.

Councillor Eddie Carrick, sustainability portfolio holder, said: "We consulted the local community before carrying out this refurbishment and I think hall users will be delighted with the improvements. This refurbishment ensures that this beautiful hall can benefit the community for many decades to come."

Alva Community Council have given the refurbishment the thumbs up and representative Dorothy Harvey said: "This is a job well done. The colours and lighting are beautiful. The hall looks far more spacious now and I hope it will be well used."

To book the Hall call us on 213131 or email leisurebookings@clacks.gov.uk

Clackmannanshire set to welcome Olympic Torch Relay



The Olympic Flame will be carried through Alloa by Torchbearers on Wednesday 13 June during the London 2012 Olympic Torch Relay.

It is hoped that people of all ages from across Clackmannanshire will turn out in force to welcome the Olympic Flame, share in the excitement of the Relay, and celebrate the achievements of the Torchbearers. The Council is working with local community groups and businesses to ensure that this is a memorable day for Clackmannanshire.

The Games open on 27 July and in the build-up to the start of the event, the Olympic Torch Relay will make a 70-day journey around the UK, with the Flame, representing peace, unity and friendship, carried by 8,000 inspirational Torchbearers.

Provost Tina Murphy said, "Everyone here is delighted that we will be welcoming the Olympic Flame to Alloa and I hope the people of Clackmannanshire will grasp this opportunity to witness the spectacle of the Olympic Torch

Relay, be part of this historic occasion and enjoy the fun and excitement of the build-up to the Games.

"It's also an ideal chance for local business to capitalise and I hope they will make the most of the opportunities that getting involved could bring."

PHOTO: Alva Academy pupils prepare to welcome the Olympic torch

Ochils Landscape Partnership gets going

The Ochils Landscape Partnership, which is a partnership project of 20 local organisations aiming to deliver 22 built and natural environment projects by the end of 2014, is now beginning the implementation stage. The project, which covers the distinctive landscape of the Ochils and Hillfoots, has two-thirds of its funding in place and is in the process of putting the delivery team together.

The overall aims of the project are to conserve or restore built and natural features that create the historic landscape character of the Ochils and to increase community participation in local heritage as a key part of this. For this the project will be looking for volunteers, as well as running a range of events that should appeal to everyone.

There are three programmes of projects.

Your Wee Bit Hill and Glen

The Ochil glens act as the main points of access onto the Ochil hills and offer great views south across the Forth Valley. This programme will enhance access to and promote visits to the spectacular glens of the southern escarpment of the Ochil Hills, up towards the rolling peaks that rise along the Highland Fault.

Amongst the thirteen projects are an archaeological dig in Dollar Glen near Castle Campbell, and restoration of the historic Dollar Burn water race, created from railway sleepers and rails following the 1877 flood that

destroyed the local railway. The Hillfoots Way, a path traversing the foot of the Ochils, will follow the route of what some say locally was the old Kings Highway.

By the Banks of the Devon

The Ochils Landscape Partnership area contains many rivers, streams and wetlands which are a distinctive part of the landscape and have precipitated the development of much of the areas' industrial past such as the textile mills.

The focus of these four projects is the River Devon and its network of burns, focusing on habitat improvement work. The Devon Trail will provide a walking route along the Devon with interpretation highlighting the industrial past including the railway and the former bleaching works at Rackmill.

The Hills of Time

The final programme of five projects focuses on the built and historic environment.

The projects include a kirkyards' trail with a tombstone audit and restoration work; a mining and minerals project focused on the silver mines; and the restoration of an unusual octagonal ice house including a community



archaeology project. There will be numerous opportunities for people to learn more and get involved at the annual Ochils Festival each June including themed walks, workshops, talks, many ways to 'get your hands dirty', and fun events for the whole family.

Interpretation is a key part of the whole project and will be used to promote the many attributes of the Ochils landscape, be they natural, built or cultural heritage. Volunteers from the local community will be invited to undertake research for use on on-site boards, displays at the Ochils Festival, and via new media such as podcasts, Bluetooth, QR codes and an on-line searchable database and a 'virtual landscape'. All of these aim to encourage people to learn

more about and get involved with their local heritage. There will also be the opportunity for people to learn the skills required to undertake historic research such as palaeography, archival research, and oral history training, as well as on-the-ground skills such as dry-stone-walling.

The Ochils Landscape Partnership is funded primarily by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Burnfoot Windfarm, as well as Clackmannanshire and Stirling Environment Trust, and Clackmannanshire Heritage Trust. It is a partnership between twenty organisations including Clackmannanshire and Stirling Councils, the University of Stirling, Forth Valley College, and a range of local community councils and community groups.

For more information on the project, on how to get involved or become a volunteer, or to be informed about forthcoming events, contact: Sheena Stone, Project Coordinator on 01259 452521 or email sstone@clacks.gov.uk.

Did you know?

The 'cleanliness index' is calculated from various independent inspections of the area by other local authorities and Keep Scotland Beautiful, and a score between 1 and 100 is given. In the last 4 years, we have improved from a score of 71 to 77, and from a ranking of 13th out of the 32 Scottish Councils to 5th. It is also notable that all but 1 of the Councils ranked above us were 'rural' Councils, while Clackmannanshire is classed as 'semi-rural'.

Transforming Communities

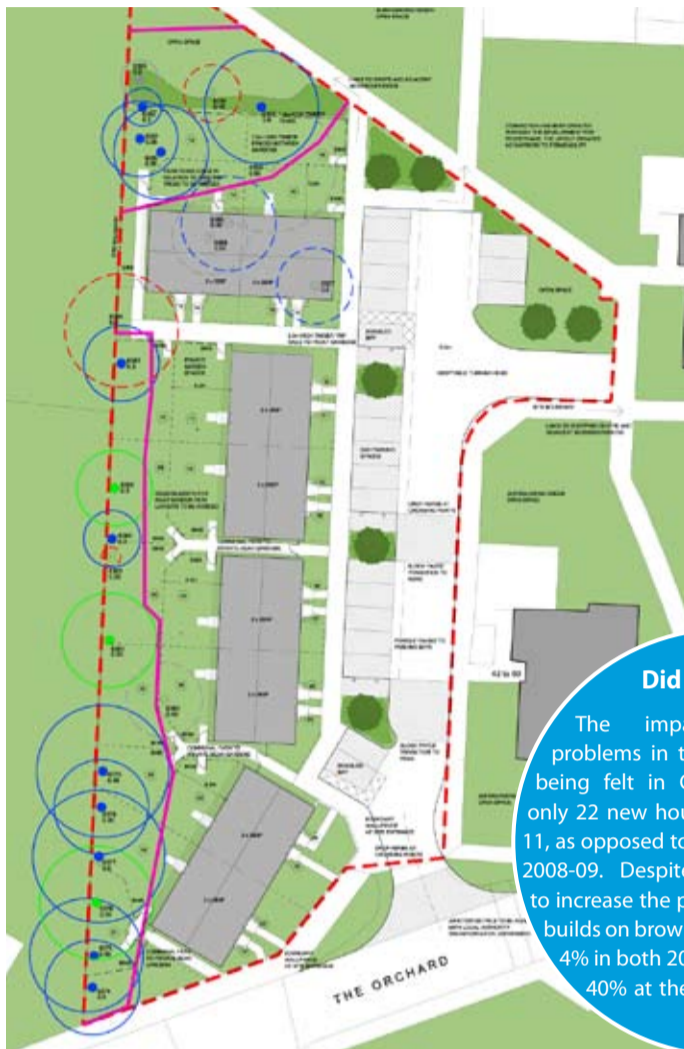
Work on the first Council houses to be built in Clackmannanshire for over 30 years will begin on site in the spring.

The £1.9 million project will see:

- Alteration and refurbishment of the Dalmore Centre in Alva to accommodate 5 amenity houses
- Construction of a single new-build block within the grounds of the Dalmore Centre in Alva accommodating a mix of 4 general needs and amenity houses
- Demolition of 19 lock up garages at the Orchard in Tullibody and construction of 4 new-build blocks on the same site accommodating a mix of 16 general needs and amenity housing units (4 in each block)

The contract for the work has been awarded to Hadden Construction Ltd after a competitive tendering process. The company has confirmed that the project will bring community benefit with jobs being created for local people during the construction phase. The Council is also committed to the developments being delivered in a sustainable way and to the new homes being as energy-efficient as possible.

Council Leader Gary Womersley said: "It's great news that work is beginning on delivering new homes in Tullibody. It's vitally important that we provide new, much needed, affordable homes, while this project will also create some employment and training opportunities."



Did you know?

The impact of national problems in the housing market is being felt in Clackmannanshire, with only 22 new house completions in 2010-11, as opposed to 50 in 2009-10 and 150 in 2008-09. Despite this, we have managed to increase the percentage of new house builds on brownfield land, from around 4% in both 2009-10 and 2010-11 to 40% at the 2011-12 half-year stage.

Housing Support is Excellent

The Housing Support Team were inspected by Social Care and Social Work Improvement Scotland (SCSWIS) recently.

The team's Quality of Care and Support was graded excellent and the Quality of Management and Leadership was graded as very good.

The inspector concluded that the housing support team supported people using an approach dedicated to supporting people to improve all areas of their lives and enabling them to succeed in managing their tenancies.

The Housing Support Team provide support to people who are homeless and who need support to set up and manage their tenancies. The team will also provide support to existing tenants who are at risk of losing their tenancies.

Support is tailored to the needs of the individual but may include:

- 🏠 support to reduce rent arrears
- 🏠 accessing appropriate benefits and grants
- 🏠 setting up your home
- 🏠 housekeeping skills
- 🏠 keeping appointments and dealing with correspondence
- 🏠 accessing other agencies who can provide support, such as alcohol, drugs or mental health services

Councillor Eddie Carrick, sustainability portfolio holder, said: "My congratulations go to everyone involved in this excellent inspection report from SCSWIS. The staff involved do a challenging job and this report is a tribute to them and the support they receive from the Council. I am pleased the service is receiving the recognition it deserves."

Council Offers Free Insulation

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Councillor Eddie Carrick, sustainability portfolio holder, said: "The Council is delighted to have secured over £250,000 of Scottish Government funding to assist home owners make their homes more energy-efficient and less costly to heat as well as providing fuel poverty advice and assistance to all residents of Clackmannanshire.



"This package will help to ensure that local people will benefit from reduced heating bills and will also help those who may already be struggling with debts incurred due to increasing fuel bills."

If you are an owner-occupier and wish to apply for free insulation, please call the hotline free on 0800 512 012 (quoting: ClackmannanshireUHS_2011) as soon as possible to go through a free home energy check to see what support is available. You will then be referred to a surveyor who will visit your property and identify, with your agreement, where improvements could be made to your insulation.

You should also call the hotline if you wish advice and support to tackle your fuel bills.

Alex Warren from Energy Saving Scotland said; "We are delighted to be working with Clackmannanshire Council to

tackle rising energy bills. We are urging householders to act now as this is a time-limited offer. Call the Home Energy Scotland Hotline on 0800 512 012 and get free, impartial advice on how you can save energy and keep your bills as low as possible."

Also, as part of this project, Clackmannanshire Council is offering tailored energy advice and one-to-one support for people who are experiencing difficulty in meeting the costs of their fuel bills. This service is open to all local residents. A friendly home assessor can visit you in your home to chat about other ways you can save money and make your home more energy-efficient. They can advise on using energy more efficiently, help you obtain the best deals on gas and electricity, help understand and simplify fuel bills, tariffs and meter readings, and also act on your behalf with utility suppliers to deal with fuel arrears and payment plans.

ALLOA HOMES TO GET ENERGY MAKEOVERS

Over 250 properties in the Bowmar area of Alloa are set to benefit from whole-house energy makeovers which will save tenants around £300 per year on fuel bills.

The initiative is being made possible thanks to a grant from the Scottish Government which aims to improve energy efficiency in properties in areas of fuel poverty.

The work will be carried out by Scottish Gas at Council-owned properties. It is hoped that Ochil View Housing Association will also take part in the project at some point in the future.

The Bowmar area has been identified as being one of the poorest energy-performing areas in Clackmannanshire. These improvements will help to eradicate fuel poverty. Households are considered to be in 'fuel poverty' if they would have to spend more than 10% of their income on fuel to keep their home in a 'satisfactory' condition.

The homes are to receive a raft of energy-saving measures including external wall insulation and loft insulation to reduce heat loss, as

well as new gas central heating systems.

As a result of these improvements, tenants will benefit from lower fuel bills and warmer homes. Work on the homes will get underway towards the end of January 2012. A show house will be established on the site, at 17 Harris Court, Alloa which will accommodate a resident liaison officer who will be working with the community to ensure that everything goes smoothly.

The work is being carried out as part of the Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP), which is a joint initiative between the Scottish Government, energy suppliers and power generators to help low-income communities.

Councillor Eddie Carrick, sustainability portfolio holder, said: "This is a £2.5 million investment scheme for the local landlords, which has secured a contribution of over £1.2 million from Scottish Gas. We're very pleased that the Bowmar estate will be one of the first areas in Scotland to receive energy-

saving improvements under this innovative programme of works.

"This is a great example of the community and the Council working together with a major energy supplier to make residents' homes warmer and more energy-efficient."

Owner-occupiers in the area will also have the opportunity to participate in the scheme with Scottish Gas contributing towards their costs.

Information about support for owner-occupiers and financial assistance will be circulated in the near future.

Did you know?

The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) measures performance in housing condition against various different criteria. In 2010-11, we achieved rankings of 1st to 4th place out of the 32 Scottish Councils for Council houses being 'free from serious disrepair' (100%), having 'modern facilities and services' (98%) and being 'energy efficient' (94%). We were also ranked 3rd in Scotland for Council houses meeting all criteria, improving from 74% in 2008-09, to 77% in 2009-10, and up to 85% in 2010-11, substantially above the Scottish average of 54%.

Payback benefits communities



People across Clackmannanshire are benefiting from the work carried out by offenders as part of their Community Payback, Community Service or Supervised Attendance Orders.

In Tullibody pupils at St Bernadette's Primary have a new outdoor classroom within the school grounds. The substantial structure was built by offenders during the school holidays.

Headteacher Tina O'Neill said: "As part of our improving school grounds project in partnership with Grounds for Learning we identified a number of developments to promote active learning outside. The final phase of this project was to create a dedicated area in our grounds for learning. Building structures like these can be costly so we called on the support of the Criminal Justice Service, who provided all the labour and created a fantastic classroom outside. The classroom takes pride of place in our grounds having already withstood heavy rain, strong winds and an unfortunate attempt of vandalism."

The offenders were involved in the whole project from the initial design phase, to working with the wood in the service's workshop, to building it on site.

In Menstrie offenders have cleared a two mile long footpath of rubbish, dead wood and overgrown bushes. The footpath runs from Red Carr House, in the West, to about 50 yards west of the Scout Hall in the east and now that it has been cleared has become a popular walk once again.

The work was requested by Menstrie Community Council and chairman Les Sharp said: "The work done in Menstrie was some which we were desperately needing done, but could never find the people to do it. The path had become overgrown by weeds and dirt washed down from

the hill, making the path both narrower and very slippery when wet.

"We approached the Community Payback Scheme for help and the guys who have been out have made a huge difference to our woodland walk. The path is clear of debris, not slippery and wide enough for even the most determined group of walkers.

"We are now on phase two, where again the scheme is making a further length of path more usable for all abilities. It is unlikely that we could have achieved as much in such a short space of time, so hats off to them from the community of Menstrie."

Work-related skills gained and developed by the offenders include: planning, organising, effective communication, team work, practical skills and work safety. All of these skills are directly transferable to any form of employment. Moreover, the offenders take great pride in the work they undertake as they recognise the value of this within the community in which they live. This work routine can also provide a sense of purpose to offenders, as well as increasing personal self-esteem and promoting a good work ethic.

And in Tillicoultry offenders have been renovating a property in Upper Mill Street which is being converted from a women's aid property to a facility for three people with autism. The work has included stripping wallpaper, painting and decorating and tidying the garden, which had become very overgrown.

Maureen Dryden, Service Manager Adult Assessment, said: "An incredible amount of progress has been made at this property. This is a large project and a lot of work has been done. When complete this property will enhance the lives of the individuals that use the house."

Young people tell us what they want

Consultation on the type of outdoor and indoor areas where youngsters hang out, and areas they try to avoid, was top of the agenda at a half day gathering in Alloa at the end of the year.

Held at Dunmar House Hotel and hosted by Clackmannanshire Council's Youth Services, the Youth Spaces Event, was designed to glean the thoughts, preferences and attitudes of local 12-25-year-olds on the types of spaces and facilities they like to use, as well as identifying activities they would like to see in their community.

Areas that were not popular were also identified, along with the reasons that put such places off limits, as well as ideas for improvements.

More than 50 youths attended offering views and opinions and hearing from groups of other young people who are already developing activities and youth spaces in their communities.

Kara Lindsay said, "It is important for us to have our own space, places to go and spend time, where we can make new friends and enjoy ourselves.

"Knowing exactly what we want from our area will let the Council



address our needs and wishes, improve services and create spaces and design rooms where we can spend time.

"This was a great opportunity for us to have our say. The Council was keen to let us know that they are listening to what we want from the area and to give us the chance to be involved from the outset in the design process."

Following presentations on Tillicoultry Youth Hub, Alva Youth Cafe, Community Art projects, Open Spaces and Wild Spaces and Clax Connections, there was resounding support for developing community hubs and allocating specific times for young people to use them. Proposals to run workshops in the hubs on topics such as writing CVs, careers and sexual health also received overwhelming support.

Feedback also showed that

youngsters would feel safer and use open spaces more readily if lighting was provided.

There was unanimous approval for Community Art projects, with all the youngsters believing that Graffiti Art makes community spaces look and feel good, countering vandalism and making walking in towns a better and safer experience.

In terms of the types of activities local youths would like to see introduced or enhanced, music and dance featured highly, along with improved access to the internet. Arts and crafts also remain high on young people's agendas.

With priorities now identified, Clackmannanshire Council is now looking to set up six focus groups for further discussions on the areas earmarked for development.

What's on

Fairtrade Fortnight



A local Fairtrade steering group was set up in June 2011 with the support of the Council and the Co-operative.

Fairtrade Clacks is trying to make Clackmannanshire a Fairtrade Zone.

Fairtrade provides a better deal for producers in developing countries, creating opportunities for farmers and workers to improve their lives, their communities and to protect their environment.

The Council declared its support for Fairtrade in its Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and is committed to supporting this grassroots campaign to work towards achieving Fairtrade Zone status.

Fairtrade Clacks held a very successful African cooking event in Alloa on St Andrew's Night with over 50 people coming along to see MasterChef finalist and author of Kids' Kitchen, Fi Bird, give a cooking demonstration.

Fairtrade Fortnight takes place from 27th February until 11th March and Fairtrade Clacks is planning to join in the celebrations. See ClacksWeb's event diary for more information.

Voluntary Arts Week – what could you do?

Held for the first time in 2011, Voluntary Arts Week highlighted the wonderful amateur arts and craft activity taking place across the country. This year it's being rolled out across the UK and Republic of Ireland – so it's time to start thinking about how you could take part. Run by Voluntary Arts Scotland, the week-long event is all about celebrating what you currently do, and perhaps encouraging others to join in.



Voluntary Arts Week will take place from 12 – 20 May 2012, and there are many ways you could get involved: put on a special show; hold an exhibition; invite people to an open rehearsal; run a taster session; take your art or craft form out into the public domain – the possibilities are endless! Visit www.voluntaryartsweek.org for more information and ideas.

Contact email: info@voluntaryartsweek.org

Alloa Half Marathon

The 30th Alloa Half Marathon is on Sunday 18th March and online entries are now open. The start time is 10am and the race start and finish is Alloa Leisure Bowl. The event is organised by Alloa Round Table and more information about the race is available online at www.alloahalfmarathon.co.uk



Clackmannanshire Awards 2011

Provost Tina Murphy is hosting a joint Award Ceremony to recognise the dedication and commitment that local people and groups make to help improve the quality of life in Clackmannanshire.



The Clackmannanshire Awards ceremony will be held in Alloa Town Hall on 23rd February 2012.

There will be three different categories of award - Citizen of the Year, Sports Council Awards and Arts Forum Awards. And for the first time the Council's staff awards will also be presented on the night.

Charity Concert



The Rotary Club of Alloa is staging a charity family concert in the Devonvale Hall, Tillicoultry at 8pm (doors open 7.30pm) on Friday 17th February. The event features the internationally acclaimed Scottish group Gaberlunzie, who will be supported by the Central Scotland Police Pipe Band. All proceeds from the event will be given over to the charity, Mary's Meals. There will also be a raffle with some excellent prizes to be won.

Mary's Meals is a Scottish-based international movement that sets up school feeding projects in communities where poverty and hunger prevent children from gaining an education.

Pre-booked tickets for the concert, which are priced at £10/£8 concession, can be obtained by emailing hectornicolson@yahoo.co.uk

Happiness Festival

Following the success of the first Happiness Festival in 2011, Resonate Arts House is planning to hold another festival in the spring of 2012. The event aims to use creativity to break down barriers and encourage people to make new friends and share in the enjoyment and fun of making craft and art works.



The dates for this year's festival will be announced. Go to www.thehappinessfestival.co.uk for the latest news.

Forth Valley Open Studios

The Forth Valley Open Studios was first launched in the summer of 2010 and is an annual nine day event. During the event local artists, galleries and art organisations open their doors to invite the general public to view their art works.



This year's event takes place from 9th - 17th June. See www.forthvalleyopenstudios.com for more information.

Helping you to live well

Stress Control

Coming soon to a venue near you: Stress Control.

Learn to control your body, your thoughts, your actions and your panic. Just turn up, sit back and learn some great ways to control stress.

A six week course starting soon.

For further information or registration, contact the Phoenix Centre on: 01259 215048

Fancy becoming a Mental Health First Aider?

Scottish Mental Health First Aid (SMHFA) is based on the concept of general First Aid training and aims to improve the general public's awareness and understanding of mental health.

The course teaches you to:

- Give initial help to someone experiencing a mental health problem.

- Deal with a crisis situation or the first signs of someone developing mental ill health, and

- Guide people towards appropriate professional help

SMHFA is a FREE 12 hour course that can be delivered in a variety of ways, to fit in with people's busy lives.

We will be running courses on:

- 21st and 22nd February in Stirling

- 20th and 21st March in Stirling

- 17th and 18th April in Alloa

To register for the above courses, please contact Jenny on:

01786 431132 or email jewen@nhs.net

01259 215048.

Do you know someone with a mental health problem?

If so, we can help by providing you with information, education and support. We can meet you individually and we also have a monthly support group, Ochil Carers, for people to meet, share experiences, get up to date information and generally feeling more confident about supporting someone with a mental health problem.

We are also very keen to hear your views on how we could improve the services we provide.

For more information on Ochil Carers, please contact Isabel Reed on 01259 290361

For more information on any of the above, please contact 01259 215048.

Contact Us

View is delivered to every house in Clackmannanshire four times a year. It contains news from all Council services that we hope you find interesting and informative.

We pay for View by using it to distribute information that would previously have been printed in separate leaflets or advertised in local press. We've calculated that each copy of View costs about 12p to print and deliver.

If you have suggestions, questions or comments on View please contact us by writing to Communications Unit, Clackmannanshire Council, Greenfield House, Alloa, FK10 2AD, or email us at press@clacks.gov.uk.

