

CONNECTED

#12 SEPTEMBER 2020

**Focus on
Staff
Wellbeing**

**Virtual
Council
Meetings**

**Mark and
Stephen
Save Man's
Life**

**Covid
Special
Issue**



Chief Executive Perspective



Dear Colleagues

Since the last edition of Connected in February, we have all experienced what could arguably be described as one of our most difficult periods both personally and professionally as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The times we have been living through have been unprecedented.

When we announced our exciting and innovative plans for our transformation programme Be the Future at a special budget meeting in February, it was almost impossible to predict what lay ahead for all of us, just a few short weeks later.

As a Council we not only had to change and adapt quickly to a new way of working...remotely and apart from colleagues... but we were also faced with trying to maintain essential services to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

It has been a huge endeavour. At times it has been, and felt, relentless. There were long hours. There were many, many challenges. But we worked together for the benefit of the community we serve.

We might be Scotland's smallest council but because of all of your efforts and the fact that you went above and beyond to do your job to the best of your ability in the most difficult circumstances, we can stand tall with even the largest of local authorities.

There is so much to highlight from across the Council. We have aimed to capture this through the pages of this special edition of Connected.

I have said it before but will say it again. It has been humbling to look back and see how much we have achieved together over the past few months. I am extremely proud of all of you and the work we have carried out. I hope that you feel that same pride in your work and in the organisation you work for when you read this edition of Connected.

We are now firmly on the road to recovery but we still have quite a way to go. We have to be cautious. Coronavirus has not yet left us. Our working practices have changed and as we go forward it's important that we now look to build a strong, positive and lasting legacy from all that we have learned over the last few months.

Thank you again for all your efforts and enjoy this edition of Connected.

Best wishes

Nikki Bridle Chief Executive



Front cover image is:

Michelle Bonar - MECS Warden
(back - wearing the visor)

Sato McConnell - Social Care Worker
at Ludgate House (front)



nhsinform.scot/coronavirus #WeAreScotland

Mark and Stephen help to save man's life

The quick thinking actions of Council workers Mark Allan and Stephen Lamb helped to save the life of a man who had fallen unconscious in the garden of his home in Alloa.

Mark and Stephen, who are maintenance operatives based at Kelliebank, were on their way to a routine work call when they came across the man lying on the grass in his back garden. When they went to check that he was OK, they saw that he wasn't breathing.

Stephen phoned an ambulance and while they were waiting for it to arrive, they had to start chest compressions on the man.

Stephen said: "The call handler asked us to put the phone up to the man's mouth to check his breathing and then told us that we had to start doing chest compressions. I put the speaker phone on so the call handler could talk us through what to do."

Both men continued to carry out the chest compressions for around 10 to 15 minutes until the ambulance arrived.



It is thought that the man may have been lying in his garden for a while before Mark and Stephen found him and paramedics said that had it not been for their actions and quick thinking, the man could have died.

Both men, who joined the Council 4 years ago, had not had any training before the

incident and are now hoping to go on a First Aid course through the council.

Mark said: "If you think someone needs help, you should always stop. Neither of us had any training whatsoever and we managed to help save a life."

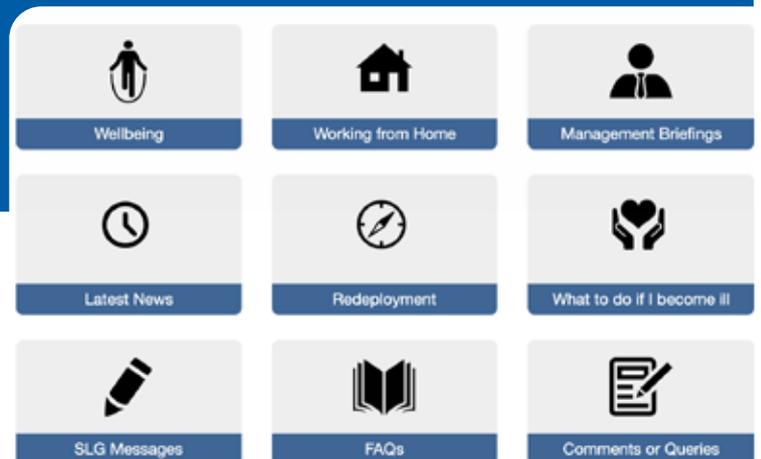
If you would like more information on CPR check out www.nhs.uk/conditions/first-aid/cpr/

Keeping Staff Connected

As a Council, the Coronavirus Pandemic presented us with many challenges but one of the biggest challenges was ensuring that staff who were unable to come in to their place of work were kept up to date with the latest information and still felt connected to the organisation.

Although our website Connect has a wealth of information, the Communications Team had to create a new staff page on our main internet which could be accessed by staff who were unable to get on to Citrix.

The Keeping Staff Connected page now has all the latest information from around the organisation as well as weekly messages from the Senior Leadership Group (SLG).



You will also be able to find lots of advice and guidance on working from home and how to maintain your physical and mental wellbeing.

The Communications Team is currently exploring longer term options for internal communications as part of the wider Communications and Engagement Strategy.

Local hero portrait

Emergency Resilience Officer Karen Kirkwood was in the spotlight during lockdown when local artist Karen Strang painted her portrait as part of an exhibition "Heroes Here and Now: Caring Through Covid".

Karen Strang teamed up with Artlink Central for the exhibition and Karen Kirkwood was one of a number of key workers who were nominated to have their portraits painted in tribute to the work they have been carrying out in the community throughout the pandemic.

Karen took up her post as Emergency Resilience Officer for the council just over a year ago but has been a Council Incident Officer for 20 years and was seconded to the Scottish Government in 2015 for 18 months in the role of East of Scotland Resilience Coordinator. While in that post she dealt with major incidents such as the closure of the Forth Road Bridge and Storm Desmond.

However Karen said the Covid-19 pandemic has been unlike anything she has ever experienced. Over the past few months her role has involved implementing many of the council's emergency plans. She has also been the conduit for information coming from and to Scottish Government, Regional and Local Resilience Partnerships and to and from SLG and Senior Managers.

Working with our Health and Safety Team, she has also been involved in ensuring our facilities are Covid secure to ensure the safe return of our workforce and has been heavily involved in the recovery planning for services.

Connected asked Karen what initially made her look at resilience as a career and what the high and lows of the last few months have been.

What was your route into the post?

I became interested in risk and resilience during my time as the Events Officer and I was asked to prepare plans for major events. I had never even considered when planning an event. I then became involved in the Queens Baton Relay, The 2012 Olympic Torch Relay and more recently The Boyne event in 2017 which involved 20,000 people descending on Alloa doubling our population for the day. I enjoy the multi-agency working, preparing plans and delivering a successful safe event so moving into resilience full time really was the next step.

What have you found to be the biggest challenges over the last few months?

I'm based in the Incident Room and for the first 6 weeks spent on average 14 hours a day in the room helping to shape the Council's response to the incident. The constant changes have been particularly difficult. We can be issued with guidance first thing in the morning and by close of play it can have changed several times. People think we have had advance notification of the changes but we got them at the same time as everyone else.



Dealing with the deaths in our community has also been really challenging, especially at the peak. I have had to report these figures on a daily basis to various partner organisations but each one signifies someones' parent, sibling, relative or friend.

What have been the most rewarding moments of the last few months?

Working as part of the emergency response team in the incident room has been the best team building exercise ever! I have also enjoyed working with colleagues and partners across Scotland to deliver a national response to meet the needs of both our local community and Scotland as a whole. Finally, seeing how our communities have responded has been really rewarding. They have been fantastic and it has given a whole new meaning to community resilience!

Do you ever get time to just "switch off"?

It has been difficult during Covid as my brain never fully switches off. Everywhere you go someone is talking about Covid or they think you have information that's not in the public domain but my grandchildren keep me grounded and provide lots of fun and distraction. I also enjoy reading lots of books.

What has been your "lightbulb" moment?

Deciding to stand up the incident room as it has been invaluable having all the key players in one place and being able to bounce ideas off each other and making collective decisions.

What advice would you give to anyone who is thinking about Emergency Planning and Resilience as a career option?

Even after 20 weeks of working non stop it's still my dream job. There's never a dull moment and you have to think on your feet. You are dealing with such a variety of things that there's never time to get bored. You meet and deal with so many different people, agencies and partners and everyone is always willing to help you. I would recommend it to anyone considering it.

Adult Care Staff Are In It Together

The covid pandemic has been a busy and often challenging time for adult care services and the HSCP.

The HSCP has taken on new and evolving roles in partnership with NHS Public Health, the Care Inspectorate and others, helping to ensure that private care homes, which provide the majority of places throughout Scotland continued to provide safe and appropriate care to residents in Clackmannanshire during this public health emergency.

The team rapidly developed and deployed a Care Home Assessment and Response Team (CHART) to support care homes with the challenges associated with the pandemic. They continue to work closely with local GPs and NHS Forth Valley's Public Health team to provide dedicated support to local care homes, doing everything possible to support residents, local staff and the care home operators.

At the same time, our staff have been busy ensuring that our services have been maintained to continue providing essential care to people in Clackmannanshire, despite the restrictions experienced throughout the Council. This meant that with a number of staff Shielding, we had to keep in contact with some clients by phone to ensure that they had ways to communicate with us.

Mecs and reablement / care at home service staff continued to visit clients in their own homes where it was safe to do so. Our teams

at Ludgate House (pictured on the front page) and Menstrie House faced challenging times continuing to deliver care to vulnerable people.

A priority during the lockdown has been the maintenance of safe working practices for all staff who could be at work. PPE was provided to all staff at work in line with legislation and guidance from the Scottish government and public health. This guidance changed as the situation developed, sometimes on a daily basis, so our staff have and continue to be on daily contact calls with Public Health teams to ensure staff were managed to follow the current legislation and guidance. Stringent infection control procedures and ongoing testing have been in place, and we have been able to keep virus out of Menstrie and Ludgate Houses.

The service was able to keep supporting people thanks to the excellent help and support they received from colleagues throughout the Council including Health and Safety as well as facilities management. Staff were deployed from other services to help support the teams to maintain critical and safe staffing levels.

Our teams caring for our vulnerable residents have gone through some extremely challenging times these past months, and have got through it together by showing resilience, leadership and great team working.

Community Support Helpline

Staff from across a range of Council services came together to form a special team offering support to those most at risk during the lockdown period.

These volunteers formed the community support team answering the phone calls to a helpline specially set up as part of a range of measures to support people in the shielding category and other vulnerable citizens. There were around 2000 people in the shielding category in Clackmannanshire.

The community support helpline assisted people who needed help getting access to food, medicines/prescriptions and other essential services to ensure they minimised their risk of coming into contact with Covid-19.

The helpline operated from Monday 6th April to Friday 31st July, and as with many of the measures the Council had to take during lockdown, had to be set up very quickly.

A new call management system was put in place to support the helpline called 'Helping Hands'. This system provided a useful means to log and record the details of the help needed by those at risk, and to manage the delivery, working with Property Services, 3rd Sector and community groups.

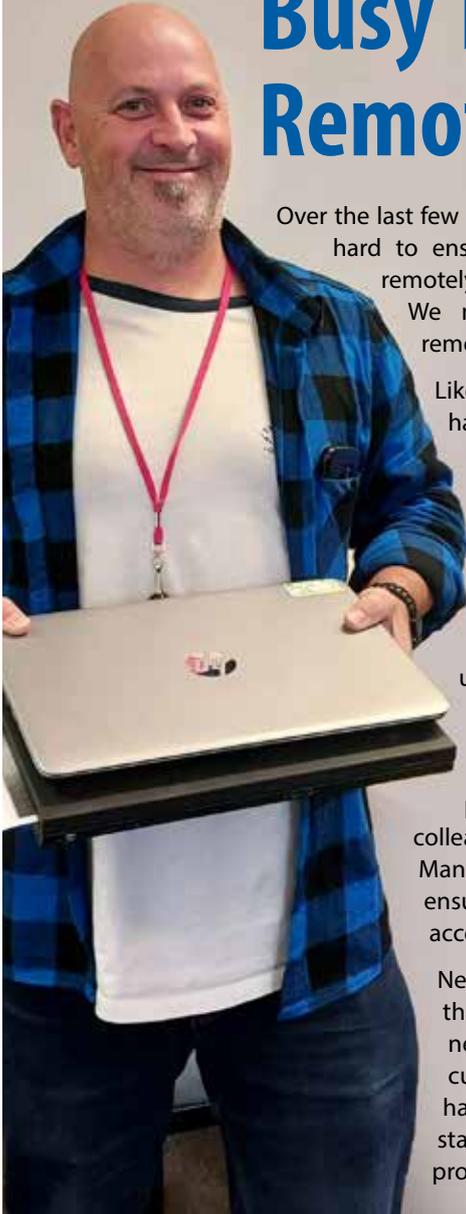
Implementation of this system was a collaborative effort between eight councils, the Digital Office and the supplier Agilisys. This partnership meant we could react to the evolving requirements of the Scottish Government, meet the emerging needs of our citizens while enabling us to design and implement a workable solution for Clackmannanshire Council.

As well as making contact by phone, the team arranged a postcard drop to shielding people to ensure they were aware of the support available to them. In some cases, team members went door-to-door to ensure no-one slipped through the net.

Shielding was paused on 1st August, and calls to the community support helpline will now be routed through the Council's main contact centre where callers will be signposted to suitable available support.



Busy Time For IT as they Get Remote Workers Up and Running



Over the last few months, our IT team has been working hard to ensure that our staff are able to work remotely and access the network from home. We now have 500 employees working remotely delivering Council Services.

Like all other Council services the IT team has had to adapt to new ways of working quickly and respond to new priorities as a result of Covid response and recovery. The IT helpdesk has been adapted to enable remote IT support to be provided and the remote working pages in the staff section on the Council's website have been updated and provide information on requesting IT kit, setting up equipment at home and troubleshooting, working safely in line with cyber security best practice and staying connected with colleagues and customers. Itrent People Manager has also been implemented to ensure that managers have been able to access the system remotely.

New ways of working has also meant that we have had to quickly develop new online and digital services for our customers. Video Conferencing Tools have been deployed to enable staff to stay connected, collaborate and meet and provide services and have been widely

used. These tools have also been used for Council Committee's, partnership meetings, training events and conferences. A range of new online services has been developed for customers including applying for grants and booking appointments at Forthbank Recycling Centre. A new case management tool called Helping Hands has been implemented to assist with our shielding and community aid efforts.

The team have also been working with teaching and education staff as well as pupils to ensure that home based learning has been maintained and that all pupils have been able to access digital learning opportunities.

But there is also a lot of work behind the scenes that is carried out by the IT team, including round the clock work to maintain our infrastructure and to make our IT and phone network and systems resilient and safe.

However there still remains a lot of work to do as the Council's recovery activity progresses. One piece of work in the coming weeks will be to support Schools and Digital Learning plans.

Looking ahead to the future, work is underway to review the team's digital priorities, and over the course of the next few weeks, IT will engage with Services to collectively develop these priorities in line with wider ambitions set out as part of our Be the Future transformation programme.

Committee Team Make it a First with Virtual Council Meetings

Covid-19 has affected all aspects of our day-to-day lives and has highlighted the need to embrace change and use technology including for our Council and Committee meetings.

The Committee team has been working hard and has done a fantastic job supporting members and officers to use technology to participate in decision making.

The team started small with the Council approving an Emergency Decision Making Forum (EDMF) with just 6 members in its last meeting before lockdown. The EDMF met regularly during the first few months of lockdown and took decisions that allowed the Council to keep functioning and respond to the challenges we were faced with.

We then began to consider getting our full meetings back up and running as it was important to ensure that all of our elected members could participate in decision making and also that as

a council, we remained transparent and were able to keep our residents informed and up to date with the decisions being taken by the Council during the pandemic.

We usually have our meetings open to the public but the law was changed so that this no longer had to happen. However we then wanted to make sure that the public could watch decision making on our website even if they could not come in to the Chambers in Kilncraigs

Our first foray into virtual meetings was the Licensing Board in early June. We had scripts, practice runs, contingency plans – and after all the planning the meeting went really well with positive feedback on Twitter from two of the solicitors who attended.

We then held our first virtual council meeting on 25 June 2020 and although there were some initial teething issues this went smoothly too. The phrase "you are still on mute" is now almost as common as "lets move on to the next agenda item" in Council discussion now!

All meetings will continue to be held virtually and the recordings made available on our website. If you have chance, take a look here www.clacks.gov.uk/council/meetings/

Staff Wellbeing at the Forefront

Throughout lockdown health and wellbeing became a priority.

Staff had to get used to a new way of working or were having to self isolate at home without having the same direct contact with their teams. We created a Wellbeing section on the Keeping Staff Connected website page to act as a support hub which could be accessed by all staff even if they didn't have access to Citrix.

The sections on the wellbeing page include a wealth of advice and guidance including:

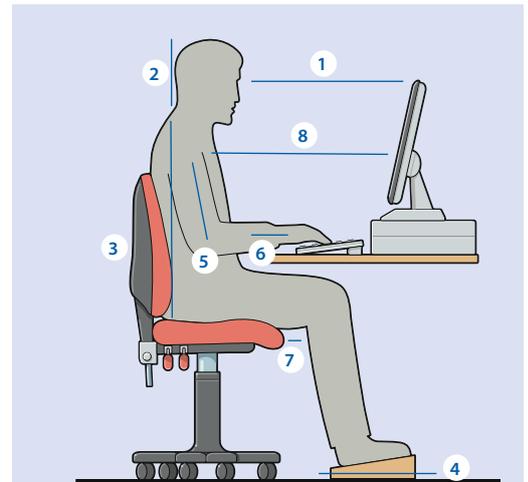
- Looking after mental wellbeing - This contains sub-sections on where staff get can support with links to mental health organisations; how staff can talk to their children about Coronavirus with links to support organisations; tips on how to maintain health and mental wellness;
- Staying active - This includes tips on how to get started for staff who are not used to taking regular exercise; Links to online exercise classes.
- Eating well - Tips on eating well and links to websites for inspiration on budget friendly meals for families.

Staff also had the opportunity to take part in a Wellbeing Survey which gave managers and the senior leadership group (SLG) the opportunity to gauge how well staff felt they were doing during lockdown. The results of the survey will be communicated shortly.

You can access the wellbeing section on the Keeping Staff Connected page at www.clacks.gov.uk/coronavirus/wellbeing/,

As more staff than ever before are now working remotely, a "Working from Home" section was also created on the Keeping Staff Connected page with tips on how to work from home safely, how to set up equipment and how to stay cybersafe.

If you are working remotely, please make sure you take the time to read through the information on the page which you will find here www.clacks.gov.uk/coronavirus/workingfromhome/.



- 1 Top of screen about eye level
- 2 Head straight – not leaning forward
- 3 Back as upright as is comfortable, with curved part of the chair back providing support to lumbar region.
- 4 Feet flat on the floor, or on a foot rest.
- 5 Arms approximately at right angles – relax arms.
- 6 Forearms approximately horizontal
- 7 Space behind knee - no excess pressure on underside of thighs and backs of knees.
- 8 Screen about an arms length from you.

Health and Safety Update

Well what a year it has been so far! The team has been working incredibly hard to support all services through the pandemic and to ensure that reopening of services is done in a safe manner.

Here are some numbers which highlight what the team have done in the last 5 months to support the Covid response:

- 134,622 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) issued to Council staff.
- 193,184 pieces of PPE issued to partners through the HSCP PPE Hub.
- 2079 bottles of sanitiser distributed to Community Groups.
- 50 buildings assessed for Covid compliance (most have also now been reviewed at least once)
- Working to complete 425 individual risk assessments.
- Supporting services with developing over 70 task based risk assessments.
- 223 referrals for testing sent for local care homes and our own staff and pupils.
- Represented the Council on the Wellbeing Champions Network.
- Helped Clackmannanshire Women's Aid receive £500 funding from Arco
- Reviewed 118 Display Screen Equipment Self Assessment forms.

This is all on top of trying to keep up with the thousands of pages of government guidance which has been changing (sometimes on a daily basis!) and deal with a number of our normal tasks.

It has not been all bad news though. The language of health and safety is now much more understood – who would have thought at the beginning of this year that PPE and risk assessments would be talked about on TV and in every day conversation?



Development Team Delivers

Taking on new and unfamiliar roles and providing important guidance during this fast moving pandemic situation have been a hallmark of the efforts that the Development team has been making.

Economic Development has been working closely with colleagues in areas like finance to ensure that over £61 million of government grants for local businesses were distributed, helping to keep the economy of Clackmannanshire sustainable during lockdown.

A lot of work has been undertaken by Economic Development to form a Business Support Partnership with a wide range of partners across the area. As part of this, they have been sharing information and are carrying out a business survey which will be an important part of the next phase of work as we continue to work together on economic recovery.

Environmental Health has done a great job in challenging and very varied circumstances. Along with helping out with Covid testing in care homes, they are now working proactively to help the local economy recover by supporting individual businesses to reopen, helping them out with social distancing and health and safety issues. They have been doing a great job with local businesses to ensure they are up to date with the fast changing

legislation and guidance that is produced by government. They've achieved this while continuing to deliver their normal statutory duties.

Planning and Building Standards have worked hard to maintain this statutory service and have kept performance figures high and provided good customer service despite the Covid situation.

The Clacks Works team showed a huge amount of dedication and commitment when they made themselves available at very short notice and over weekends and public holidays to help run the Shielding helpline. They did this during a time when anxiety over Covid 19 was running high and while they were helping their existing clients throughout this time. You can find out more about the work of the helpline elsewhere in Connected.

While we experienced lockdown, the chance to get outdoors and experience the wonderful Clackmannanshire countryside was important to many people. The Sustainability and Climate Change team has worked hard to ensure that our public paths and areas such as Gartmorn Dam can be enjoyed by local people. The team has also ensured that vulnerable residents continue to be able to access advice on fuel poverty, which has been an important issue during these challenging times.

COVID DASHBOARD Provides Snapshot of Council's Performance

Since the outbreak, officers across the Council have been pulling together data to provide performance reporting to the Incident Management Team, our elected members and to external organisations such as COSLA and the Scottish Government.

One of the main developments during Covid-19 has been the creation of a dashboard which provides a snapshot of the organisation's performance across a whole range of measures. This work is coordinated by officers in the Legal & Governance team and particular thanks go to Judi, Rose and Morgan - our unsung data heroes! These officers are also grateful for the support they receive from others across the organisation in providing the data.



Remember **FACTS** for a safer Scotland

- F** Face coverings 
- A** Avoid crowded places 
- C** Clean your hands regularly 
- T** Two metre distance 
- S** Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms 

nhsinform.scot/coronavirus
#WeAreScotland



Communications Team

Response to Covid-19

March – August 2020



74 news updates written and posted on website



Wrote and published **222** Facebook posts

6,024

Produced and published **seven** messages on behalf of the **Council Leader**



Wrote and published **198 Tweets**



5,635 retweets/shares



Produced and published **26** messages on behalf of the

Senior Leadership Group

2,035 messages received via social media



628
positive

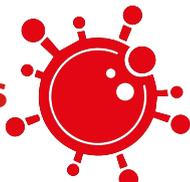


1071
neutral



336
negative

Coronavirus web pages



298,876 views

Social media content seen by **4.5 million** people



Website views **1.39 million**

Staff online portal pages **29,964** views



114 media enquiries answered

23 news releases written and published



71 cascade briefings shared with managers



On call support **7 days a week**

Environment Team

Delivered



The Environment team has worked throughout the pandemic to keep delivering vital services for residents and support the Council to provide help to our most vulnerable citizens. Throughout it all, the service's business support team and fleet services ensured that everything was in place to keep operations running.

The Waste team has been in the spotlight throughout these last months, as our Council was one of a small number throughout the country who managed to keep providing a normal waste collection service. The team managed this despite dealing with a reduced workforce due to shielding, and adjusting to new ways of working to ensure staff were kept safe while they were working.

During the lockdown, the public really showed their appreciation for the staff out emptying the bins every week. Lots of lovely children's drawings and thank you notes were left out, and many a thumbs up and wave were exchanged through the windows of houses. Social media users were also quick to say how much they valued the continuation of service.

With more hard work and planning, we re-introduced the bulky uplift service in May, and in June when national guidance changed we opened up Forthbank recycling centre using an appointment system. This much anticipated opening was many weeks in the planning, with colleagues in IT, Communications and the Contact Centre working with Waste to get the new booking system online

and available to the public. Colleagues throughout the Council and our partners helped by testing the system before it opened. All this preparation meant that Forthbank was opened to the public without a hitch, and avoided the queuing and closure experienced in other areas.

The Roads & Transport team was moved to an emergency service at the start of lockdown, and those colleagues who were available helped other services to keep going. Once guidance changed the workload was widened to carry out some of the planned resurfacing and improvement works, prioritising those on busy routes that were still quiet to reduce the impact on road users. The team was also involved in ensuring the very fast delivery of the Spaces for People programme, helping to provide more space for everyone to keep a distance while out and about. The planning, procurement and construction of new active travel paths was also delivered in an incredibly short timescale, helping us to provide safe ways to travel to school for our young people.

Stuart Cullen, our Principal Flooding officer volunteered to lead our helpline for those Shielding and requiring extra

help during the lockdown, using his skills and experience in a new way.

The Land Services Team continued to provide the sad but necessary burial service to our residents during the pandemic, while helping to deal with essential planning for different scenarios behind the scenes. They also helped ensure other services could continue, ensuring that bin collections could continue. As soon as they were permitted by guidance, the team resumed the grounds maintenance service, ensuring that cemeteries and parks were prioritised. They continue to work to catch up with the programme of maintenance during these busy growing months.

We will be using our new fleet of refuse lorries to help get the message across that abuse against members of our staff as they carry out their jobs is unacceptable. Peter McNie, a driver/loader in Waste Services will appear on advertising panels on the side of the lorries with the slogans "You wouldn't tolerate abuse at work...why should we?" and "It's our job to help...it's not our job to be abused" . Watch out for the launch of the campaign over the next couple of weeks.

You wouldn't tolerate
abuse at work...
why should we?
#respectourstaff



Digital Leading the Way Ahead



The outbreak of Covid-19 and the subsequent closure of schools resulted in the acceleration of our Education Service's Digital Learning Strategy.

The Service's Digital Learning Team had to speed up the development of the FLIP Clacks website, an online learning hub for families, pupils and the wider community, which they had been working collaboratively on with partners.

During lockdown, although the focus was always the health and well-being of pupils and their families, FLIP Clacks provided families and learners with an accessible and motivating mobile website containing home and family learning ideas and resources for all levels. It also gave clear information about what each school's approach was to remote learning at senior phase level.

Social Learning was a key part of the FLIP Clacks approach with Google Classroom and other apps to keep children and young people connected remotely. Some staff even delivered live video lessons and specialised video content to support and engage with learners.

Education Service also offered Level Up Digital webinars 3 times a week over the course of lockdown. This was a great way for our teaching staff to keep in touch but it was also a collective effort with many

teachers sharing their good practice using a variety of digital solutions for engagement.

The work was a combined effort of all the services in Clackmannanshire and this made it unique as everyone pulled together.

Lorraine Sanda, the Council's Chief Education Officer, said: "Our school teams responded in an amazing way to our vision for adding a social element to home learning. The response has been incredible.

"We anticipated that schools would close for some time and we knew we wanted to develop an enhanced support that was more than just homework packs. We already had the plans in place and an idea of how to make it happen but it took a collaborative effort from all of our schools, teams and partners.

"The commitment and dedication to support children, young people, parents and the wider community has been astounding."

During this time the Digital Learning Team also started making plans to help schools in the recovery phase - this next phase includes exciting improvements to FLIP as well as work on access issues, digital webinars for carers and parents

Secondary school digital leads collected chromebooks from Kilncraigs.

and more in depth work for young people with Additional Support Needs (ASN).

Pupils are also set to receive Chromebooks as part of the Scottish Government funding to counteract digital exclusion. The first 674 devices will be delivered to pupils shortly.

The Digital Learning Team has been working hard to make sure the devices reach those who need them most.

As well as receiving the Chromebooks, families are being offered technical support on how to use the device and the G-Suite tools. The young people will also be given catch up work in a range of subjects - as well as being shown some digital skills.

The team are set to have helpdesk availability in every school cluster and have started working creatively in other areas with outdoor learning initiatives, exciting digital input to Maths and STEM projects as well as CLD teams. They will also be collaborating with initiatives to use curriculum coaching for helping young people catch up with school work.

Place Directorate Steps up

Janitorial Team

The Janitorial Team suffered a number of absences in recent months as a result of the COVID outbreak. However despite this, the remaining janitorial staff were able to cover a number of other work duties in schools and public buildings which they would not normally be used to working in.

The hard work and effort shown throughout this difficult period ensured that service disruption was able to be kept to a minimum and our school and public buildings were kept safe and secure.



Cleaning Team

The Cleaning Team provided a robust and specially devised cleaning process and procedure for use in priority buildings that were required to remain operational throughout the pandemic.

The commitment and willingness of the team enabled additional cleaning to be undertaken in key operational premises with an emphasis on additional cleaning of high contact/high touch areas and the use of eco-static spray equipment to provide a clean working environment, a combination of both modern and more traditional cleaning methods have been used to great effect.

More recently the team has been working to prepare the education estate for re-opening to pupils in August with additional cleans being added to the standard delivery model.

Catering Team

A joint effort between both the Property and Catering teams, on behalf of Education, saw the delivery of 10,000 food grab bags to vulnerable members of the community.

The grab bags were delivered by staff working on redeployed duties with the emphasis of connecting with vulnerable children who would normally be entitled to a free school meal. This was extended to include any child that required the service.

The teams delivered to 15 locations throughout the county to ensure that all children had a provision. This was operationally safe as social distancing, PPE measures and barriers were used to control contact.

Property and Catering teams also worked on planning menus and the delivery of food to residents who were shielding as well as visiting food banks to provide supplies and specialist advice.

Property Team

Kelliebank property staff have been heavily involved in community work throughout the COVID outbreak.

Staff from the trades and repairs centre teams along with project co-ordinators have been going the extra mile to support the Council's Helping Hands programme which was set up to provide support to the most vulnerable people in the community.

Trades and repairs centre staff along with project co-ordinators have been going the extra mile to help deliver food and medicine as well as providing bespoke help where needed as part of the Council's Helping Hands programme. A food store was set up at Kelliebank for the creation of food boxes which were then delivered by our trades teams.

The team's drivers have also helped a number of third sector organisations in the community by carrying out cash and carry runs and delivering donated items such as furniture and hardware/white goods etc. Trades staff assisted with small buildings work which enabled organisations to optimise the use of premises.

Kelliebank trades staff continue to be redeployed to Waste Services allowing Forthbank Recycling Centre to open and continue to function while other members of the team have been redeployed to catering services to support the delivery of school meal grab bags throughout the Easter and Summer holiday periods.

In addition to the community work, the team continued to deliver a variety of services to our tenants throughout the pandemic.

Compliance Works

The public buildings compliance and maintenance team have continued to work throughout the pandemic to ensure that all residential care homes and all of our critical non-domestic buildings were maintained in sound condition. Although the vast majority of these buildings were closed the

team ensured that there was no let up in required testing and maintenance in such areas as water management, fire and security, electrical and gas testing. These works had to be undertaken in order for our care homes to remain safe and for our temporary closed buildings to be able to open again post lockdown, the team did a fantastic job in ensuring a high standard of maintenance was completed.

Repairs

Emergency repairs to our domestic and non domestic properties have continued to be undertaken throughout the pandemic. Trades teams have adjusted processes and procedures to enable these works to be undertaken safely and continued to provide this statutory service 24 hours a day 7 days a week, a fantastic effort. Non-essential works have been back programmed to be undertaken when able. The repairs call centre team remained fully operational throughout and have done an excellent job in managing tenant enquiries and issues.

Gas Team

The Council's gas servicing programme ensures that every property within the domestic housing stock has its gas heating installation serviced annually, this statutory service continued to function fully throughout the pandemic. The team worked relentlessly in conjunction with our colleagues in tenancy management to achieve more than 2000 gas services in a period when gaining access to properties was extremely challenging, a magnificent effort ensuring the safety of our tenants in their homes.

Electrical Team

The team have worked throughout these past few months to undertake vital electrical testing and repair works throughout a number of our public and education buildings, this statutory testing has ensured that buildings are safe to re-open as and when the time is right

Void Property Works

Trades teams have worked extremely hard within void properties since March to ensure that there are adequate number and type of properties refurbished and made available to provide temporary accommodation for those who require it. Additional procedures had to be introduced to enable a suitable and safe process for works to take place, all trades staff working through this process have went the extra mile to ensure these works could continue in a challenging environment.

Enabling the Education Estate

Kelliebank Property team has worked in conjunction with corporate health and safety to undertake survey and assessment of all education buildings across the county to ensure that they are suitably equipped for the return of children in August. The team have been working hard to put in place Covid safe arrangements and provide advice to education staff on measures which are able to be put in place to assist in the managing of the building and the safe return of the children, a tough task which the team has handled brilliantly.

Covid Safe Buildings Assessments

Our Public Buildings Compliance Team has worked in conjunction with corporate health and safety to undertake risk assessments across our public buildings portfolio ensuring that these buildings have been adequately assessed and enabled for re-habitation. This has been a time consuming and challenging task with the teams input invaluable in providing Covid Safe buildings for re-opening.

Children's and Justice Service Rise to the Covid Challenge



Working through Covid-19 over the last few weeks and months has been particularly challenging for staff in Children's and Justice Service but they have more than risen to the challenge.

Within Woodside Children's Home, staff rallied to the needs of the young people living there and embraced different working patterns to ensure the house continued to run safely and happily. The team recognised the difficulties facing young people in their care and how stressful it has been for them over the past four months and have shown them commitment and love - two factors which have ensured the young people are ok and learning to cope with the situation.

Children's Services in general have seen a 50% increase in child protection and welfare referrals during the pandemic and have been working hard throughout this period with the duty team assessing all child protection referrals. By using skills, knowledge and experience around strength based restorative approaches, children have been able to remain at home or with kinship networks. This is something that the team is very proud of as it demonstrates a real commitment to keeping children safe, but still within the family home.

Staff have had to be imaginative with the children and families they are working with. Prior to Covid, all contact was face to face but following lock down, this had to stop (aside from child protection referrals). They have had to use a variety of IT and social media tools to not only keep in contact, but to have interesting and informative interactions. As we move into recovery, staff have been meeting clients outside and going for

walks. This is helping to form different relationships between families and workers and is something the team are keen to build on.

Our Justice Service staff, working with partners, have also embraced IT to maintain contact with their clients on statutory orders as well as those in custody.

Staff have had to adapt to legal changes within short timescales and the subsequent implications of this. The early release of prisoners saw 11 prisoners come back into the Clackmannanshire area. Justice, Housing and health teams worked closely together to ensure that these individuals were not only able to adjust to community release, but to do so in the middle of Covid.

Fiona Duncan, Chief Social Work Officer, said: "Working within statutory services during Covid has proved to be both demanding and inspiring. Staff at all levels in Children's and Justice Services have gone above and beyond throughout this period and I couldn't be more proud of them.

"Across all areas, there has been a calm but structured approach to problem solving. The management team have put systems in place that has not only enabled services to run, but have taken account of the need to provide support and guidance to those working in the teams. Margaret McIntyre, Yvonne Lynch, Tina Cunningham, Stuart Landels and Margaret Ure have worked tirelessly to ensure that staff are ok and are able to continue working as effectively as possible during this time. Truly amazing!"

What is STRIVE?

Safeguarding through Rapid Intervention (STRIVE) is a project underway to provide support at an early stage to individuals and families who live in Clackmannanshire. The aim is to ensure people get the support they need, faster, and prevent the need for statutory intervention.

STRIVE is made up of officers from social work, housing, education and police. By working together, officers gather and share information quickly to improve the existing system of safeguarding vulnerable individuals that would not otherwise have been achieved by any one of the agencies acting alone.

STRIVE practitioners are better able to “join the dots” to understand the overall threat of cases. This collaborative effort is informing the most appropriate action, reducing the likelihood and impact of vulnerable people experiencing crisis and reducing the intensive (and often repeated) resource required by public services.

The project was initially set up as an eight week pilot from Monday 3rd February 2020 and was based on the 5th floor of Kilncraigs.

What is STRIVE+?

In mid-March 2020 Clackmannanshire Council had to implement an emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Clackmannanshire Council's Incident Management Team agreed to use and build upon the STRIVE model to help manage concerns for welfare during the emergency response period.

The scope of the STRIVE partnership was extended to welcome Health and Social Care as a core partner, to have liaison contact with Clackmannanshire Third Sector Interface and Community Council Groups and, as such, the model became known as STRIVE+.

STRIVE+ has played an active role in responding to high priority concerns for welfare received into the Council, including families and households particularly affected by Covid. STRIVE has built close working relationships with the Community Support Team, Education hubs and third sector partners.

STRIVE+ Service Delivery

As lock down was announced, early constraints for STRIVE+ included a lack of remote working technology and no access to a secure case conferencing facility. These constraints were overcome quickly thanks to technology.

The STRIVE+ model now operates a remote and secure screening, action and decision-making process with one STRIVE+ practitioner continuing to act as the key point of contact for both the client or family and professionals.

Daily screening sessions now take place virtually via Microsoft Teams. This ensures regular and consistent communication between STRIVE+ practitioners and timely response to managing open STRIVE cases.

The newly-created “Management Hub” has added value to STRIVE+ output during lockdown. Those cases with particular high priority welfare needs or risk have been referred into the Management Hub for management decision and/ or action, including approval to grant Covid Hardship Funds and risk managing necessary client face-to-face interventions.

The constantly changing environment brought about by the Covid pandemic has tested its purpose and technology, but the STRIVE+ model is continuing to fulfil an identified business need to safeguard the most vulnerable residents of Clackmannanshire and present new opportunities to expand the project role.

STRIVE+ is building upon good partnerships and systems already in place to collaborate and provide a customer-focused and holistic service delivery.

STRIVE+ continues to identify and work with new partners whose input is having significant benefit to the lives of those who need it most (i.e. Housing Support, Clackmannanshire and Stirling Social Inclusion Project and Clackmannanshire Women's Aid).

Staff Response

STRIVE+ practitioners are becoming more experienced as they continue to develop their knowledge of different partner agencies' systems. More people on the cusp of statutory intervention are, therefore, receiving the help and support they need as early as possible.

STRIVE+ staff have fed back a personal sense of achievement from contributing to the STRIVE+ model and to the Covid emergency response. Shared responsibility and joint commitment to cases is reducing the duplication of work across agencies and is making better use of staff time, particularly when health and safety guidance restricts face-to-face contacts.

Demand

The volume of welfare concerns was slow at the start of lockdown, but the number of referrals into STRIVE+ has since increased.

Since the start of the pilot project in February 2020 STRIVE and STRIVE+ has now managed over 100 cases.

Demand is anticipated to increase as lockdown continues to ease.

The majority of referrals into STRIVE during lockdown have come from the Community Support Team.

STRIVE+ partners also make referrals based on incidents that have happened present a new risk or where officers have a concern about the welfare of a person or family.

STRIVE+ does not duplicate statutory services already provided.

Future of STRIVE

It is hoped that STRIVE+ can continue respond to those within Clackmannanshire who are experiencing vulnerability and risk, as well as help manage the impacts that will continue to emerge from the Covid-19 crisis.

A formal evaluation of the STRIVE project will be undertaken and will inform recommendations to be considered as part of Clackmannanshire Council and Clackmannanshire Alliance's strategic and transformation goals.

Contact: Fiona Grinly, Project Manager, strive@clacks.gov.uk

Keeping Kids in Clacks Active Throughout Lockdown

Prior to lockdown the Council's Sports Development team had been in regular communication with Wee County Harriers, Central Athletics and Scottish Athletics to develop pathways for new members. During lockdown Scottish Athletics has been one of the few Scottish Governing Bodies to maintain contact and host virtual meetings.

The Active Schools Co-ordinators have been supporting the learning hubs both before and during summer for children of key workers. The partnership between Sport Development and local sport clubs meant that during the summer hubs local community clubs volunteered to support sporting activities.

Alison Mackie, Active Schools Manager, said: "The sport of athletics played a very large part of the programme of sport and physical activity that was delivered to children as part of the Education Services Summer Childcare Hub. We were delighted by the support that both Central Athletics and Wee County Harriers gave over this period and a huge thank you to the coaches and volunteers from Wee County Harriers who delivered weekly sessions in the Alloa hub."

The wider Sport Development team have been involved in providing online content using the Active Clacks Twitter and YouTube channel along with supporting weekly live classes on the Get Active Sauchie Facebook Page supported by Wee County Harriers Athletics Coach Elspeth Kirkpatrick. This has allowed us to reach a wider audience.

Community Sport Hub and Club Development Officer Greg Welsh has supported clubs across the area with the latest guidance and information from SportsScotland and has been hosting regular 'Club Connect' meetings for clubs across the region to share experiences,

challenges, successes and to provide specific support. Central Athletics and Wee County Harriers were regular attendees and provided valuable insight. The two athletic clubs have also been working with Scottish Athletics & Sport Development in a Clackmannanshire Athletics Forum to help grow the sport across the area and have become trial clubs for the newly developed Clackmannanshire Education Service Club Accreditation Scheme.

Now that children and young people have returned to school and until further notice PE in primary and secondary schools is taking place outside (weather permitting). Athletics is one of the activities which is taking place across all schools. This is a great opportunity for the two clubs to get involved and grow their sport across Clackmannanshire.

The Council's partnership with Scottish Athletics recently supported two international athletes to use the track at Lornshill Academy to train for their specialisms.

Greg Welsh, Community Sport Hub/Club Development Officer, said: "Central Athletics & Wee County Harriers have been fantastically proactive during the difficult lockdown period. Both clubs have been in regular contact with Sport Development and have actively engaged their membership throughout with challenges, competitions and social zoom sessions. I am glad to see both clubs continuing to support Sport Development. It has been great to see that clubs have returned to regular, safe and structured coaching sessions at Lornshill Academy with both clubs noticing increased attendances at their junior club sessions."



Back Up and Running



With support from the Council's Health and Safety Team, Firpark Ski Centre was able to re-open on 7th July for restricted access.

As the first step in a phased return, small groups who could follow the Covid-19 guidelines, had their own ski equipment and adhered to the Firpark conditions, were able to use the ski slope during July and August.

Five groups from across Scotland who specialise in race training have now booked space on the ski slope. One of the first groups to utilise the slope were The British Ski Academy, who brought 15 talented young skiers from across Scotland to try out the slope and the new Covid safe environment.

ATC Racing, who are based in Nethy Bridge, occupied Tuesday evening slope time with 10 kids; Lothian Ski Racing from Hillend ran two Camps, with 15 kids and 3 coaches. Polmonthill Snowsports Club and Muckhart & District Racing also held Camps over July and August.

The staff at Firpark continued to work very hard during lockdown to ensure that the slope and the venue were ready to accept skiers back to the slope.

Each group who has accessed it so far have praised the venue, the quality of the slope, and the customer service of the staff, along with being delighted at how well their young skiers have enjoyed being back on two skis again!

Dual slalom races, skill sessions, drills and fitness work has seen the Tillicoultry venue brought back to life this summer, and it is hoped as the country continues to move through recovery that skiing can become more accessible for everyone across Clackmannanshire.

Libraries Continue to Deliver Valuable Service

The Library Service continues to deliver free access to a range of activities online which have been really well received since lockdown began and the libraries were closed. This includes the Ebooks and E-Audiobooks service, online reading activities including Bookbug and reading promotions.

The Summer Reading Challenge 2020 for children moved to a digital platform and is being well received, and the Service has also introduced a new adult reading challenge to inspire more people to take up reading.

During lockdown, the Speirs Centre and Ben Cleuch Centres were closed but have now re-opened and over 250 people used the service on the first day back. Sauchie Library has also now re-opened and plans are underway to re-open the libraries in Alva and Tullibody.

The new click and collect library service is very popular and has gotten off to a great start. This service is for customers who require new library reading materials. Customers can contact the three locations and staff will make up reading packs for them to safely collect at a time that suits them.

The Service have also restarted housebound deliveries, providing a valuable service to our most vulnerable library customers.

Staff are really happy to be back in the buildings and delivering great customer services.



Customer Service Keep in Touch

Despite the challenges as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, our Contact Centre staff continued to take calls throughout and did a fantastic job helping and advising those most in need. The team also had to do this while getting used to a new way of working with members of the team working remotely.



Registrars Support Community Throughout Lockdown

The Registrar team has been working hard right the way through the pandemic, often in difficult circumstances.

They have had to get used to a change in the way they worked because death registrations could no longer be done through face to face appointments and had to be carried out by phone.

The team also moved to 7 day working so that they could continue to supply the statistics that formed part of the First Minister's daily briefings.

Covid-19 also meant that birth registrations stopped so the registrars have just completed the backlog. It's been lovely to reinstate this important occasion for new parents again.

Weddings have also re-started, although they are small and have to comply with the latest guidance. This can mean some really tough decisions for couples, such as whether it is possible for brides to be walked up the aisle when social distancing has to be in place.

Throughout the pandemic, the Registrar team has been there to support our community through the biggest moments in their lives - birth, marriage, citizenship and death, This has been a huge task which has been both more important and more challenging since lockdown began.

Thank you to the whole team for their commitment and professionalism.

Farewells

Earlier this month we said farewell to Fiona McOmish, Strategic Director of Services to People, who joined us on secondment from the Fire Service in early 2019.

During Fiona's 18 months with the Council she has taken forward some key work including: the development of our STRIVE pilot (safeguarding through rapid intervention); the agreement of the Working Together and Facilities Time agreements with trade unions colleagues, and the delivery of the Learning Estate Strategy.

Fiona has taken a career break for 12 months to embark on a new adventure in Italy with her husband and children. We will miss Fiona's calm and cheerful commitment but wish her and her family a safe and happy time in Italy.



Lottery Winners

In the December draw, Julie McMillan from Revenues won £250. In January, Julie Wozniak from Housing won £1,000 and Nicole Shirreff from Ludgate won £250. All winners of £250 were Jacqueline McArthur from Social Work in February draw, Jennifer Roy from Park Primary in the March draw and Julie Sinclair from Revenues in the April draw.

For more information on the CFSLA staff lottery, please see

www.cfslalottery.org.uk/

David Kennedy left his post as an Energy Efficiency Advisor in July, after four years working for the Council.



David's dedication and commitment towards helping residents tackle fuel poverty is well recognised and has helped deliver substantial financial savings within the community. He is appreciated for his work in the community and will be missed by his colleagues in the Energy and Sustainability Team and the local fuel poverty network. Most recently David has been our Environmental Emergency Liaison officer to help out during Covid outbreak.

David will now be working as Efficiency Advisor in a new project at Moncreiff Parish Church in East Kilbride, and all his colleagues wish him the best in this role.

Support for Our Armed Forces

We've further strengthened our support for former and serving members of our armed forces in Clackmannanshire by signing the Armed Forces Covenant. This means that we will endeavour in our business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- no member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
- in some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.



Nikki Bridle signed the document on behalf of the Council, together with Commander Gary Mills from the Royal Navy.

Services will be sharing more information with staff in the coming weeks and months about how this might impact on our work, so look out for more details.



nhsinform.scot/coronavirus #WeAreScotland