

AGENDA ITEM No. 4.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL REPORT

To: BELLSHILL & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE	Subject: GOOD NEWS
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	
Date: 24 AUGUST 2004	Ref: PJ/LMcM/JP

1. INTRODUCTION

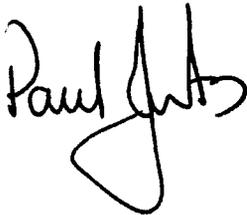
The purpose of this report is to advise committee of current 'good news' stories within the department.

2. GOOD NEWS ITEMS

A list of the current 'good news' stories is attached as appendix 1.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That members note the report.



There are no background papers relevant to this report

1. DEPARTMENTAL

1.1 Breakout activity brochure launched

The Council's summer holiday activity guide, Breakout, was officially launched on Monday 21 June at M&D's theme park in Motherwell. The winner of the Face of Breakout competition, 5 year old Anna Swan from Cumbernauld was there, together with the runner up, 8 year old Liam McCafferty from Airdrie.

The guide has information on activities across North Lanarkshire for children and young people, covering arts, countryside, libraries, museums, play and sport. The activities run from June until the end of August.

2. COUNTRYSIDE & LANDSCAPE

2.1 First Minister re-opens rowing course at start of preparations for the FISA World Masters Regatta 2005

In his role as chairman of the FISA World Masters 2005 Committee of Honour, First Minister Jack McConnell officially re-opened the upgraded rowing course at Strathclyde Country Park on Saturday 26 June.

He started the first race to be held on the upgraded course and later attended the inaugural meeting of the Committee of Honour.

The course is Britain's first Olympic-standard eight-lane 2,000-metre rowing course. The existing six-lane course was upgraded to meet the new FISA grade A standards.

Strathclyde Country Park is the location for the FISA World Masters' Regatta, which is being hosted by the Scottish Amateur Rowing Association (SARA) from 8-11 September 2005.

The Masters is the largest rowing event in the world, attracting around 3,500 competitors from 36 nations. It is likely that there will be a further 6,500 spectators, bringing an anticipated economic boost of some £12 million to the area.

A number of sections are involved in the working group, which has been set up to prepare for the event.

2.2 Another good show at the Summer Flower Festival

This year's Summer Flower Festival took place at Viewpark Gardens in Uddingston from Thursday 3 to Sunday 6 June. Despite the changeable weather, attendances remained high at 15,300 across the four days. Visitors from all over Lanarkshire came to enjoy the space-themed floral displays and other entertainments, including a roadshow, plant sales and arts & crafts.

The winners of the miniature garden competition were New Monklands Nursery in Glenmavis and St Teresa's Primary School in Newarthill.

3. CREATIVE SERVICES

3.1 Successful Scottish Arts Council application for Youth Arts Festival 2005

The Community Arts team has received funding of £25,000 from the Scottish Arts Council for the annual Youth Arts Festival. The funding will allow for the programming of a much more comprehensive festival and also for the appointment of a part time co-ordinator.

4. COMMUNITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Holytown parents create community wildlife garden

A group of parents and grandparents of children at Christ the King primary school in Holytown, have designed and created a wildlife garden for pupils to make use of. The group received a grant from Scottish Natural Heritage, together with donations of plants and soil from local businesses. The garden has contributed to the school's plan for achieving an Eco Award and has also created opportunities for recycling and family learning. The group's hard work was recognised by the Scottish Adult Learning Partnership at an awards ceremony in May.

5. LIBRARIES & INFORMATION

5.1 Extended Saturday opening hours for libraries

Libraries in the six main town centres are now open for longer on Saturdays.

Airdrie Library, Bellshill Cultural Centre, Coatbridge, Cumbernauld, Motherwell and Wishaw Libraries are now open from 9am until 4pm, giving residents an increased opportunity to make use of free internet access, or borrow the latest DVDs, books, videos and computer games.

Kuppas Cafés in Bellshill Cultural Centre, Motherwell and Wishaw Libraries are also now open from 10am until 3pm to coincide with the extended opening hours.

5.2 Objective 3 funding success

The department has been awarded funding from the European Social Fund to enable further development of the learning website Logintolearn.

The overall funding of £380,000 for the project will allow for the appointment of a project manager and a project officer to oversee the development on the site.

The project will also include the development of online learning materials to support the new European Computer Driving Licence syllabus and interactive digital television, as well as enhanced support systems based around the use of virtual library assistants.

5.3 Online catalogue proves popular with customers

The introduction of the online library catalogue is proving popular with customers. Latest figures show that searches of the catalogue have increased from 1,620 at its launch in March to 9,085 in May. The number of customers logging in to request or renew books has increased from 230 to 673 for the same period.

A programme is now in place to replace all the catalogue terminals in libraries with web enabled versions to allow customers in libraries to access the internet version of the catalogue and its facilities.

6. SPORT & RECREATION

6.1 Free summer swims for young people at all North Lanarkshire's pools

The council's free swim scheme for under 16s is once again on offer at all Community Services pools. It operates from Mondays to Fridays, 10am to 4pm from 28 June to 17 August. In an extension to the scheme, 12 to 16 year olds can swim free until 9pm.

This is the fourth successive year that the scheme has been available. It has proved to be extremely popular, with almost a million free swims enjoyed by local children since it was first launched. Extra staff are on hand at each of the pools to cope with the influx of young people.

In response to feedback from adult users, designated lane arrangements and sessions have been set aside at pools, to provide adults with a quieter area for swimming.

7. RAVENSCRAIG

7.1 Funding agreed for regional sports facilities

Following the recent announcement by Andy Kerr, the Minister for Finance and Public Services, some £49.5 million of public money from the National and Regional Sports Facility Strategy Fund has been awarded to six local authorities for the development of multi-sports facilities at a number of sites in Scotland.

North Lanarkshire received the maximum grant available, some £5 million, to assist in the construction of a Regional Sports Facility on the Ravenscraig site. This significant provision will include:

- A full size 11-a-side indoor football pitch, with third generation playing surface. The pitch will be capable of accommodating 2,000 spectators for indoor football events and 5,000 people for other events
- A 135 metre six-lane indoor athletics strip, with rubberised surface
- A 12 court sports hall
- Outdoor turf and synthetic football pitches

The success for the North Lanarkshire bid was largely down to effective partnership working between the Council and the Ravenscraig Partnership. This is made up of representatives from Scottish Enterprise Lanarkshire, Wilson Bowden Developments and Corus.

Details on any of the above are available from the Director of Community Service.