

To: BELLSHILL & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE		Subject: GOOD NEWS
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Date: 15 MARCH 2005	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.

3.2 That the report be referred to the Area Committees for information.

Paul Gutter

There are no background papers relevant to this report

1. DEPARTMENTAL

1.1 Year of achievements for Community Services staff

On Wednesday 26 January, over 150 staff from across the department attended the annual 'Celebration of Achievements' awards presentation, at Sir John Wilson Town Hall in Airdrie. The presentation was to celebrate a year of achievement, with awards from 28 nationally recognised bodies being received by teams and individuals.

These included Charter Mark awards for excellence in public service, ISO 9001 quality management awards, CoSLA Excellence Awards, a Fleet Operator of the Year award for Transport Services and a Vision in Business for the Environment (VIBES) award for the Time Capsule.

2. COUNTRYSIDE & LANDSCAPE

2.1 Cash boost for urban woodlands

North Lanarkshire is set for a £500,000 cash boost from the Scottish Executive, to help revitalise urban woodlands. The investment will be used to improve access, thin tree cover to open up more space and light, remove fly-tipping and provide better information and recreation facilities to help people enjoy their local woodlands.

As a result of the funding, Community Services and Planning & Environment will oversee three projects, in partnership with Central Scotland Forest Trust and the Forestry Commission.

- **Glencryan Woodlands** – These woodlands will form an off-road public access link from Cumbernauld to Palacerigg Country Park. Funding of over £152,000 has been allocated for this work.
- **Green Link, near Motherwell** – More than 1,800 metres of new cycleway will be constructed to link local settlements to new jobs at the regenerated Ravenscraig Steelworks site. The project will receive funding of £309,000.
- **North Lanarkshire Council** – A number of urban woodlands throughout the authority will be surveyed and their potential assessed as part of a management plan to improve their structure and diversity. A total grant of £40,000 has been awarded for this work.

3. SPORT & RECREATION

3.1 Completion of £300,000 facelift at West End Park

The major work to upgrade the West End Park synthetic pitch in Bellshill is now complete. The £300,000 refurbishment includes a complete replacement of the existing pitch with the latest new generation synthetic grass surface, renewal of the perimeter fence, upgraded floodlights, new goal posts and additional car parking. The new pitch will be able to accommodate three seven-a-side areas for training, or a full size pitch for football matches. It is anticipated that it will complement the proposed new multi-million pound regional sports facility planned for the former Ravenscraig site in Motherwell.

3.2 Viewpark to benefit from a new seven-a-side pitch

A new seven-a-side grass pitch is being installed at Burnhead Pitches in Viewpark. At the same time, work will also be carried out to upgrade the existing surfaces. The project, which involves an investment of £26,000, is due for completion at the end of March.

3.3 Nominations sought for annual Sports Awards

Nominations are being sought from the public for North Lanarkshire Council's annual Sports Awards. These provide an excellent platform for recognition of sporting talent throughout North Lanarkshire, across a number of categories. These include Senior Male and Senior Female, Junior Male and Junior Female, Coach of the Year, Senior Team of the Year, Junior Team of the Year and the Service to Sport Award.

The awards will culminate in a gala presentation dinner, which is being held on Friday 10 June at Motherwell Concert Hall.

4. CREATIVE SERVICES

4.1 North Lanarkshire gets into the Groove

In January, the Community Arts Team launched three new Scottish Arts Council funded initiatives at an event in Bellshill Cultural Centre. The initiatives include Groove Live (North Lanarkshire Youth Arts Festival), the Groove arts magazine and website for 12-25 year olds, and the Beatroot Recording Label.

Groove Live is a multi-artform event that offers young people aged 12-25 a wide ranging participatory arts and cultural programme. The festival is running during February and has already been very successful. All of the programmes for schools are fully booked.

The Groove arts magazine launched in January, and its accompanying website www.onlinegroove.co.uk, will be available from mid-February. The project aims to increase participation in the arts for young people.

The Beetroot recording label is currently being set up and will benefit the local musical community within North Lanarkshire, by allowing bands to release records on the fairest terms possible.

5. COMMUNITY LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Council to pilot electronic voting scheme for Youth Parliament

North Lanarkshire Council has been selected by the Scottish Youth Parliament to pilot one of the first elections in the world to use electronic voting.

The election, which is for North Lanarkshire's five Scottish Youth Parliament seats, will take place on 29 March. The department's Children & Young People Team will be leading the arrangements, which will enable those aged 12 and 25 to elect the member of their choice by using their Young Scot smart card online.

The electronic voting project, working under the title *E-Nation*, is a partnership of organisations under the umbrella of the Scottish Youth Parliament. It includes the Electoral Commission, Young Scot and YouthLink Scotland.

5.2 Grant to help North Lanarkshire's homeless

The ACCESS Initiative, based at Dalziel Workspace in Motherwell, has received a grant of £75,000 to develop an employability programme for North Lanarkshire's young adult homeless.

The 'PEOPLE' programme (Providing Employability Opportunities through Positive Learning Experiences) is tailored to the individual needs of those aged 16 to 24. It includes driving theory and practice, a residential outdoor education experience, an introduction to IT and the ECDL, a cookery programme, food hygiene, first aid, pool lifeguard training, fork lift truck driving and work experience. The programme will last for six months and will involve two three-month blocks, with 30 young adults participating.

6. LIBRARIES & INFORMATION

6.1 Local children benefit from sponsorship and donations

Askews Library Services, the supplier of books to North Lanarkshire Council, has donated £500 towards children's activities. The money will be used to fund prizes for the popular annual schools quiz, together with other activities.

In Coatbridge, £2,500 has been donated to the library by Mr D Stevenson, for the purchase of children's books. Mr Stevenson wished to encourage the reading habit in Coatbridge children and decided to donate part of an inheritance to the library.

6.2 Generous libraries staff present cheque to cancer charity

Over £2,815 has been presented to Maggie's Cancer Caring Centre Lanarkshire, by staff from Libraries & Information. The money will be used towards the construction and running of the new complementary care centre at Wishaw General Hospital. The money was raised during a variety of events, including a 'virtual' Big Brother Branch Library, a coffee morning, a Mad Hatters tea party and various raffles. One member of staff, Elaine Guy, raised £300 by completing the Glasgow women's 10K.

7. CATERING

7.1 North Lanarkshire packs healthier lunchboxes

A leaflet designed to encourage healthier lunchboxes in schools has been developed by Catering Services, in conjunction with pupils. The leaflet, called 'Healthy packed lunch – a guide for parents', was launched at Cumbernauld's Whitelees Primary School, which is working towards achieving Health Promoting School status.

The leaflet is being distributed to all North Lanarkshire's primary schools and is part of the council's 'Hungry for Success' initiative. It contains many key messages for parents, on simple changes that will have long-term health benefits for their children.

'Healthy packed lunch' is the latest in a long line of initiatives designed to encourage healthier eating by the area's school pupils. Other schemes include the introduction of breakfast clubs, provision of free fruit to P1 and P2 pupils, water in schools and sports bars.

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