

REPORT

To: AIRDRIE AREA COMMITTEE		Subject: COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES WITHIN THE AIRDRIE AREA
From: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Date: 20 MAY 2002	Ref: PJ/KN/WM	

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to advise committee of community initiatives, projects and events that have been undertaken and supported by the Department of Community Services.

2.0 INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS

2.1 Gartlea Community Centre

The Community Centres Section have now received draft plans for the replacement of Gartlea Community Centre, destroyed by fire some time ago. A public consultation exercise was actioned and local residents, previous user groups and other interested parties were invited to have their say on the replacement for Gartlea.

As part of this public consultation exercise, the public were invited to attend the Sir John Wilson Town Hall on Thursday 4 April to view the draft plans and provide their opinion and feedback. The Community Centres Section is currently assessing the feedback and preparing a report.

2.2 Central Area - Capital Grant Works

Various improvements have been carried out to Petersburn Library with new window grilles having been fitted to the upper windows. These windows were regularly subjected to vandalism and, as a result, the new grilles have eliminated the danger of glass falling into the library.

2.3 Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland : Pathfinders Projects

Wendy Alexander, the previous Minister for Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning, recently announced the launch of Scotland's first national Pathfinder projects to support adult literacy in the work place and the Scottish Executive's intention to develop a new curriculum for adult learners. The four Pathfinder projects will develop new approaches to improving adult literacy and numeracy.

It is estimated that low basic skills are costing the Scottish economy an estimated £500 million in lost production, returned orders and additional recruitment costs. The cost to individuals may include difficulties in finding a job, gaining promotion, getting a mortgage or completing many everyday tasks. The "Adult Literacy and Numeracy in Scotland" report recommended that 8 pathfinder projects be established to raise awareness, stimulate demand and make links with social justice issues.

The first four national Pathfinder projects have been identified and were announced at the STUC Annual Congress in Perth by Ms Alexander and the Department are delighted to advise that North Lanarkshire's Community Learning Strategy Partnership was one of the first four. The other three projects are being launched by the STUC, the Road Haulage and Distribution Training Council and the Scottish Prison Service.

Ms Alexander said: "The launch of these first projects will assist in meeting our national target of helping about 800,000 adults over 3 years. This is the first time national literacy and numeracy programmes have been delivered through the workplace, demonstrating our determination to work with employers, trade unions and others to improve the skills of the Scottish people and to implement all the recommendations in last year's literacy report."

The reason given for North Lanarkshire's Pathfinder project being selected as one of the first four was that it was "*a beacon of best practice in local authority / Further Education partnership work*". The project was "*successful in engaging the interest of local employers*". It is anticipated that a further four projects will be identified through challenge funding later in the year. Communities Scotland will oversee the Pathfinders projects and curriculum development.

2.4 Junior Performing Arts College

The North Lanarkshire Junior Performing Arts College, funded by the New Opportunities Fund and the Scottish Arts Council, started in October 2001 and will run until June 2002.

Twenty-three Primary 7 children from six Primary Schools in Airdrie took part in an Easter School at Cumbernauld Theatre along with Primary 7 children and S1's from Cumbernauld, Wishaw and Moodiesburn. The children participated in a workshop during the course of the week that included drama, visual art, video production and street dance. The course ended in the culmination of an excellent performance on the Thursday evening at which parents, head teachers and friends were invited. The partners involved in this initiative are Community Services, Education, the Policy Unit and Cumbernauld Theatre.

2.5 Free Swims Initiative - Easter School Holidays

The "Free Swim" initiative for children under 16 years of age in our pools was introduced for this year's Easter holiday period and the response has been reported as being very popular throughout North Lanarkshire. The response to the Easter initiative has shown an overall increase in usage of 44% when compared to the previous year. Our junior usage increased by 80%, with the adult uptake showing a slight decrease of 8%. The resulting loss of income to the Department for the Easter initiative, again when compared to the income for the previous year, was £57,003. All of the major sport facilities offered a combination of pool and or sportshall activities, with good attendance being reported in most, and exceptional in others.

Airdrie Leisure Centre ran a very successful sportshall programme, managing to attract more than 60 children each day on average. John Smith Pool offered activity programmes combining fun and skills sessions.

2.6 Free Swims Initiative - Forthcoming Summer Holidays

The forthcoming summer school holidays will again hold the Free Swims Initiative. Now in it's second year, the scheme has proved to be very popular with parents and children alike, benefiting both participants and the community at large.

The Department is also pleased to announce that the scheme will be further expanded to include a free summer dryside activity programme, also for children under 16 years of age within the Sport and Recreation facilities. The required funding and support for this expansion stems from a partnership involving Sport & Recreation, the Department of Education and Lanarkshire Health Board's Health Promotions Unit.

This free programme will offer playleader-led multi-sport and game activity sessions, in addition to specialist skills development camps which last one week and are led by qualified sports coaches. These sports camps will aim to improve skills in basketball, volleyball, football, athletics, gymnastics, rugby and flag football. Health Promotion staff will also be working with the children to encourage good health habits.

2.7 "Bodycheck" Bus Update

As we move into the summer, the Bodycheck Bus will be out and about in your community on a more regular basis, providing a range of services to promote health and issues concerning lifestyle. The Bus, which can now be booked by local community groups, has certainly stimulated an avid interest. To date, over 1,500 people have benefited from an onboard health check.

2.8 Capital Projects - Sports Facility Improvements

Various improvements have been completed in Sport & Recreation facilities throughout the authority. Specifically within the Airdrie area, a new disabled hoist was fitted within the John Smith Pool to assist the disabled and the infirm in gaining easier access to the swimming pool. The Jungle Safari (soft play) equipment was replaced and emergency lights were upgraded in Airdrie Leisure Centre.

As well as the above, more than 20 outdoor football pavilions throughout North Lanarkshire will have various repairs carried out amounting to £150,000 and the new conditioning gym planned for Airdrie Leisure Centre is now at the design stage.

2.10 School Litter Campaign

All primary schools within the Airdrie area have been given "Henri and Henrietta Hippo" bins during the month of March to encourage children to place their litter where it belongs. This worthy initiative has been jointly funded by the Education Department and is yet another excellent example of partnership working within the Council. The Department is also pleased to advise that the new Karcher Sweepers, recently purchased by the Building Cleaning Section, will duly sweep up sweet wrappers and other loose packaging that happen to escape the hippo's attention.

2.11 NOF – PE & Sports Facilities

The New Opportunities Fund announced on 19 March 2002 that North Lanarkshire Council's allocation for the PE and Sport Initiative is £6,163,000. This funding will be divided into two programmes: The New Opportunities for PE and Sport Facilities (£3,582,000) and The New Opportunities for PE and Sport Activities (£2,581,000).

The 'PE and Sport Facilities' programme will modernise and build indoor and outdoor school sports facilities and outdoor adventure facilities and provide initial revenue funding to support community use. The deadline for Stage 1 submissions is 20 Sept 2002. The other programme, 'PE and Sport Activities', will tackle Out of School Hours Activities (OSHA) and *Active Steps*. OSHA projects will offer children and young people the chance to take part in sporting and cultural activities outside the normal

school day. *Active Steps* will use sport to divert young people from crime or behaviour likely to lead to crime.

Local Authorities will be the lead organisation in developing this grant scheme and must show that partnerships have been developed between the Local Authorities, schools, health and youth crime bodies, sport governing bodies and the voluntary sector.

2.12 Forthcoming Events

Forthcoming events at a facility or venue near you are as follows:-

- Wednesday 5 June
An event for Children with Special Needs, funded by the Airdrie & Coatbridge Taxi Drivers, is being held at Drumpellier Country Park. Pony rides, train rides, special displays, play equipment, games, refreshments and much more will be available on the day. Further details available on 01236 422257.
- Sunday 16 June
"Flower Power" is back at Drumpellier Country Park when the park abounds with colourful flowers. Join the Countryside Ranger at 2.00pm at the Visitor Centre and find out what's growing. Further details available on 01236 422257.
- Tuesday 25 to Thursday 27 June
Following on from the success of last year's event, "Safe Play" will be held at Airdrie Leisure Centre when various activity sessions will be available for children. Further details available on 01236 762871.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Committee note the content of this report.

