



## Changes to recycling

Changes being made to help us recycle more



## Brunton's star quality

Big names to appear as live entertainment returns

## CHANGE A LIFE

We're looking for foster carers who can make a real difference

## Pandemic support

We're united in response to COVID-19 crisis

# East Lothian Living

[www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)

WINTER 2021

NEWS FROM YOUR COUNCIL

Councillor Fiona Dugdale and Letham Mains Head Teacher Bruce Murray with some of the school's children



# County's newest primary school opens

**E**AST Lothian's newest school opened its doors to learners earlier this year. Letham Mains Primary School was funded through developers' contributions from the neighbouring Letham Mains housing sites.

The £8.6m school has 14 classrooms, an early learning and childcare centre, a dining hall, dance space and a two-court PE hall with retractable seating for performance and community use. External areas have been designed for outdoor learning, PE and play.

Children moved into the new building in February, having

## £8.6m facility provides a modern learning base for the community

previously been hosted at Haddington Primary since the establishment of the new school community in 2018. The school roll will continue to grow as more housing comes forward in the catchment area. Staff and learners are already appreciating the generous layout, modern facilities and dedicated space for their school community.

Head Teacher Bruce Murray says: "We feel really fortunate to be able

to enjoy a learning space that is bright and airy and generous. The impact on both staff and pupils is immeasurable, there is a sense of pride and ownership and a desire to reflect this in all that we do, and that creates a very positive ethos. We look forward to embedding our school in the local community and we can't wait for our parents and partners to make full use of this great facility."

The development is part of the

council's five-year, £134m Capital Investment Programme.

A major expansion project has been recently completed at Gullane Primary School while works are ongoing at Ross High School and North Berwick High School to provide new extensions and refurbishments that will meet the needs of growing numbers of pupils.

Construction work has also started on the county's newest

secondary school. Wallyford Secondary Learning Facility was granted planning permission in June. Initial groundworks have been completed to clear the site and work on the foundations for the £46m facility has begun. Alongside modern teaching and social spaces, the new facility will include specialist provision for young people with complex needs, a dedicated Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) centre, and a tots and teens area. Community facilities are an integral part of the new campus including a sports centre. *Continued on page three...*



# Food & Drink Innovation Hub gets the green light

EAST Lothian, building upon its existing and strong reputation in the Food and Drink sector, is to be the location of a flagship Food & Drink Innovation Hub and has ambitious future plans for a wider Innovation Park.

The Food and Drink Innovation Hub is part-funded by £30 million from the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal and a further £10 million from East Lothian Council. Located at Queen Margaret University, it is the result of a long-standing collaboration between the University and East Lothian

Council. The Food and Drink Innovation Hub will focus on developing and supporting innovation in food and drink within the context of health and wellbeing, providing serviced laboratories and office accommodation as well as facilities for events. It will accommodate the existing QMU Scottish Centre for Food Development and Innovation, and will offer access to equipment, knowledge and skills to support product development.

The Food and Drink Innovation Hub is in a prime strategic location next to the

QMU campus on the boundaries of both Edinburgh and Midlothian. It will be the first phase of a wider Edinburgh Innovation Park which will be developed over time to create a nationally significant centre of knowledge exchange, innovation and high value business growth.

Work is getting under way to select the design team and finalise designs for the hub. Construction is expected to begin early in 2023 and will be completed in 2025.

Councillor Norman Hampshire, Deputy Council Leader, said: "I'm absolutely delighted to reach



such an important milestone for this exciting project which will promote inclusive growth locally and regionally and create a significant number of new jobs and skills pathways. East Lothian, Scotland's food and drink county, is the perfect location for a Food and Drink Innovation Hub.

"The importance of growing the economy has been heightened by the challenges of the pandemic and the need to

focus on securing a strong recovery. In one of Scotland's fastest growing areas, we must provide opportunities for good quality, local employment as well as opportunities for young people."

Pictured: Cllr Hampshire with Head of Development Michaela Sullivan, Project Manager Catherine Molloy and QMU Principal Sir Paul Grice

## CONTACT

Living East Lothian,  
Communications and  
Marketing,  
John Muir House,  
Haddington  
EH41 3HA

Tel: 01620 827743  
E-mail: [living@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:living@eastlothian.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)

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## Ready for winter?

**W**Are all too aware that events can occur which can impact our lives, such as global pandemics. East Lothian's local communities play a major and important role in helping neighbours during times of crisis.

As the weather starts to get colder, it is important that East Lothian residents get prepared now rather than waiting until extreme weather affects them and others in the community.

Recent winters have proven that Scottish weather is unpredictable. It can cause a range of problems but everyone can get ready by taking action now. When it comes to severe weather it is important to stay informed (register for alerts with the Met Office and Floodline or listen to local news reports), be prepared and think if there are others you can help.

Some practical tips to get you started:

- Identify family or neighbours in your community who may need help if severe weather strikes – have their phone numbers to hand and

offer to help them prepare

- Make a household plan and collect together items that will be important to you and your family in an emergency
- Pack a few essential items in your car, such as an ice scraper and de-icer, a torch and spare batteries, a shovel for snow, warm clothes, boots and a blanket; and some food and a warm drink in a flask
- Whether you're self-employed, manage a small team or run a large business, ensure your workplace has severe weather contingencies in place
- If you live in an area at risk of flooding, register with Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

There are many simple actions we can all take to get ready. It's easy, doesn't take long and isn't expensive, but some smart thinking and advance planning could make all the difference.

**FOR MORE** information visit  
[www.readyscotland.org](http://www.readyscotland.org)  
and <https://ready.scot/prepare/emergency-plan>

## Voters urged to register in time to have their say next May



IN MAY 2022, local government elections will take place. To vote in the election, residents must be on the electoral register. In the months leading up to the election the Electoral Registration Office (ERO) for East Lothian is urging anyone who is not registered at their current address to make sure they are registered in time.

Gary Elliott, Electoral Registration Officer for East Lothian, said: "It's important to make sure you can take part in these elections. They are a chance to make your voice heard and have a say in who represents you on issues that affect you. If you

are not registered by the registration deadline, you won't be able to vote.

"If you were registered to vote in the last election and your details have not changed, you don't need to take any action. If in doubt, you can contact us via email at [enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk) or by phone on 0131 344 2500."

### HOW DO YOU REGISTER?

- 1) Go to [gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote)
- 2) Complete the online registration application – you will need your National Insurance number.
- 3) Look out for confirmation from your local ERO to say you've registered.

If you don't have access to the internet, electoral registration staff will be able to help you to register. You can contact your local ERO using the details below.  
Web: [www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk](http://www.lothian-vjb.gov.uk)  
Tel: 0131 344 2500  
Email: [enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@lothian-vjb.gov.uk)



# Schools come alive with skirl of pipes!

Piper in Residence hits right note with primary seven pupils

**T**WO of East Lothian's primary schools now have a Piper in Residence, thanks to the Instrumental Music Service, Pupil Equity Funding and support from the Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust. Primary 7 pupils at Windygoul in Tranent and Dunbar primary schools are taking weekly lessons learning bagpipes and Scottish drumming.

The lessons have quickly become a highlight of the children's weeks, with chanters and drums providing an atmospheric soundtrack to learning for the rest of the school. The young musicians received their instruments in September so they can also practice at home. Each school is forming a pipes and drums band and all are excited to showcase their skills in future performances.

## EXCITEMENT

Instrumental music instructor Ciaren Ross, who leads the lessons, said: "At the start of the project I was filled with excitement and anticipation as I have never had the opportunity to teach such a large number of primary pupils in one day. Having now begun to teach 100 pupils across two schools the fundamentals of bagpipes and drums, I can already safely say that it has been the highlight of my teaching career to date. When I arrive to collect pupils for lessons, their smiles light up the room with excitement and their enthusiasm is inspirational! Keep your eyes peeled on social media around Christmas time to see these talented young people's first public performance!"

The Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust (SSPDT) provided grant funding for the project. SSPDT supports piping and drumming in state schools in Scotland and



Instrumental instructor Ciaren Ross with Windygoul Primary School P7 pupils

the formation of pipe bands. It exists partly to protect and expand the country's musical heritage, but also to give young people opportunities to develop a unique set of skills that will stay with them for life.

SSPDT Chief Executive Alex Duncan said: "We're really looking forward to seeing the gains in pupil confidence and camaraderie as they take pride in learning an instrument and playing together. The Scottish Schools Pipes and Drums Trust is delighted to support East Lothian Instrumental Service and the schools in this wonderful initiative."

Instrumental Music Service Team Manager Jonathan Gawn said: "It's been a

pleasure to work with the SSPDT to further promote piping and drumming across East Lothian. There has been a lot of work behind the scenes to make this happen but both schools have effectively started a school pipe band overnight! I'm very much looking forward to hearing these talented young people in action soon."

**FOLLOW OUR** Instrumental Music Service online to see a wide range of pupils' performances across a range of disciplines at: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/IMS](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/IMS)



## Videos put mental health in the frame

EAST LOTHIAN Health and Social Care Partnership's mental health occupational therapists are launching a suite of videos to accompany their Occupational Therapy Workbook. It's part of a five-week course aimed at helping people to feel more in control of their lives.

The course helps people to identify what their issues are and where they are with their life. Building on this, the course then focuses on setting personal goals. These can range from helping participants plan how to spend their time, eat healthily, get into a good sleep pattern and learn to relax properly. It also looks at what's available in the community to provide stimulation and support. Linda Sneddon and the Mental Health OT team have been working alongside Justin Adams of LA Media to develop this innovative package.

Linda said: "The course is for people who have been referred to our service, and is part of an overall support package that also includes one-to-one conversations. People have busy lives and set clinical appointments can sometimes be an issue. This way people can access the support at times that work for them."

"It also allows us to engage with people in non-clinical settings - no consulting rooms for us! All the videos are filmed in an actual house or out and about in Haddington. It's easier to understand the benefits of a walk or the pleasure of making a meal if you can see someone doing it."

"You have to be referred to us to access the videos and workbook at the moment. But, in time, we hope to be able to offer it as a resource to other professionals because we think it would be so helpful for lots of people."

Justin Adams, Managing Director of LA Media, said: "This is a passion project for me. I really wanted to support Linda and her team and if one person is helped by one of these films I will be delighted. Linda and her team were so open to a different creative approach and we've completely shied away from medical talk and clinical settings."

If you are worried about your mental health, phone the ELHSCP CWIC Mental Health service on 01620 642 963, Monday to Friday, 9am-4pm.

## County's newest primary school opens

Continued from page one...

Work is due to be completed by 2023. The council is working with its development partner Hub South East on the project with Morrison Construction appointed as the main contractor. Cabinet member for Education and Children's Services Councillor

Fiona Dugdale said: "Our Capital Investment Programme is delivering new and improved educational facilities across the county to benefit families and wider communities."

"Letham Mains Primary School offers us a template for the establishment of brand new learning

communities in Blindwells and Craighall, while the development of a new secondary campus at Wallyford is also exciting. This is alongside our capital maintenance programme within existing schools and public buildings which will deliver almost £3m of improvements this financial

year and a further £2m in revenue funding for other works.

"Our priority is to ensure that all children and young people can learn in an environment that supports, encourages and inspires them to reach their full potential and these works help to achieve that aim."



# More trees please!

The issue of ash dieback highlights the importance of our major tree-planting programme

**A**SH dieback is a fungal tree disease first identified in the UK ten years ago when ash trees in the south east of England became infected. The disease is spread by infected spores borne by wind and has gradually been spreading north with evidence now of trees affected in East Lothian.

It is estimated that around 80% of ash trees will be killed by this fungus which affects trees of all ages and this will have a devastating impact on local landscapes and associated biodiversity.

The council is following national Government guidelines in terms of managing its own tree stock as well as offering advice to local landowners on identifying and dealing with affected ash

trees which will require to be cut down.

Amenity Services Team Manager, Jennifer Lothian, said: "The problems associated with ash dieback have been well documented in the UK and preparations have been made by a range of national organisations including Scottish Forestry and the Tree Council. While ash trees are not a large component of woodland cover in East Lothian they are still a significant presence in many locations and the removal in particular of mature trees will have a visible impact in some of our towns and villages."

The council has further information on the website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) on the identification of the disease and the management of infected trees, including recommendations for landowners and land managers.

Trees and woodlands form an important role in the local environment for sustaining a wide range of biodiversity as well as providing scenic beauty. The council has a dedicated forestry team which undertakes work to the council's tree stock as well as working with local community groups to identify suitable areas for increasing tree cover across the county. This year, this also includes the recently announced Queen's



Our dedicated forestry team is helping to identify areas for planting more trees

Green Canopy initiative, in addition to the council's own pledge for the East Lothian Climate Forest.

Mike Foy, Tree Officer, added: "Trees are an invaluable resource in both rural and urban locations and the council has identified an aim to greatly increase native tree cover as part of its Climate Change Strategy objectives, including the planting of two million trees over the next ten years through our Climate Forest proposal.

"We are already aware of interest and support to provide practical help in planting by a range of groups across the county. Winter is the key time for new tree planting and we are always keen to hear from people wishing to support new planting as part of our Climate Forest."

To register your interest in new tree planting e: [trees@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:trees@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Delivering a difference

From life-saving equipment to projects that tackle food poverty and social isolation, Area Partnerships are making a difference for communities across East Lothian.

Six Area Partnerships were established in 2014 as the local voice of community planning in the county. They strengthen the links between communities, area-based services, and The East Lothian Partnership and provide an opportunity for local communities to influence service planning and delivery in their area. Each Partnership has a budget for projects and improvements that will improve their area and sets its own priorities.

Mental health has been identified as a key priority for Haddington and Lammermuir Area Partnership. The group provided funding for CHANGES community health project to develop an online Crisis Handling Awareness Course which included specific information on signs and signals of suicide.

The course was offered free of charge to staff and volunteers with local groups and feedback was very positive. In the past 12 months, the Partnership also provided funding for a number of important projects in the area, including a defibrillator in West Saltoun, Lammermuir Larder for people in the ward struggling to access food, and Amisfield Preservation Trust for a new accessible greenhouse that can be used by volunteers and to teach local school pupils

how to propagate and grow plants.

North Berwick and Coastal Area Partnership's Health and Wellbeing Association commissioned research to better understand how it could continue with its work to create a kind, compassionate and inclusive community following the pandemic, improving communications and relationship building, and working with partners.

Musselburgh Area Partnership is also building on its work post COVID-19 with initiatives that further the significant support it provided during that period. Project 21 provides funding to community groups and organisations to offer free taster sessions of their activities that could have a positive impact on mental health, tackle social isolation, and offer new experiences. The Partnership is also working with Dementia Friendly East Lothian and the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) to establish a meeting centre for people living with mild to moderate dementia and their families in Musselburgh.

To find out more about Area Partnerships visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/areapartnerships](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/areapartnerships)

Contact Lammermuir Larder: [team@lammermuirlarder.co.uk](mailto:team@lammermuirlarder.co.uk) or call 07483 911391

## Let's plant a tree for the Jubilee

**THE QUEEN'S Green Canopy (QGC)** is a unique tree planting initiative created to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 which invites people from across the United Kingdom to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'.

Everyone from individuals to Scout and Girlguiding groups, villages, counties, schools and businesses will be encouraged to play their part to enhance our environment by planting trees during the tree planting season from October to March.

With a focus on planting sustainably, the QGC will encourage planting of trees to create a legacy which will benefit future generations. This initiative will work locally with Area Partnerships, Community Councils and local schools to dedicate newly planted trees to the Queen's Green Canopy.

East Lothian Provost, John McMillan, explained: "The Lord Lieutenancy in East Lothian is coordinating planting projects as part of the QGC and working closely with the council's local amenities teams to identify appropriate sites and tree species that will thrive for years to come."

Roderick Urquhart, Lord Lieutenant of

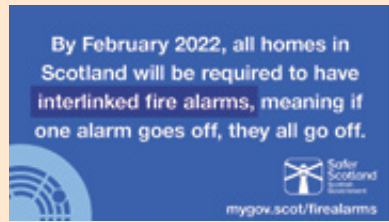


East Lothian's Lord Lieutenant, Roderick Urquhart, gets planting

East Lothian, said: "QGC is such a worthwhile, exciting and well-timed initiative, and I would encourage individuals, voluntary organisations and businesses across East Lothian to get involved and plant trees. Not only will tree planting mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee, but the trees will leave an important legacy for our beautiful county. The Lieutenancy is very grateful for all the support provided by East Lothian Council in helping promote QGC and planting trees."

For more information visit: [www.queensgreencanopy.org](http://www.queensgreencanopy.org)





## New fire safety regulations come into force next February

EVERY home in Scotland must have interlinked smoke and heat alarms that are mounted on to the ceiling. Interlinked alarms mean if one alarm goes off, they all go off. You're required to have:

- one smoke alarm in the room you spend most of the day, usually your living room
- one smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- one heat alarm in the kitchen.

Any carbon-fuelled appliances - like a boiler or heater - must also have a carbon monoxide detector. This does not need to be linked to the fire alarms.

### LEGISLATION

Home-owners are responsible for ensuring their home complies with the legislation. You can either install:

- Sealed battery alarms which have tamper-proof long-life batteries (these can be fitted yourself), or
- Main-wired alarms (fitted by an electrician).

The installation costs are to be met by the home-owner. If you are struggling to meet the cost and the following applies to you, Care and Repair East Lothian may assist you:

- Receive Guaranteed Pension Credit or Employment Support Allowance
- Council tax band A, B or C and
- Name on the title deeds.

For social and private tenants, it is your landlord's responsibility to ensure your property meets the new legislation.

Council house tenants will be receiving a letter so that an appointment can be made for interlinked alarms to be installed by the local authority. This will be carried out at the same time as the regular electrical safety inspection.

More information can be found at:  
[www.mygov.scot/home-fire-safety](http://www.mygov.scot/home-fire-safety)  
[www.careandrepaireastlothian.co.uk/page/smoke-detectors](http://www.careandrepaireastlothian.co.uk/page/smoke-detectors)

# Changes to recycling

Further improvements to help you recycle more waste than ever

**C**HANGES to the household recycling collections this November will see all recyclable materials collected kerbside on the same day each week. This refreshed recycling service is designed to help us all recycle more than ever before with all materials collected by a single vehicle into separated compartments.

Environment spokesperson, Cllr Norman Hampshire, explained: "Recycling of materials is an important contributor in tackling climate change. Our new single pass collection vehicles keep the materials separated into types as required by the Scottish Government's 'Household Waste Charter' and greatly minimises any contamination of mixed products. East Lothian already presents a high quality of materials for recycling thanks to local residents using the containers correctly which reduces the quantity of waste going for disposal which is both economically and environmentally beneficial. In response to concerns about recycling materials sometimes being scattered on windy days a new weighted, self-sealing bag has been introduced for lighter materials. As there will be more frequent collections residents will find they won't need to use as many containers and certainly won't be storing materials as long."

### MATERIALS COLLECTED FALL INTO FIVE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES:

- Plastics, cans and cartons - we will be providing a new container to collect



this material which will be a sealable, weighted, reusable bag. The bag capacity is larger than the existing green boxes, are sealable - so no need to attach a cover - and the bags are weighted to help prevent these lighter materials blowing away. They still allow the collection team to check the contents are correct before they are emptied into the vehicle - and if used correctly they should reduce litter on collection days while maintaining the quality of the material we are collecting.

- Glass bottles and jars - in the existing green boxes.
- Paper and card (grey thin card used in food packaging i.e. cereal

boxes) - in the existing blue boxes

- Cardboard (brown corrugated packaging i.e. the boxes parcels are received in from online deliveries) can go in another blue box, or as present, flattened and presented beside the boxes or in another cardboard box.

The new collection vehicles have a compartment specially designed to hold up to one tonne of flattened cardboard so more recycling can be picked up before they have to return to the Transfer Station to tip. This reduces the distance each vehicle has to travel and means they can collect from more households each day.

- Food waste - no change. Continue to use the existing caddies.

## myeastlothian will make it easier to get in touch with us

WE'VE LAUNCHED a new online platform making it easier for residents to request a service or make a payment.

myeastlothian can be accessed from the council's website at a time which is convenient to the customer and saves people having to make a telephone call or send an email.

Currently it can be used for waste services orders with more forms and services being added in the months ahead.

Some services will be available online for the first time while others will replace

and improve upon existing online forms.

Willie Innes, Council Leader, said: "This is an exciting digital transformation development making it easier and faster for East Lothian residents to make a request, report something or pay for a service. It builds on initiatives such as improvements to our main council website and the launch of SchoolPay, the online payments service for parents and carers.

"The launch of myeastlothian reflects the fact that there is increased demand for

accessing online services - at a time and place of your choosing. Our intention is to deliver an even better customer experience, process requests and deliver services more effectively."

### ACCESSING MYEASTLOTHIAN

When accessing myeastlothian services for the first time, customers will be asked to create a 'myaccount' - this is the simple and secure sign-in service for online public services in Scotland. Users can set up an online account with a single user name and password

to access various online public services.

myaccount checks the user, and hands them back seamlessly to the council website with confirmation that their log-in details are genuine.

After registering, customers will sign in using myaccount to access the council's online services. It means many online forms will be pre-populated with the customer's information.

Sign up at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/myeastlothian](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/myeastlothian)







The Kickstart Scheme offers great opportunities

## East Lothian Works...inspiring and supporting individuals and businesses to thrive

WHETHER you're an individual looking for advice on employment or education or if you're a business looking to start up, expand or diversify, there is a dedicated and supportive team at East Lothian Works that can help.

Our services and the way we deliver them have had to be adapted due to the current economic climate and COVID-19 pandemic, but we're still here to offer support, advice and reassurance so we can keep building an East Lothian that's a great place in which to live, work and do business.

Check out our new web pages at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elworks](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elworks) for the most up to date information on what we can offer whether you're a young person leaving school or still in school, an employer or a budding business start-up or you're already in the world of working and looking to re-train or build up your skills.

### WHAT'S NEW?

#### ONE YEAR PROGRAMME FOR LEAVERS

This year, East Lothian Works is thrilled to be able to offer a newly developed programme for students in the senior phase. A number of S4, S5 and S6 students, from across all six high schools in East Lothian, will be attending a range of courses for the full academic year. The programme aims to offer our young people alternative courses with the view of gaining additional qualifications and enhancing their opportunities when they graduate high school. Delivered by EL

Works staff, students will complete a range of additional courses including personal development which uses a person centred approach to improving outcomes for our young people.

In addition to alternative qualifications, students will also have dedicated time to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Students have the opportunity to complete a secondary choice with one of our partnerships including Heavy Sound, Limelight Careers, Morrison Construction and Hibernian Community Foundation. Over the course of 12 months, students will be able to conduct visits to sites, colleges and have the chance to complete some work experience.

#### COUNTRYSIDE RANGERS

East Lothian Works is currently supporting the Kickstart Scheme, The UK government offer for young people aged 16-24 to have paid work experience, and has provided 60 work placement opportunities for young people in partnership with employers in our region. East Lothian Council itself has so far offered three young people a chance to join our Countryside Rangers using this scheme, with aspirations for more on the way. Having helped over 32 young people and 23 employers, if you are an employer or someone interested in work placement opportunities for more information on our work placement schemes please visit our website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elworks](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/elworks)

# Committed to

**S**UPPORT for all of East Lothian's business sectors continues. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic it was obvious that there was going to be a huge impact on businesses, so East Lothian Council quickly set up joint working groups with all industry sectors including retail, rural and tourism-related businesses, to ensure there was a two-way conversation happening to help identify and tailor the support available.

Council teams also worked hard to administer more than £36 million in funding from the Scottish Government's Business Support Grants scheme and other funds.

We also launched our Stay Safe, Support Local, Love East Lothian campaign to encourage locals and visitors to fully explore the range of quality local businesses across East Lothian.

Our website was continually updated to reflect the changing picture as we moved through lockdowns and the various levels of restrictions. There were posters and other artwork such as floor stickers made available for businesses to use to keep staff and customers safe such as physical distancing information, reminders to wear face coverings and maximum capacity notices for shops.

The website was an invaluable resource for information on mandatory and best practice measures for all sectors as well as how to apply for the various funding streams – plus our continuing range of business support including the Business Gateway service.



## Major development sites in East Lothian

#### BLINDWELLS

THIS is a key development for East Lothian and it's exciting to see work progressing at pace now on site, with the first new homes due to be occupied this year. 128 hectares of land has planning permission for 1600 homes, employment and commercial premises including local shops, community and healthcare facilities, transport & public transport infrastructure.

The new housing taking shape is the most obvious part of the site just now, but it's not just housing at Blindwells – it is intended that the first phase will also encompass a local centre area to give the new community a heart. Hargreaves, the landowners, are in

discussion with possible tenants in this area which it is hoped will bring a food store and coffee shop as well as a range of other community uses as the population grows. Work is also proceeding on the development of the loch and surrounding open space, to provide a place of tranquillity and somewhere for new residents to exercise and walk their pets.

There are also longer term and wider ambitions for expanding Blindwells to allow the development of a larger new town, potentially 540 hectares in size with great transport links to the A1 and East Coast Main Line. The feasibility of developing this potential expansion is currently being explored before



# supporting business

Councillor John McMillan, East Lothian Council's spokesperson for Economic Development and Tourism, said: "Working with our sector groups, we have identified a range of continuing support that will help East Lothian's businesses to thrive and grow as we continue to move through the recovery phase of the pandemic.

"This includes grants for tourism sector groups for projects that will help the industry to recover; continued marketing of East Lothian as a tourism destination including a refresh of the Visit East Lothian website; grant funding for projects identified by traders' groups in our towns and villages; plus a planned careers event and programme of vocational training for the hospitality sector.

"We are also delivering an additional tailored programme of expert support for businesses via our Business Gateway service, which has been informed by the results of a comprehensive survey. We are also bringing in third party support to help further improve digital connectivity across East Lothian.

"I'm also excited to see the progress being made with a joint project between the council and the University of Edinburgh to develop a visitor

management app which will use technology to inform visitors about how busy our coastal areas are on any given day, even suggesting alternative locations with more capacity, and informing visitors about what other amenities they might want to use during their visit including signposting to local retail and hospitality.

"It has been a very difficult time for all of our businesses but with the continued input from our industry partners I'm absolutely sure that East Lothian Council's package of support measures, current and future, will make a significant difference

## Help and advice

BUSINESS Gateway East Lothian offers impartial help and advice to all businesses and budding entrepreneurs in East Lothian, from the initial idea phase to launch and ongoing support to existing businesses.

We offer appointments with our experienced advisers, coupled with a range of workshops, seminars, networking events and a wide range of resources at [www.bgateway.com](http://www.bgateway.com)

Our range of Expert Help also offers funded consultancy support to businesses on topics including marketing, HR, website development, sales, branding, strategy and more. To discuss or make an appointment, contact [bgateway@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:bgateway@eastlothian.gov.uk)

Follow us on social media @ BGEastLothian

and help our economy to bounce back and be stronger than ever."

Information on funding still available for businesses can be found at [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/supportgrants](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/supportgrants) and for any support and advice you may need, contact [economicdevelopment@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:economicdevelopment@eastlothian.gov.uk)

## Card is a success

THE East Lothian Gift Card is a money card accepted in more than 130 local businesses. With everything from restaurants and shops to sports centres, hairdressers, and beauty salons there really is something for everyone.

It provides a simple, easy way for local people to buy a gift for friends, family and work colleagues, while supporting local businesses and our high streets. Since its launch in October 2018, purchases of gift cards have increased annually on average by more than 150% to more than £130,000 sold to date, with a similar percentage increase in spend recorded in local businesses since the lifting of lockdown.

This year will also see the launch of 'Load my Card' where identified businesses will have blank cards available to be collected, which you can then add money to via your PC or mobile device. Full details at [www.eastlothiangiftcard.com](http://www.eastlothiangiftcard.com)

## Loan lifeline

EAST Lothian Investments Ltd is a not for profit company authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. Since its formation in 2001, it has awarded 363 loans to a value of £3,172,300. These loans have levered into the county additional private sector investment in excess of £19 million.

The company offers interest free loans from £500 up to £25,000 to businesses and start-ups based within East Lothian and is the only interest free loan fund provided in a local authority area in Scotland.

Loans have been awarded to a varied range of businesses from hospitality, retail, engineering and food & drink. Any start-up business and/or existing company, be it a sole trader, limited company, social enterprise etc. from any sector can apply for the loan.

Decisions are taken by a board of directors made up of highly experienced local business people. They have a deep understanding of the county and make East Lothian Investments unique in Scotland as local business people are making decisions on awarding loans, unlike the majority of business lenders.

Business testimonials have included a hotelier who was able to refurbish a bar and rooms after being unable to secure bank lending; an engineering company investing in a new machine to make them more competitive and a food manufacturer being able to set up when bank lending was not forthcoming. More information at [www.eastlothianinvestments.com](http://www.eastlothianinvestments.com)



deciding whether it should be included within the next local development plan. It's expected that if the decision is taken to pursue the wider development area, it will take around 30 years for the whole site to be built out, which is why the council is working with partners to make sure the development is sustainable with high quality housing, good transport links, infrastructure and supporting facilities, job creation and protecting and enhancing the local environment as core aims.

### COCKENZIE

THE former Cockenzie Power Station site was acquired by East Lothian Council in 2018 to support its ambitions for promoting economic growth in the local area and creating employment opportunities. It is a key component of the East Lothian Economic Development Strategy. It is hoped that the new National Planning

Framework (NPF) will provide a greater degree of flexibility over the potential use of the site, when published in the autumn, which will allow the council to start to bring forward some of the interests that have arisen in the land.

Planning permission has been granted for two electricity substations on the site, to take power from offshore windfarms to the National Grid.

Much interest has already been shown in the site with ideas from the local community and potential developers.

The first draft of NPF4 is key to bringing the site forward. Cockenzie is currently included in NPF3 as a safeguarded site for thermal energy generation and carbon capture and storage, so provision in NPF4 for delivering a wider range of uses there would open up the site for much more varied development, which would link into existing communities and the new town at Blindwells.

## ENJOY YOUR NEW GYM FACILITIES!

enjoyleisure, in partnership with East Lothian Council, is thrilled to present its brand new Bodyworks Gym facilities in Meadowmill, Dunbar and North Berwick. Complete with a full suite of state-of-the-art cardio and weight resistance machines from Pulse Fitness, if there was ever a time to unlock your potential and increase your physical activity levels it's now!

As we head into shorter days and cooler nights, enjoyleisure's Bodyworks Gym facilities provide a fantastic opportunity to maintain your physical activity levels. From a light walk, to a gentle jog, or an intense run, you choose the pace that's right for you. Plus with the brand new fully interactive consoles – with built-in TV, music, apps and more, you can enjoy so much more than just your workout.

As well as upgrading the ever popular treadmills, cross trainers, rowers and resistance machines there are some brand new pieces of kit to discover! Meadowmill Sports Centre now has a Stair Master, which, even with slower speeds and

minimal impact, delivers a high calorie-burn workout.

Dunbar Leisure Pool and North Berwick Sports Centre have added an Air Bike to their cardio ranges. Unlike standard upright or recumbent cycles, the Air Bike uses a large fan for resistance. The more effort you give, the more resistance it delivers. But that's not all. With its moving handlebars, which engage your upper body and core, you can benefit from a full body workout all at the same time. With all of this brand new equipment available, (and a commitment to upgrade the other three enjoyleisure gym venues in 2022/23), access to more than 200 fitness classes per week and six swimming pools and health suites, enjoyleisure's valued fitness membership offering is not to be missed!

Remember, a fitness membership is so much more than going to the gym! It's a commitment to yourself – an investment in your physical and mental wellbeing.

Further information can be found at [www.enjoyleisure.com](http://www.enjoyleisure.com)



# Make the switch to electric

We have a reliable network of more than 100 chargepoints here for you

**A**S well as offering significant environmental benefits – less air pollution, less noise, lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – electric vehicles (EVs) can save you money. To support you in making the switch to electric power, East Lothian Council provides a reliable network of more than 100 chargepoints including:

- Journey (50kW+ 'Rapid') chargepoints in all of our larger towns, for quick top-ups when needed
- chargepoints in residential areas providing unrestricted overnight parking and up to four hours during the day, for affordable charging close to home
- multiple chargepoints with all-day unrestricted parking in long-stay car parks
- 150kW capable High Power Chargers located just off the A1 at Wallyford Park & Ride, suitable for cars with trailers (including

caravans) and vehicles up to 12m long

- workplace chargepoints for council employees at many buildings
- chargepoints for our own pool vehicles and works vans as we increasingly electrify our fleet
- bollard-style on-street chargepoints with no associated parking bays – the space can be occupied by any vehicle, regardless of what fuel it uses in areas where there is significant parking demand, and in sensitive locations.

This year, the council has secured over £800,000 to invest in new car chargers to provide flexible charging solutions for people without a driveway or a safe place to charge at home.

East Lothian already has the most chargers per head of population in mainland Scotland and, by the end of 2022, East Lothian Council will have completed its



ambition to bring almost all residents in the county within a short walking distance of a suitable place to charge their car within a robust, reliable and decentralised charger network.

The bulk of the funds have been secured from the UK's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) On-Street Residential Chargepoint Fund with the balance being made up by Transport Scotland's On-Street Residential Chargepoint Top-Up fund. This means that the additional chargepoints are being installed at no cost to the East Lothian Council.

The OZEV grant is the largest award made to a Scottish local authority for on-street residential chargers so far, reflecting past successes by East Lothian Council in delivering chargepoints under challenging conditions. A further £95k has been secured

from Transport Scotland's Local Authority Infrastructure Programme which will help with the ongoing costs of maintaining the chargers.

Additionally, more and more businesses (e.g. supermarkets, hotels, fuel stations and private developers) are providing charging options for their customers. Locations of these are often available at ZapMap or Plugshare

Would you like a chargepoint in your area? We welcome suggestions, particularly from potential EV owners without off-street parking (and therefore without the ability to charge at home).

**MORE INFORMATION** is on our website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/electriceastlothian](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/electriceastlothian)



Our staff keep the play areas in excellent condition

## There's plenty of places to play!

**THE COUNCIL** currently provides, manages and maintains 120 equipped play areas throughout East Lothian.

The range of play areas varies from traditional swings and slides to adventure play areas and skateparks. The facilities at each play area cater for a wide range of children of all ages and abilities.

Local children are always involved in choosing the design of new play equipment for their own local areas, arranged by the council's Amenity Services with the assistance of the local primary schools.

The fixed play facilities provide outdoor activities for children to use and enjoy in their local area and being able to play outside in this type of environment provides children with opportunities to develop new experiences and learn new skills.

Earlier this year the play area at Pinkiehill, Musselburgh, was refurbished with brand new play equipment funded by the council's Community Housing Local Initiative scheme, and has already proved popular with children and families.

Each play area is inspected regularly by council staff to check the safety and operation of the equipment. This is in addition to a full annual inspection and risk assessment.

Minor maintenance work is carried out at the time of the inspection by our dedicated Play Squad. Major replacement works to our play areas, and implementation of new play areas, are prioritised and delivered by our Amenity Services Play Team in consultation with communities and linked to capital monies available.



# Keeping East Lothian moving

We are hard at work as we maintain and improve our roads network

**T**HE COVID-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for us all and also impacted on the council's Road Services. During periods of lockdown, government and health guidelines for workplaces and physical distancing meant that road crews were unable to fully utilise opportunities for works when roads were quieter.

The main priorities were restricted to road safety, emergency repairs and other essential urgent work but, as restrictions began to ease, Road Services were able once more to undertake a wider range of work, including within urban locations which had been avoided during lockdown periods.

An essential part of Road Services works is the winter maintenance programme, which will start at the end of October.

East Lothian Council is responsible for providing a winter maintenance service on adopted roads throughout the county. Our aim is to provide an effective and efficient service, to allow pedestrians and vehicles to move safely, depending on weather conditions. In severe weather, we treat up to 600km of roads and around 300km of footways.

## OUR PRIORITIES

Where possible, we treat major roads and important bus routes before ice

Our road crews are working for you



forms. When it snows, these important routes are treated first. We operate this service over 24 hours if necessary.

Once these main, or 'primary routes', have been completed, we treat secondary routes and finally minor routes, such as those in housing estates, during normal working hours. We also deal with footways on a priority basis. Given our limited resources, footways are not normally pre-gritted. In ice and snow, footways leading to schools, hospitals, health centres and shopping areas are treated first, along with those where a lot of people walk. Main routes to residential areas follow, with footways within housing areas being treated as resources allow.

The A1 road is maintained by BEAR Scotland on behalf of Transport Scotland.

## GRIT BINS

Grit bins are provided for use by local residents at a limited number of locations where there are particular problems with snow and ice – such as steps, steep roads and paths, etc. Please note that:

- Grit bins will only be provided on sites with difficult conditions
- Grit bins will only be located where they can be filled from a lorry
- Generally, grit bins will not be provided to service a road which is already a primary gritting route
- Grit bins cannot be placed where they obstruct pedestrians

- Only written requests for bins will be considered. These must be supported by local residents and will be considered after a full assessment has been carried out
- Grit bins will be left in position in the summer months unless they are causing a public nuisance
- These bins are provided for use on public roads only and are not for use on private roads or driveways. Any abuse of this condition can lead to them being removed
- A review of locations for grit bins is carried out each year, taking into account any additional requests from local residents.

With more than 1,000 grit bins to manage, you can appreciate it can take time to refill during severe weather conditions. This is partly due to the squads also gritting and responding to emergency defects.

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS:

- Requests for new grit bins or refills; general comments / information on services via e-mail: [roadservices@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:roadservices@eastlothian.gov.uk) or call on 01875 824305
- Evenings and weekends 01875 612818

## FOR A1 TRUNK ROAD CONTACT BEAR SCOTLAND

- Email: [enquiries@bearsotland.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@bearsotland.co.uk)
- Phone: 01738 448 600.

CLlr Hampshire checks out new on-street chargepoints



We're serving up healthy options



# Fresh and nutritious choices

**TODAY'S** school lunches offer pupils an exciting range of freshly prepared meals that fulfil new nutritional requirements for food and drink in schools introduced earlier this year by the Scottish Government to promote healthy eating.

School lunches are prepared daily by trained catering teams and include a fresh soup each day and a choice of main courses, including a vegetarian option, all served with sides, bread and a dessert choice or fruit.

Supporting a healthier diet includes limited sugar and sugar-based items on the

menu and reduced fat and salt content. Pupils are served with a minimum of two portions of vegetables and one of fruit and locally sourced ingredients are used wherever possible.

Education spokesperson, CLlr Fiona Dugdale, said: "East Lothian school kitchens serve around 3,700 meals each day at 36 primary and six secondary schools and the school meals service has achieved the Soil Association Scotland's Bronze Food for Life Served Here award for the past seven years. This award recognises and rewards councils that are serving food made from fresh

ingredients, using free-range eggs and high-welfare meat, and free from genetically modified ingredients and undesirable additives."

Pupils in Primary classes 1-3 have received free school meals for a number of years and P4 pupils also became eligible earlier this year. Free school meals will then extend to all P5 pupils in January 2022 and P6 and P7 pupils from August 2022.

To see the current school meals menus, visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk) and search 'school meals'



# Our plan to tackle the climate crisis

We are taking positive steps on the road to becoming a Net Zero council

**E**AST Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025, launched in 2020, sets out the council's commitment to tackling the climate emergency at a local level and the vision and overall aims for a Net Zero council and a Carbon Neutral East Lothian, with specific outcomes, key priority areas and actions over an initial five-year period towards achieving these overall aims.

Since the launch of the strategy it is recognised that although many planned priorities and actions have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic other opportunities have arisen which can result in a positive impact on reducing carbon emissions. Environment spokesperson, Cllr Norman Hampshire, said: "The past 18 months have been challenging for all of us but nevertheless the council has continued to reduce its carbon footprint and deliver actions identified within the action plan which all contribute towards us becoming a Net Zero council.

"New actions have also been identified for future years and the council will continue to keep abreast of changing legislation and explore new opportunities. COVID-19 has proven the concept that many council staff can work remotely and services can be delivered with fewer assets.



The council is now analysing and considering how to build on this learning, and exploring opportunities for the future 'new normal'.

"The engagement, interest and commitment of young people in the climate change debate is recognised within East Lothian and I am personally grateful to both individuals and groups, such as Eco-Committees within schools and the East Lothian Youth Council, for their continued contributions to this important subject.

"Results of a survey of pupils late last year from several local primary and secondary schools showed that young people thought pupils at their school had changed behaviours during the pandemic, which could also benefit the environment and climate. This included walking to school more often and using local shops more. The pupils also provided us with valuable feedback on our strategy, and as we continue to progress more actions within the strategy the continued engagement and

consultation with young people will be crucial for successful outcomes.

"A particularly exciting new action reported in our strategy update earlier this year is work to develop an East Lothian Climate Forest, which would be delivered by an East Lothian Climate Forest Partnership with direct links with our communities. The proposal is to develop a 10-year strategy that will aim to plant two million trees across the county, enabling us to reach our target of a carbon neutral East Lothian while also delivering a range of biodiversity and green network benefits. Council officers have had initial discussions to scope the proposal and will now seek to procure a delivery partner."

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE THE STRATEGY LAUNCH INCLUDE...

- Continued progression of the installation of solar PV on the council's housing stock for energy generation, and the improvement of energy efficiency of civic buildings across East Lothian, including council offices, community centres and a swimming pool;
- The council was a partner in the ParkPower project – a national project identifying opportunities to generate Green Heat in Green Spaces. Consideration is being given to the potential to use bio-methane from food waste as an energy source following a positive high-level feasibility study;
- The council achieved the Soil Association Scotland's Food for Life Served Here

Bronze award again this year for the seventh year in a row, for its commitment to providing fresh, locally sourced and sustainable food for school meals, and is working towards a Silver award;

- Waste Services reported an increase in East Lothian's household recycling rate to 55.3% (2019) of total household waste recycled;
- Increase in the council's electric vehicle (EV) fleet and the installation of public EV chargepoints across East Lothian. 11 new ultra low emission vehicles (ULEVs) were added to the council's fleet, funded by Transport Scotland's Switched On Fleets Programme, increasing current fleet to 36 EVs or 10% of the total fleet. The roll-out of EV chargepoints across the county continues with at least one Journey (Rapid) charger in each of East Lothian's six largest towns, and more than 100 chargepoints now available across the county.

East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025 covers two major aspects of climate change: Climate Change Mitigation – which sets out how East Lothian Council will reduce its emissions to reach net zero as soon as reasonably practicable, and work with partners towards a carbon neutral East Lothian; and Climate Change Adaptation, which recognises that climate change is already impacting upon the planet and sets out how East Lothian Council will adapt and prepare for future changes in climate and enable local communities and businesses to become more resilient.

## IN RECOGNITION OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION...

- The council continues to take action to tackle future climate change impacts: a key area currently advancing is Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme.
- The council's Design Standards for New Housing Areas Supplementary Planning Guidance was adopted in June 2020. This document aims to improve housing design across the area, making more attractive, sustainable places for living, and includes climate change mitigation and adaptation measures.

East Lothian  
Council



TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE TOGETHER

East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020-2025 is available to view and download on the council website [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/climatechangestrategy](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/climatechangestrategy)





## Update on Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme

**THE PREFERRED £42m Musselburgh Flood Protection Scheme was approved by East Lothian Council in January 2020. In February 2020, the project team immediately commenced preparations to the Outline Design. However, due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and the council's commitment to advance this project in consultation with the people of Musselburgh, the design work unfortunately had to be postponed until late summer 2021.**

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 the project team continued to work on a number of key activities behind the scenes, with significant technical and environmental surveying work progressed within the town over the past year.

In the early summer, the scheme recommenced meetings of its Working Groups which bring together the project team with officers from multiple partner organisations who have a regulatory role to undertake. These include a Planning, Heritage & Landscape Working Group, a Roads, Structures & Access Working Group, a Watercourse Impact Working Group and a Public Utility Working Group.

### OUR PRIORITIES

In addition to the Working Groups, the project team also consult with a number of local area consultation groups. To start with there are six groups for defined areas in the town which have been identified as containing the properties / people who may be most directly affected by the proposed new flood defences. Each area will look at the existing infrastructure and local issues and help to shape the design in that area.

Further public exhibitions are also

planned for everyone to participate in with the next to be held in the spring of 2022 in The Brunton.

Project Manager, Conor Price, said: "It is hugely important to us that the people of Musselburgh become involved in the design process. This project will deliver flood protection against major flood events from both the River Esk and the Firth of Forth (i.e. the sea). This scheme is Musselburgh's scheme. The project team is here to deliver this project, but we would like to achieve the best possible scheme for Musselburgh and we cannot do that without the public's involvement. We hope these new local area consultation groups will allow us to reach into the heart of the communities and thus facilitate the engaged discussions that are so essential.

"We would like to highlight that the scheme is not designed. The 'Preferred Scheme' that was approved in January 2020 is a concept that has not yet been designed.

"It consists of a range of natural, catchment and traditional engineered flood risk management measures to reduce the flood risk to approximately 2,600 properties in Musselburgh.

"That 'Preferred Scheme' confirmed it was essential to have a new physical barrier down the riverbanks in the town and along the coastline to keep flood waters from both the river and the sea out of the town - i.e. keep the water out of the existing built environment, public spaces, and people's houses, schools, and businesses etc.

"The challenge now is to determine the type and look of the structure that will both undertake this responsibility and simultaneously become a part of the town's landscape."



Diane and Lauren

## Become a foster carer and make a positive difference

AS A radio presenter and school crossing guide, Diane Baillie-Whyte is a familiar voice over the airwaves and a familiar face on Port Seton's streets. However it's in her new role as a foster carer that Diane feels she is making the most impact: "It's really rewarding when you see a child thrive. The feeling that you get from helping a kid have a proper life is amazing. You can't beat it," she says.

Diane and her wife Lauren had been considering foster caring for around eight years. Their previous property was unsuitable due to the lack of a spare room. Undeterred, the couple moved to a two-bedroom house so they could make their dream a reality. Last year they made the first step on their journey and have since welcomed children into their home, first for respite care and now a long term foster placement.

Respite carers provide short breaks and Lauren explains that the couple focused on making the experience the best it could be: "We tried to do lots of activities and make every day like a little holiday," she says. Now with a long term placement they still ensure there is plenty of fun however day-to-day life resembles that of any family with school, work and an overflowing washing basket to accommodate. The challenges will also be familiar to many parents: "The questions!" both women laugh. "Kids always say why, what for, what does that mean? That's a challenge trying to find the answers all the time," says Diane. "When it comes to living and going out and having fun, that's easy."

Restrictions around COVID-19 meant that the normal fostering recruitment process moved online with meetings and training via Zoom. "It wasn't what we expected but it all worked well online," explains Lauren. They have a dedicated social worker who remains a constant

## "It's really rewarding when you see a child thrive"

support when needed. "Tanya's always on the end of a phone. If I can't get hold of her I'll text her and she gets in touch right away. She's really, really good," says Diane.

For Tanya, the experience of working with Lauren and Diane and other foster carers like them is the most rewarding part of her job. "I love the journey of watching people go through the recruitment process. Seeing how proud carers are when they get approved then finally get a young person to stay is extremely rewarding," she commented. "It's great watching our new recruits thrive and grow in confidence."

With new household routines established, the Baillie-Whites are busy planning their first Christmas as a family of three. "It's great thinking about Christmas - it's quite exciting for us making Christmas special for him, explains Diane. Even Lauren, a self-confessed Grinch, admits that she is looking forward to it.

"We don't have children of our own," says Diane. "Being able to give a kid what we would have given our own is great. We felt we could make a difference and we are."

East Lothian Council is urgently recruiting foster carers to make sure that there are enough homes within the county so children and young people can stay within the area and maintain links to familiar settings and people, such as schools, friend groups or family. Support is offered every step of the way. Start your fostering journey today: [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/fostering) or call 01620 827 643



## You can make a difference

VOLUNTEER Centre East Lothian (VCEL) can help you find volunteering opportunities locally to make a difference in your community.

If you are involved with a community group or charity, VCEL can help recruit volunteers, find funding, train trustees, provide templates for policies or support you to become a constituted organisation. Partly funded by the Scottish Government, most services are free. VCEL has also been commissioned by the East Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership to deliver a Community Support Service which provides patients with information, assistance and access to local volunteers when they have been assessed ready for discharge from hospital. This ensures that people get back to their homes in a safe and supported way. Volunteers help build confidence, promote independence and encourage people to get out and about.

The East Lothian Community Taskforce is part of the East Lothian Caring Communities initiative which developed following the fantastic work already undertaken by many local partners in response to recent COVID-19 challenges. Community taskforce volunteers offer help with occasional and time-limited tasks such as prescription collection and deliveries.

The Fa'side Community Pantry offers individuals and families in the Fa'side area a dignified method of accessing essentials like food and toiletries.

More recently, the Kindness Café opened. Operating Monday-Thursday 10.00am-12.00 midday, the café gives anyone the opportunity to pop in for a cup of tea and meet friends. For more information, see [www.volunteereastlothian.org.uk](http://www.volunteereastlothian.org.uk)



# The power of positivity

**S**CHOOLS across East Lothian will be using odd socks, sticky notes and special assemblies as part of a movement to help children and young people feel happy, safe and included.

Anti-Bullying Week is a nationally recognised initiative from the Anti-Bullying Alliance that will take place from 15-19 November 2021. This year's theme is 'One Kind Word', asking people to think about ways we can make a difference for those around us as well as ourselves.

The activities will start with Odd Sock Day where people of all ages celebrate difference. It's an easy and cost-free way to encourage open conversations about our uniqueness and the things that unite us. Schools will also take inspiration from Withington where the community came together with an outpouring

of positivity by covering racist graffiti on a mural of footballer Marcus Rashford with notes of gratitude and kindness.

Creating their own word walls will encourage all pupils to consider the power of language and 'one kind word' to create an inclusive environment. Special assemblies will consider the themes of the week and how they apply to relationships and behaviours.

Ahead of the week, schools had been invited to take part in a competition to win £200 for their community by putting forward ideas for projects that would help pupils create positive environments. This could be a buddy bench or a project to help with transitions between school stages such as P7 to S1. The winners will be announced during Anti-Bullying Week.

Education Support Officer Abby Ingham believes that the week provides a vital focus

for ongoing work throughout the year. "We want to make sure our schools are environments where every pupil is valued and differences are accepted and celebrated; where children and young people are secure and can flourish; where their voices are listened to and their ideas taken seriously," she says.

"Anti-Bullying Week is an important focus of this activity, however, it is an ongoing process throughout the year and across all of our schools.

"As well as the work that we do in schools through our Anti-Bullying policies we work with specialist organisations including Show Racism the Red Card and listen to our staff, children and young people.

"Working together we can make sure that all of our learners feel happy, safe and included in our schools."

## Corporate parenting: our commitment

THE council has set out how it will improve the lives of looked after and care experienced young people in East Lothian through the publication of its Corporate Parenting Plan for 2021-23.

A corporate parent is an organisation or individual who has special responsibilities for looked after children and care-experienced young people. This can include children and young people of all ages who are in residential care, foster care, kinship care, secure care, who are looked after at home

with social work involvement and care leavers who were looked after on or after their 16th birthday. The council is a corporate parent to around 400 children and young people in the county.

Executive Director for Education and Children's Services Lesley Brown said: "As a corporate parent we have a legal responsibility to these children and young people. However we believe that we have a moral responsibility towards them too - to make sure that they have

opportunities and life chances that their friends, school mates and peers have. We want to be sure that we focus on the things that will make a real difference across all of the key areas that many of us take for granted."

The plan has been developed in conjunction with the East Lothian Champions Board, a group of care experienced young people that come together to speak up about their experiences of care and the improvements needed.

"Involving the Champions Board and listening to their

views and putting their voice and experiences at the centre of what we do is crucial," added Lesley.

"The priorities in our Corporate Parenting Plan were developed from their feedback and we've worked closely with them throughout the Plan's development. We'll now work with them as we put our plan into action - they'll keep us accountable.

"We are all grateful to them for their commitment to positive change for others in care in East Lothian."



# Day centres give support

**D**AY centres in East Lothian – independent community organisations that support older people – have provided a swift response and flexible service delivery throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I am so impressed at how quickly East Lothian day centres responded,” said East Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) Vice Chair Councillor Shamin Akhtar.

“Overnight they had to close their doors in line with social distancing and infection control

guidance and move to an outreach model so that they could continue to support vulnerable people and their carers.”

Richard Smeed, incoming Chair of the Association of East Lothian Day Centres added: “We switched immediately from regulated building-based services to outreach support. It wasn’t always easy and I think we should all be very grateful to all the staff who picked up outreach working and ran with it – their response was excellent.

“No day centre staff were furloughed and we managed to

support our service-users with regular home visits to deliver lunches and help with things like shopping. Each day centre adapted its services to meet the needs of its own community.

“For many people, the most important thing was being able to rely on seeing a familiar and friendly face regularly. We know that service users and their families and carers really valued our caring role and the essential support we were able to provide.”

East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership has funded this support and will continue to do so.



Alastair Reid, Cruden Technical Director, with Councillor Jim Goodfellow and Dougie Russell, Development Officer

## New affordable homes for East Lothian

DESPITE the closure of construction sites for a significant part of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, East Lothian Council is continuing to work with developers to ensure as many new affordable homes as possible are made available across the county.

At the end of 2020 and the early part of 2021 we took ownership of 43 council houses, two of which were built to be wheelchair-accessible, at one of the largest new developments in East Lothian, at Letham Mains, Haddington. This was in addition to seven council properties at Home Avenue, Dunbar, 12 at Elder Street, Tranent and 12 at Pinkie, Musselburgh; plus six flats for veterans in Cockenzie. A total of 80 new homes.

The 12 properties in Tranent are specialist housing units delivered in collaboration with East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership. Meanwhile, in 2020 a total of 40 new housing association properties were completed.

Councillor Jim Goodfellow, East Lothian Council’s spokesperson for Housing, said: “East Lothian Council’s programme of investment in affordable housing is essential

in making a difference to individuals and families.

“As East Lothian is one of the fastest growing local authorities in Scotland, councillors agreed in 2020 to spend more than £174 million over the next five years on building new council housing and modernising existing stock.

“We will continue to work with developers and housing associations to stay on track with our plans to deliver the maximum number of council houses, homes for social rent via housing associations, and low cost home ownership opportunities.”

In 2021/22, we anticipate taking ownership of a further 70 new council properties; 37 at Tynemount, Ormiston, 18 at Craighall, Musselburgh and 15 at Blindwells, Tranent.

As well as new council houses, in 2021, we expect the completion of 10 homes in Longniddry for Mid Market Rent via Lowther Homes and 39 properties for social rent for over 55s via Castle Rock Edinvar, also in Longniddry. In North Berwick, it is hoped that eight Mid Market Rent properties via Touchstone and 23 for social rent via Castle Rock Edinvar will be available by the end of the year.

## Have you considered a career in care?

THERE is a real need for care at home workers and care home workers across Scotland.

Our Care-at-Home Service Manager Clair Anderson is also a Care to Care Scotland Ambassador.

Clair used to work in insurance but moved over to care for a new challenge. Here’s what she’s got to say:

“You meet loads of great characters in this job and they have some wonderful stories to tell. They’re so full of wisdom which makes it so interesting to listen to them.

“It can be a challenging job as you build relationships with people and though it can be tough to see their health deteriorate over time, it’s rewarding to see their smiles each day and know that sometimes by just being there, you’re helping to make someone’s day. I’ve always been keen to learn throughout my career and the number of



Clair is pictured at East Lothian Community Hospital with Councillor Shamin Akhtar, Health and Social Care Spokesperson, and the Home Care Team

training opportunities in adult social care are endless. It’s a great career to get into. The training is accessible and I’m always interested to learn more about my job and to impart that knowledge to my team.

“In order to be successful in social care you need patience, self-confidence, and faith in your colleagues. Good communication, listening skills, and relationship building are important as well. What people

don’t realise is that you also need to have thick skin as it can be quite an emotional job and you can’t take things personally.

“Be sure that it is a career you want to get involved in. It’s not an easy ride and it can be draining but there is no career as rewarding as adult social care.”

If you want to find out more about jobs and careers in care, visit [MyJobScotlandEastLothian](http://MyJobScotlandEastLothian)

## Ageing Well project is promoting healthy living

Much has been done in recent years to get East Lothian more active, but the number of adults meeting physical activity recommendations declines sharply with age. Physical activity helps prevent and manage a wide range of health conditions, including diabetes, heart and lung conditions and osteoporosis.



But did you know that less than a third of people in Scotland aged over 55 are active enough for good health?

The Ageing Well project promotes healthy lifestyles for people over 50 in East Lothian. The project is a partnership between NHS Lothian and East Lothian Council. The Ageing Well project aims to maintain and promote the physical and mental health, wellbeing and quality of life for people over 50 in East Lothian.

Here are some of the ways

Ageing Well can help:

- Set up new activities where there is a demand or a gap
- Help signpost you to activities in your area
- Help you stay healthy and active for longer
- Work with people who have physical disabilities, mental health needs or dementia and possibly “buddy” people to

appropriate health-related services

There are also opportunities to volunteer for Ageing Well. For more information, contact: The Ageing Well Coordinator Email: [ageingwell@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:ageingwell@eastlothian.gov.uk) Tel: 07718 117585, [www.activeeastlothian.co.uk/physical-activity/ageing-well-37](http://www.activeeastlothian.co.uk/physical-activity/ageing-well-37)





# Supporting each other during the COVID-19 pandemic

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, people across East Lothian have rallied to support and help others, including some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. From individual volunteers to local groups, the strong community spirit which exists in the county has been plain for all to see and made a real difference.

Collecting and delivering essential shopping and medicine, preparing meals or making regular phonecalls to relieve loneliness at the height of lockdown, are just a few examples of the ways in which people have helped to get us through an incredibly difficult – and unprecedented – time.

Volunteers of all different generations stepped up to undertake a wide range of practical tasks including providing food parcels, shopping, creating and delivering newsletters, and dog walking.

We have seen a wide range of talented, skilful and hardworking people devote time and energy to helping others in their local community, with local resilience teams carrying out valuable work as a fantastic example of partnering between council employees, volunteers and the third sector.

Provost John McMillan said: “We’re hugely grateful to the people of East Lothian for their invaluable support throughout the COVID crisis. We’ve seen heroic work to help and look out for others. Local resilience groups, individuals and other groups – as well as the third sector – have played an important role.

“This is greatly valued by the council and highlights the very positive difference people can make in their local area. I’d like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone.”

## CHALLENGES TO PUBLIC SERVICES

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented massive challenges to organisations large and small. There has, across the public sector, been widespread disruption to ‘normal’ services, with staffing challenges arising from people being required to self-isolate being particularly difficult.

Despite this, and in the face of lockdown

restrictions, council employees from across the organisation have gone the extra mile to maintain the essential services on which East Lothian residents rely and, as far as possible, minimise the impacts of the pandemic.

We’ve seen a combination of people working from home, operating on the frontline or being redeployed to support critical services.

Keeping buildings clean, helping people stay safe, assisting customers, protecting vulnerable children and adults and maintaining learning and support for children and families have been among the varied areas of work which council employees have prioritised, with a number of departments joining forces. Other important areas of work have included supporting businesses, processing grants, registrations, protecting the local environment and carrying out essential repairs.

## WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

We’ve liaised closely with partners, including the NHS and Police Scotland, with support for the vaccination programme and COVID testing.

While COVID restrictions had been eased at the time of writing, and many services which experienced disruption have resumed, cases of the virus are still being reported and things are a long way from ‘normal’.

Public organisations and businesses have continued to experience staff shortages for example due to illness, self-isolation or caring for others.

This, combined with the need to continue following national public health advice, means that some disruption – or services having to be delivered in different ways – is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. At the time of writing the council’s business continuity plans continue to be invoked and, from the NHS to local authorities, it will take some time for public services to recover and get back on to an even keel.

We are all very grateful to local residents for their patience, understanding and support.

Depute Council Leader Norman Hampshire said: “The Council is working hard, including with our partners and local communities, to

address the challenges, plan for the future and ensure the people of East Lothian continue to benefit from high-quality, efficient services.

“Our priorities continue to be enhancing communities, helping children achieve their potential and supporting vulnerable people. For those who were already vulnerable and had barriers to overcome, the pandemic has been even more challenging and the impact will be long-lasting.

“The council budget for this year included investment in key areas such as Education and Children’s Services, including additional support for learning.

“Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen heroic efforts on the part of council employees and local communities.

“But it continues to be a difficult and challenging time for many families and we recognise the severe financial pressure which many are under. That’s why the decision was taken to freeze council tax and rents.

“While it is a hugely challenging financial environment, we will continue to deliver improvements to local infrastructure which is a vital component of the inclusive growth agenda in East Lothian – one of Scotland’s fastest growing areas.

## REALISING AMBITIONS

“That’s why we must continue our programme of building, extending or refurbishing schools and supporting our ambitions for a low carbon economy, recognising the importance of the Climate Emergency. Embracing and more effectively supporting growth can deliver greater economic benefits and prosperity for both local and national economies.

“In the year ahead, we will need to ensure the council continues to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible, embracing new, transformative ways of working.

“Doing so will enable us to continue providing first-class services for the benefit of all East Lothian residents.”

This issue of *Living* gives a flavour of some of the things happening, or being planned across the county, in the months and years ahead.

## Staying safe to drive down infection levels

ALTHOUGH Scotland has now moved beyond COVID-19 Protection Level 0, it remains important that we all continue to act carefully and remain cautious.

To stay safe you should:

- get the vaccine when you are offered it
- wear a face covering where required
- wash your hands regularly, and cover your nose and mouth if coughing or sneezing
- self isolate and take a PCR test if you have symptoms
- take regular tests to cut the risk of spreading the virus
- meet outside if you can, and open windows when indoors
- keep your distance from people not in your group
- work from home, or do a mixture of home and office working if possible
- use the Protect Scotland and Check-in Scotland apps

## TESTING

Almost one in three people who have COVID-19 don’t have the usual symptoms (the most common of which are a continuous cough, fever/high temperature, loss of/change in sense of smell or taste), but are potentially passing the virus on to others.

While excellent progress has been made with the vaccination programme in helping to reduce the harm caused, the virus still poses a risk, with cases continuing to be reported. That’s why local arrangements are in place for people without symptoms to get tested.

There are a number of places in East Lothian where people with no symptoms can get tested, or collect testing kits to take home. Other options include ordering online for delivery to your home.

For information on the up-to-date arrangements, visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/testing](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/testing)



# Stars back at Brunton

## Highlights at The Brunton for Saltire Festival and winter

**T**HE Saltire Festival is an annual celebration of St Andrew's Day, bringing together the very best of Scotland in the Home of the Flag. The Brunton is delighted to welcome the following artists as part of The Saltire Festival programme. For more details about the rest of the Festival visit [saltirefestival.com](http://saltirefestival.com).

Scottish folk singer songwriter Kris Drever opens on November 26. Drever is the winner of multiple awards including an incredible seven BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, two shortlist nominations for Scottish Album of the Year (with his trio Lau) and much acclaim for his solo recordings and concerts including glowing reviews from *The Herald*, *The Guardian*, *Mojo* and *Q Magazine*.

Join Keith Jack and the MacDonald Bros, Brian and Craig on 27 November for a braw night celebrating all things Scotland! Songs from Wet Wet Wet, The Proclaimers, Lulu, Lewis Capaldi, Dougie Maclean and more!

Watch the charming and heart-warming classic film, *Local Hero*, on The Brunton big screen on 24 November. An American oil company has plans for a new refinery and sends someone to Scotland to buy up an entire village, but things don't go as expected...

The Brunton is delighted to re-open its doors and welcome audiences back for LIVE entertainment this winter.

The Brunton's well-loved professional pantomime, will return LIVE to the stage in Musselburgh this year! Hansel & Gretel, will be produced in house by The Brunton, written and directed by award



Kris Drever



Keith Jack & The MacDonald Bros



winning and hugely experienced writer and theatre maker John Binnie. The Brunton is delighted to welcome John back as his scripts for the 2018 and 2019 pantos were so well received by both audiences and press.

In 2020 John wrote and directed *Rapunzel The Pantomime* – a family film, which was thoroughly enjoyed by many schools and families who viewed it online during the festive period.

The traditional tale of Hansel & Gretel as they escape from the witch and realise the value of true friendship is presented in full pantomime style with songs, slapstick and joining in. Christmas just

wouldn't be the same without a trip to The Brunton. Dates will be confirmed on [www.thebrunton.co.uk](http://www.thebrunton.co.uk).

The Funbox gang are back to help younger audiences get excited for Christmas. Santa's Pyjama Party finds them trying to plan the most perfect, proper, playful, polished and popping pyjama party but it's all going to pot. Can you help them to stay awake and get everything ready in time? You might even see Santa! Full to bursting with singalong favourites like *The Night before Christmas* and *Bedtime Boogie*, classics like *Jingle Bells*, as well as brand new songs; join the perfect festive family treat on 23, 24 and 27 December.

Superb tributes fill the venue this winter, paying homage to The Rat Pack and legends such as Kate Bush, Elvis and The Beatles, to name just a few.

Always popular, the Midweek Movies are a chance to catch the latest cinema releases in Venue 1.

Full information about all these events and Returning to The Brunton FAQs can be found at [www.thebrunton.co.uk](http://www.thebrunton.co.uk).

Tickets can be purchased directly through The Brunton's website or via the NEW Box Office telephone number 0131 653 5245 open from Monday to Saturday 10am to 4pm until further notice.

Tickets are not available to purchase in the venue at this time.

## Are you worried that someone you love may go missing?

THE HERBERT Protocol is a nationally recognised scheme focused on people living with dementia who may be at risk of going missing. The main aim of the Herbert Protocol form is that it is completed in advance so that significant information is recorded and readily available for police in the event of

someone going missing.

People who care for someone with dementia can fill out a form with details about the person including where the person grew up, favourite places, and a picture of the person with consent to share this on social media should it be required.

The form is then kept

somewhere safe in the person's household.

If the person goes missing, the form helps police to quickly access important information to help find them. Find out more and download the form [www.scotland.police.uk/your-community/the-lothians-and-scottish-borders](http://www.scotland.police.uk/your-community/the-lothians-and-scottish-borders)

### PURPLE ALERT

A community minded app for people with dementia if they are missing, Purple Alert is a free app designed by people living with dementia and carers.

After successfully reaching the milestone of 10,000 downloads, Purple Alert has

gone through a major design and functionality upgrade. While the main functionality is still helping finding a person with dementia if they're lost, the new app serves tailored content to users, depending on where you are in Scotland or when you use the app [www.alzscot.org/purplealert](http://www.alzscot.org/purplealert)



# Shared lives - share your life and your home



Andrew, Louise,  
Louise and Abby  
at Belhaven  
Beach with dogs

**M**OST of us think that home, family and friends are the most important things in life and this is also the case for people with support needs. Our Shared Lives service provides this for people who may otherwise live much more isolated and lonely lives. Most people are familiar with the fostering model of care and support for children; Shared Lives is a similar service for adults.

Andrew and Louise Kennedy have been Shared Lives carers for quite a few years now. They began as short-term carers, which they did for about four years. They later became long-term carers for Abby, who lives with them full-time.

Andrew said: "We didn't really become Shared Lives carers to change our lives - we did it to

## Service offers support to families and 'it isn't a job, it's a way of life'

change someone else's life - to give parents a wee break or a weekend away or something like that. We got to meet people beforehand to see if we thought they would fit in with our lifestyle and we've always worked closely with parents or carers. Looking after someone else's relative is the biggest thing you can do. It's life changing - I fell in love with the job although it doesn't really feel like a job - Abby is part of the family and we are part of hers."

Louise added: "We're like every other family - it's not smooth going all the time - but it works. I'd highly recommend it to anybody - anyone can do it. You just treat someone as you would

want your own family to be treated if they needed care."

Louise Robertson, who is the families Shared Lives Co-ordinator, said: "We really value what Louise and Andrew and our other Shared Lives carers do because it does make such a massive difference. Abby has made loads of friendships in Dunbar and has become a valued member of the local community, her confidence has really grown since she started living with Andrew and Louise. Abby volunteers with Sunny Soups in Dunbar and at Oxfam in Haddington and she works for Shared Lives Plus (a UK wide membership organisation) as a national Shared Lives

Ambassador, addressing the Scottish Parliament and other national decision-makers. We are all very proud of what Abby has achieved.

"We really want more people to consider applying particularly to offer day support or short breaks as we can see how much people like Abby and her carers get out of this alternative model of support."

Andrew added: "I've had more support with Shared Lives than in any job I've ever had. I don't regard Louise as a boss but as a friend who you can always ask for support and advice.

"We love what we do - it's not a job, it's a way of life and I think you'll regret it more if you think about it and do nothing.

"You don't have to be a certain type of person - everyone's got caring in them."

## Increase in funded childcare for families

FAMILIES across East Lothian are benefiting from an increase in funded high quality early learning and childcare following the introduction of 1140 hours in the county from August.

Funded hours have almost doubled from 600 hours as part of a change to national policy and follows a significant amount of work with staff, partners, families and Government to prepare appropriate models and facilities that would meet the statutory requirements.

The new hours apply to all three to four-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds and has seen some council settings move to provide sessions outwith traditional term times.

They can be used in council nurseries and with our funded partner provider nurseries, childminders and playgroups. Blending between two settings or providers is also possible within criteria which are in line with guidance to reduce potential transmission of COVID-19.

For more information, visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk)

If you would like to find out more about becoming a Shared Lives carer, please get in touch with us at [sharedlives@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:sharedlives@eastlothian.gov.uk), phone one of our Shared Lives Co-ordinators on 01620 827280 or visit [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/sharedlives](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/sharedlives)

## Lord-Lieutenant is The Queen's representative in East Lothian

Lord-Lieutenancy Roderick Urquhart was appointed by HM The Queen as Lord-Lieutenant for East Lothian in February 2021 and acts as Her Majesty's representative in the

county. The main duties of the Lord Lieutenant include:

- Upholding the dignity of the Crown in the county
- arranging visits of members of the royal family and escorting

royal visitors

- presenting medals/awards on behalf of the Queen if the recipient is unable to attend an Investiture
- supporting and encouraging charities

and voluntary service.

The Lord-Lieutenant also presents messages of congratulations from Her Majesty The Queen to those celebrating their:

- 100th birthdays
- 105th birthdays and

annually thereafter

- Diamond Wedding anniversaries
  - 65th anniversaries
  - 70th anniversaries and annually thereafter
- For further information please contact:

The Lieutenancy Office  
East Lothian Council  
John Muir House  
Haddington  
East Lothian EH41 3HA  
Tel: 01620 827487  
Email: [lieutenancy@eastlothian.gov.uk](mailto:lieutenancy@eastlothian.gov.uk)