

**ALEX KIRKPATRICK**

Cleaning Services owner says business is thriving through recommendation website

PAGE 4

COUNTY LIVING: Exploring East Lothian's communities and local attractions**EMMA BOUGLET**

East Lothian Food and Drink's new business manager talks about challenges facing the sector

PAGE 8



East Lothian Council

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EAST LoTHIAN

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RENEWAL

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It's the spice of life



"Removing barriers to work has been a focus and we've built up a fantastic team"

See page 13

Melanie Auld
from Spice Pots



In with the new for 2022

AS 2022 GETS under way, East Lothian Council has produced this special publication to encourage residents to support the fantastic range of valued businesses operating in all corners of the county.

It has been an incredibly difficult two years for everyone, and the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the lives of many individuals, families and businesses large and small.

With lockdowns and prolonged periods of enforced closures or operating restrictions, the vast majority of local businesses have been detrimentally affected in some way.

Throughout this tough period our businesses have demonstrated remarkable resilience and creativity, with many adapting to deliver services differently while continuing to support their communities.

Our 'Stay Safe, Support Local, Love East Lothian' campaign promotes the message that East Lothian is open for business and that whatever products or services you are looking for, they are likely to be available locally here in East Lothian – either by visiting the business itself or ordering online.

In one of Scotland's fastest growing areas, with many new residents living here, we want to underline what makes East Lothian a special place in which to live, work and play. In East Lothian, we truly have the country's best: Scotland's Food and Drink County, Golf Coast, stunning scenery and wonderful attractions.

East Lothian is also known for its trusted local services, hospitality, tradespeople and abundance of diverse shops – from those selling unique gifts to the many outlets and markets filled with East Lothian's fantastic produce.

In looking ahead to better and brighter times, East Lothian businesses are welcoming existing and new customers. Now is the time for everyone to play their part in helping businesses old and new get back on their feet while continuing to stay safe and following public health guidance – like wearing a face covering indoors when

Turn to page two

INSIDE: GIFT CARD COMPETITION • GREEN RECOVERY • SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES • EAST LoTHIAN INVESTMENTS

Celebrate and support East Lothian

We can all help local businesses to thrive



You can support your local high street from home

By buying from one local business, you could be supporting many others. This is as a result of small businesses sourcing their materials from nearby and staff spending their money in the local area, too.

SUSTAINING JOBS

Collectively, small businesses are major employers. By shopping with them, you are helping to sustain a fair and thriving job market and employment opportunities in your community. Helping to grow the number of jobs in your area makes for a better place to live and work.

BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Supporting local businesses can help preserve the character and identity of your local community as well as contributing to, and shaping, its vibrancy.

Independent shops often host or get involved with events run by people in the community. Events and connections of this nature bring local people together.

ORDERING ONLINE

While your local business provides fantastic in-person service, it's increasingly common to find local businesses that enable customers to buy online for delivery or click and collect as well. This means you can support your local high street from the comfort of your home.

OUR "LOVE EAST LOTHIAN" message celebrates everything that makes East Lothian special. It's about loving our great outdoors, our supportive communities, and our fabulous local businesses.

Shopping locally is one of the best ways you can support your community, help retain local jobs and protect the East Lothian environment. When you buy goods and services from locally-owned, independent

businesses in the area where you live, rather than ordering from further afield, your money stays in the local community – that is good for everyone. Small, local businesses make up the backbone of the Scottish economy and you might be surprised to see just how many local businesses there are in East Lothian with innovative products and services and that real personal touch. From this spring there's a new online platform for East Lothian that showcases things that are happening in your local area. Turn to page 12 to find out more!

ARE YOU BACKING LOCAL BUSINESSES?

Buying locally protects the environment. If goods are made or purchased locally, they don't need to travel as far to reach their final destination. In doing so, less carbon is emitted, and that's beneficial for us all!

Small, local businesses are often mindful of their impact on their environment, for example minimising use of plastic packaging, or sourcing their own materials from nearby to save on carbon.

When shopping locally, it is possible to ask for plastic-free packaging options or alternatively bring your own reusable bags to further reduce waste. Many local businesses are within walking distance or can be reached by use of East Lothian's public transport connections.

HELPING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

In 2018, more than half of all private sector sales in the UK were made by small and medium-sized businesses, meaning your local area probably has everything you need and more!

Continued from page one...

required, in order to continue suppressing the spread of COVID-19.

Local businesses are essential for our economy. They are often highly innovative and bring growth, provide employment and support the local economy. They are also part of – and care about – their community.

Whether you're shopping in person or online, using services, or booking a tradesperson, please consider local first to support your local community and its recovery. You might be surprised by how many great businesses there are on your doorstep, and if you're unable to shop in person, consider purchasing from a local business by telephone or online. Many have delivery and collection arrangements in place, having adapted to do things a little differently. Those of you lucky enough to have received an East Lothian Gift Card at Christmas will find a huge range of things to spend it on.

By continuing to shop locally, we can help to sustain a dynamic and vibrant local economy, while building the increasingly prosperous and sustainable East Lothian which we all want to see.

Hold on to this publication and encourage your friends and family to "Stay Safe, Support Local and Love East Lothian".

AS PART OF A wide package of support for business and our communities, as the first lockdown began to ease in spring 2020, East Lothian Council launched a campaign to support shopping locally and using local services, called Stay Safe, Support Local, Love East Lothian.

We joined forces with the local media and used our own website and social media to encourage people to make use of their local businesses, highlighting some of the innovations many had introduced including home deliveries, new online shopping platforms and takeaway food services. The campaign also featured printable posters and floor



stickers for businesses to download and use that helped keep staff and customers safe by encouraging physical distancing, use of face coverings and sanitiser and advice on one way systems and how many people were allowed in premises at any one time.

The campaign continued as we moved through various levels of restrictions in East Lothian and was even more in evidence in the prime pre-Christmas trading period. We even had a local bus company using the logo on its

vehicles! The campaign logo was also used on social media updates informing people of what the latest government restrictions were in terms of retail, hospitality, tourism and travel.

We will continue to promote the Stay Safe, Support Local, Love East Lothian message as we carry on with progressing out of the COVID-19 crisis, so look out for it in your local businesses and online. And remember, East Lothian is very much open for business! We can all help to rebuild our economy if we support our local retailers, the hospitality industry and local attractions.

Councillor John McMillan, East Lothian Council's Cabinet Spokesperson for Economic

Development and Tourism, said: "East Lothian is well loved by its people and known for its abundance of diverse shops and local businesses, from unique gift shops to the many outlets and markets that sell East Lothian's fantastic produce. Local businesses are essential for our economy. They bring growth and innovation, provide employment and support the local economies and communities. They also care about their community."

"By continuing to stay safe and shop locally the people of East Lothian can help local businesses, so integral to the fabric and character of our community, to not only survive but thrive."

About this publication...

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A great gift idea

East Lothian Gift Card is perfect way to boost local economy

A NEW SCHEME is making it even easier to buy East Lothian Gift Cards and support local businesses across the county.

The East Lothian Gift Card is now available to buy directly from a range of outlets. It's a MasterCard-based gift card where you choose the amount and the recipient gets to choose where to spend it! The cards can be spent at more than 130 local independent businesses, ranging from hair and beauty salons to retailers, golf courses, restaurants and tourist attractions. Since October 2018 over £150,000 of gift cards have been purchased, making a significant contribution to the local economy.

For Dunbar Garden Centre, stocking East Lothian Gift Cards was an easy decision.

"The East Lothian Gift Card has always proved popular and it seemed only natural to be able to provide it on site as we were previously being asked where they could be bought," explains Manager Andrew McDonald. Dunbar Garden Centre opened in 2013, the second in a group of three family-owned garden centres. The purpose-built garden centre has a spectacular Glass House restaurant and has an excellent reputation for the range of plants and gifts on offer and for its knowledgeable team of staff.

The business has been involved in the East Lothian Gift Card for a number of years and believes it has benefited from increased footfall and sales, as well as raising their



Fiona Veerman

public profile. "We are always keen to support good local initiatives and to encourage the economic development of the county," says Andrew, below. "Local businesses need local customers, especially in these difficult times."

Fiona and Gerry Veerman of Veerman's Pets & Co in Tranent agree that the Gift Card is a great way to support local businesses. "We have always welcomed all customers into the shop with a smile, and we feel that this is especially important today as high streets up and down the country struggle to compete with online giants and out-of-town shopping centres. We have been involved with the East Lothian Gift Card scheme from the outset as it was created specifically to encourage customers to think locally. This is very important to us, as we also live in Tranent, and know that money spent locally stays in the community," says Fiona.

The Veerman family are long-established fixtures in Tranent's retail environment. Gerrit Veerman and his wife Betty set up a small DIY shop in 1982 to

complement their joinery business before diversifying into pet supplies. Veerman's is now run by their son Gerry, daughter-in-law Fiona and their family who have continued to develop and expand their offering and, along with the pet shop, operates A1 Sheds.

In 2020 Veerman's Pets & Co moved into new premises on Tranent's High Street giving them more space. However, the excitement of a move was overshadowed by lockdown. "It was a worrying time for everyone, however our loyal customers stepped up and made sure that they were there for us when we needed them most," said Fiona.

For Hilton Nursing and Homecare Agency, supporting local businesses through the pandemic was an important reason to buy the East Lothian Gift Card. The company employs almost 100 staff and chose to reward its hard-working team at

Christmas 2020 for their great commitment throughout the first nine months of the pandemic. "We wanted to support the businesses in East Lothian, as it had been such a difficult time for them as well," said Hilton's Managing

Director, Caeris Gilliland. "Our staff have enjoyed being able to shop and dine out locally using the cards, so this is definitely something we will consider doing again in the future."



WIN A £50 EAST LOTHIAN GIFT CARD

To be in with a chance to win one of twenty £50 East Lothian Gift Cards email ELInvestments@eastlothian.gov.uk with the subject 'Inspire Competition' telling us which of the participating retailers you'd love to spend it in. www.eastlothiangiftcard.co.uk/where-to-spend

Winners will be chosen at random on Monday 28 February 2022. One entry per email address.



See www.eastlothian.gov.uk/privacy for information on how we protect your data

Green recovery after COVID-19

OVER THE PAST couple of years all of our lives have been impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic. As some restrictions have eased there has been a return to some aspects of 'normal' life but many businesses, organisations and individuals continue to operate in very different ways. Many people continue to work from their homes and businesses have had to adapt not just their way of working but how they interact with their customers, particularly those providing face to face services such as hairdressers, beauty therapists or tradespeople for home repairs and renovations.

It's widely recognised that the choices we all make in our home and working lives will increasingly be influenced by the need to be more environmentally responsible. A major contributor to air pollution is transport and East Lothian Council is working in partnership with others to support alternative 'clean energy' options. This has included successfully securing external funding of over £800,000 to invest in new electronic vehicle chargers to provide flexible charging solutions for people without a driveway to charge at home.

Increasing options for active travel to and within our towns and villages is something which many of our local communities have expressed a desire for. The requirements during the pandemic for physical distancing resulted in some measures introduced across the county as part of the national Scottish Government funded Spaces for People. Reducing speed limits to 20 mph on entry and within our towns and villages has been welcomed by many and is considered to have provided a safer environment for cycling. Other legacies from Spaces for People are planters which have been placed to increase pedestrian room and have now been adopted by community groups in North Berwick and at Fisherrow, Musselburgh.

Shopping locally is one of the most sustainable actions people can take and the council has supported the Shop Local initiative across the county.

As a consumer, the council also has a responsibility when commissioning external services and purchasing goods. Late in 2020 a new sustainable procurement policy was approved.

The main objective of the new policy is to ensure that goods and services are procured ethically and responsibly, from sustainable sources, including through the supply chain and sub-contractors. The ongoing impact of the pandemic continues to be felt in East Lothian but it has also provided a clearer understanding of how we must all adapt to thrive in future.

Discover the East Lothian Gift Card at eastlothiangiftcard.co.uk or pick up a card from...

- Adam Smith Podiatry & Healthcare, Prestonpans
- Blueberry Gifts, Musselburgh
- Dunbar Garden Centre, Dunbar
- East Lothian Camera Shop, Tranent
- Flux, Dunbar
- JS Main, Haddington
- Royal Macintosh Hotel, Dunbar
- Mazzoli Italian Kitchen/ Tyneside Tavern, Haddington
- Secret Boutique, Gullane
- The Malt Kiln, Haddington
- Turnbull's Home Hardware, Dunbar
- Turnbull's Home Hardware, North Berwick
- Veerman's Pets & Co, Tranent

A clean sweep

A & K Cleaning Services is thriving through trade recommendation site

ALEX KIRKPATRICK is the owner of A & K Cleaning Services who provide carpet cleaning services for households and businesses across the Lothians. He has been an East Lothian Trusted Trader for many years and regularly attracts favourable comments from his customers.

"I have provided carpet cleaning services for 17 years and found the Trusted Trader scheme a really important means of attracting new customers," explained Alex.

"Around 85 per cent of my business is in the East Lothian area and, in addition to repeat visits from regular customers, I have gained many new customers through the referral and comments on the Trusted Trader website.

"I would recommend any local business to consider applying to be a Trusted Trader as it gives local residents a means to select appropriate companies and provide feedback on work carried out."

Daniel and Rhys, who moved house during lockdown, found the Trusted Trader scheme an invaluable way of sourcing a variety of local businesses to carry out work in their home. "We first used Trusted Traders to find a painter and decorator," explained Daniel. "We were able to see comments by previous customers, which helped us to contact recommended local businesses. Following our decorating work, we chose A & K Cleaning Services and find Alex to be trustworthy, reliable

and personable. Our carpets are cleaned exceptionally well and we highly recommend A & K Cleaning Services to anyone looking for a hassle-free and personal carpet cleaning service."

Alex Noble, who runs a garden design and landscaping service based in Humber, joined the Trusted Trader scheme in 2013.

He said: "Over the past eight years, I have been fortunate in receiving repeat business but many of my customers did originally contact me through the Trusted Trader website. Today, I reckon around 60 per cent of new business is from the scheme."

Alex works across the Lothians but increasingly the bulk of his work remains within the county. "Some of my customers have moved into new homes and are seeking help to create a manageable garden from what was a building site a few weeks before.

"I think the comments section of Trusted Traders helps people find out what companies can do based on previous experience."

For more information visit:
www.trustedtrader.scot/EastLothian



Alex Noble and his team



Alex Kirkpatrick,
the owner of
A & K Cleaning
Services

Try our local Trusted Traders



THE EAST LOTHIAN Trusted Trader Scheme is a joint council and Trading Standards initiative to help consumers find reputable and reliable local businesses.

There is a wide range of businesses available to contact from architects to plumbers, glaziers to tree surgeons.

All Trusted Traders have agreed to trade fairly and have signed-up to a Code of Practice which covers:

- Transparent procedures for quoting and carrying out work
- Only charging a fair and reasonable price
- Ensuring staff are adequately trained
- Dealing with complaints promptly
- The dispute resolution process.

Trading Standards Trusted Traders have been vetted by East Lothian Trading Standards and the scheme is supported by Police Scotland and Citizens Advice Scotland.

As a local resident you can help support the scheme by reviewing any Trusted Traders you have used which provides both the business and their future customers with information about the quality of their work and the customer experience.

If you run a local business and would like to become an East Lothian Trusted Trader simply fill in the online application form on our website. www.trustedtrader.scot/EastLothian Please note you must have a minimum of six months trading history.



East Lothian Investments' interest-free loans

EAST LOTHIAN Investments offers interest free loans from £500 up to £25,000 to businesses and start-ups based in East Lothian. Supported by East Lothian Council, it is the only interest free loan fund provided by a local authority in Scotland.

Since its formation in 2001, East Lothian Investments 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.

Loans have been awarded to a range of businesses from retail, hospitality, engineering and food and drink. Any start-up business or existing company from any sector – sole traders, limited companies or social enterprises – can apply. Decisions are taken by a board of directors made up of highly-experienced local businesspeople. The board members use their local

knowledge and experience in assessing applications making East Lothian Investments a unique source of funding for businesses.

Testimonials from businesses which have benefited from interest free loans from East Lothian Investments have included a hotelier who was unable to secure a bank loan, but made a successful funding application and has been able to refurbish a bar and rooms; an

engineering company investing in new machinery; a nursery taking on more staff; and a food manufacturer being able to set up when bank lending was not forthcoming.

East Lothian Investments is a not for profit company authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Find out more at www.eastlothianinvestments.com



A success story

Echo Beach Designs – a triumph despite the difficulties of COVID-19

SUSAN CAMERON of Echo Beach Designs, based in North Berwick, was adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic when she lost her financial services job. However, she managed to turn a negative situation into a positive and started her own business, despite the many restrictions on businesses and our general way of life at that time.

Here, Susan tells us how she managed to grow Echo Beach Designs from scratch in the middle of a global pandemic – so successfully that she has won a major award.

Q) Tell us a bit about yourself and how and when you started your business.

I started my business, Echo Beach Designs, in October 2020 when I lost my job due to the downturn from COVID-19. I had worked previously for various finance firms and latterly was a project manager. I learnt numerous skills over my 30+ years which have helped me to set up and run my own business. On looking at the wider market in personalised ceramics I found these were ridiculously expensive – and my business fits in the gap at a lower price range.

Q) Describe your business.

I take white ceramics and design and hand paint my designs on them – from mugs to afternoon cake stands and most things in between. Every item is unique. I offer

personalisation on most of my items and this has proven to be really popular. I also paint to commission and have lots of happy customers who have suggested designs.

Q) What challenges did the COVID-19 pandemic pose for you and your business?

I started right in the middle of lockdown, with no way of my customers seeing my products in real life. This has changed recently and I have my products in a couple of shops: Dunbar Craft Studio and J Walker in Linlithgow. Also, the reintroduction of fairs and markets has been amazing. I can meet my customers at last, talk to them and understand their likes and they can see and touch my items.

Q) Have you received any support during COVID-19 and what difference has that made to you?

Business Gateway has been so supportive – it's great having someone to run ideas past. My 15-year-old is getting a bit frustrated with me asking him for advice!

Q) What's your favourite thing about being based in East Lothian?

I have always loved East Lothian and have lived here now for over 12 years – the scenery, the beaches, the people and the positive vibe in the county are all

amazing and are why I stay here and will continue to do so.

Q) What would you say to encourage people to support their local businesses?

Local businesses are much more than just hobbies, they take time to build, grow and maintain. Every day you are thinking of new ideas and marketing strategies – often at 2am! They are the result of years of hard work. We are lucky that we have so many amazing local businesses, either in our towns, rural in our countryside or online. We offer services that the big businesses cannot provide and customer service which is just not there with the big businesses.

Q) What are your business plans for the future?

I was really lucky to win an award in February 2021 (less than six months after I started) from Theo Paphitis (*Dragons' Den*) and have been invited to Birmingham in February 2022 to meet him and his team, along with lots of other small business owners. I know I will come back from that buzzing with ideas. Separate from that, I have some amazing ideas up my sleeve on how I can expand Echo Beach Designs into the wider handmade gift marketplace. Watch this space!

Supporting greener travel



HOME ENERGY Scotland is running a free ebike trial programme for organisations and communities, and Eskmills Business Hub in Musselburgh have signed up to take part.

Nicole Pyper, marketing and building manager at Eskmills, decided to get involved as the trial gives her staff and tenants the chance to borrow an ebike, try something new and experience a fun, low-cost and environmentally friendly way to travel around.

Nicole said: "We are extremely grateful to Home Energy Scotland for including us in their ebike trial. We are always looking for new ways to enhance our tenant experience at Eskmills and this was a fantastic opportunity to not only do that but also promote sustainable travel to the wider community."

Anyone interested in trying out an eBike can hire one from hire stations in Musselburgh outside the Brunton Hall and at Musselburgh train station. Another hire station is available at Cockenzie at the corner of East Lorimer Place, outside Cockenzie House and gardens. Customers can register for a monthly or annual membership, or can pay per ride.

For more information about the scheme, pricing and a station map, please visit www.goebike.uk

Free bus travel

YOUNG PEOPLE aged 5 to 21 can access free bus travel on all registered services in Scotland from January 2022 by applying for their Young Scot National Entitlement Card. See www.eastlothian.gov.uk/smartcards

The card also acts as proof of age and gives access to a range of discount for young people across Scotland to find out what's available locally go to: www.young.scot/the-young-scot-card/east-lothian

Shop local in Musselburgh!

Raising the collective voice of local independent businesses



From left: Councillor John McMillan and Sharon Brown

THE MUSSELBURGH Business Partnership was set up to give a collective voice for independent businesses within the town. There are more than 400 known businesses in Musselburgh and the partnership provides opportunities for the businesses to share experiences and discuss a wide range of issues that can affect them. This can include access to funding, availability and sustainability of commercial property, attracting and retaining skilled workers and finding appropriate vendors and suppliers.

Being able to share experiences of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and looking for ways to secure economic recovery has been of prime importance to the partnership.

Sharon Brown of Blueberry Gifts on Musselburgh High Street has been a member of the partnership since it was established four years ago and believes it has helped her maintain some trading

opportunities during periods of lockdown.

“As non-essential shops were told to close down it was important for me to seek some way of continuing a relationship with my customers,” she said.

“I set up an online shop which gave people opportunities to continue to buy goods which may have been classed as ‘non-essential’ but are actually very important in people’s lives such as greetings cards celebrating birthdays, anniversaries and other milestones or little treats such as bath oils and scented candles to help people relax during the pandemic.

“As restrictions began to ease, we looked at ways to encourage people back to their local shops and we created the ‘I Love Musselburgh’ campaign which included banners encouraging people to ‘Shop Local’ displayed across the town.

“We were fortunate to receive funding support for the I Love Musselburgh and Shop Local campaign from the Musselburgh

Area Partnership, the Scottish Government’s COVID business support funding and the Scotland’s Towns Partnership.

“The pandemic has been hard for many businesses, particularly retail, though I was personally pleased to welcome many customers to the shop over the Christmas period – both familiar faces and new ones!”

The Musselburgh Business Partnership has now launched a new retail promotion from 29 January where shoppers can spend £20 in one of a number of Musselburgh retailers and receive a £5 voucher back. There are limited numbers of vouchers available so shoppers are recommended to hurry to take advantage of this promotion.

You can find out more on their social media at www.facebook.com/MusselburghBP and the I Love Musselburgh campaign at www.facebook.com/loveMusselburghshopeatlive



All about The Honest Toun

MUSSELBURGH IS situated at the mouth of the River Esk and derives its name from the extensive mussel beds that lie along its shore on the Firth of Forth. Known as ‘The Honest Toun’, it dates back almost 2,000 years to a time when the invading Romans built a fort on Inveresk Hill.

The town’s racecourse is Scotland’s oldest, dating back to 1816 and offers a full programme of flat and national hunt racing each year. Find out more: www.musselburgh-racecourse.co.uk

The bounds of the racecourse contain an historic nine-hole golf course which traces its history back to 1672, making it the oldest in the world still in use. It was also an original Open Championship venue hosting the competition on six occasions between 1874 and 1889. Open all year round, the course offers a unique experience of Victorian era play as you can hire hickory clubs to play the course as it was in its heyday! Musselburgh Links, The Old Course: www.musselburgholdlinks.co.uk

The Musselburgh Silver Arrow is reputedly the oldest sporting trophy in the world and is competed for annually in May by the Royal Company of Archers, the Queen’s Body Guard for Scotland.

The town contains some outstanding architecture including the fine old stone Tolbooth of 1590 which was used as a meeting place, courthouse and jail; the old Mercat Cross from the 1700s, and the 18th century Newhailes House, bought and restored by the National Trust for Scotland: www.nts.org.uk

Musselburgh is also home to the Brunton theatre and arts venue which offers a programme of film, drama, music, comedy and dance performances throughout the year. In addition, The Brunton is the perfect setting for private and corporate hire from small and intimate gatherings, to weddings, special occasions, conferences, performances and shows. www.thebrunton.co.uk

Musselburgh Museum, which helps shine a light on history, is due to re-open this Spring.

Musselburgh, together with the neighbouring communities of Inveresk, Whitecraig and Wallyford, is an interesting place to explore which benefits from many fantastic local businesses.



Kinchie Burn



Tranent's Civic Square



Glenkinchie Distillery

Fa'side in focus

There's lots to discover in Tranent and the surrounding area

THE FA'SIDE AREA is a mainly rural part of East Lothian, underpinned by a rich history of mining, which has left a legacy of fantastic walks along the old railway routes, many of which served the mines, but most importantly a strong community spirit, which persists to this day.

Agriculture has always been important in Fa'side too, with farming still very much in evidence today both large and small scale, meaning local produce is in abundance and farm shops are well used by locals, as well as the creation of allotments for people to grow their own produce.

Farm diversification is obvious too with developments like Glenkinchie Distillery which historically used the grain grown on the surrounding land and water from the Kinchie Burn. The distillery is still thriving and is now even more of a draw for locals and tourists with recent investment in a refurbished visitor centre.

Tranent is the main town in Fa'side and its historic high street is well worth a visit. Despite the difficulties posed for business by the pandemic, new businesses have been popping up regularly. Tranent is well served by the health and beauty industry, homeware, garden and pet shops, eateries, food shops, independent gift shops and lots more. There's even an independent cinema and community space.

Recent projects have helped shop owners to refurbish properties while uncovering

their history and enhancing their historic features to help maintain the unique character of the high street conservation area. The new community centre and cinema, the Fraser Centre, occupies the site of the old cinema, 'The Cuds', bringing film back to the town after a decades-long absence.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENTS

Other projects supported by the Area Partnership have included improvements to central and meeting spaces in the town and village centres across Fa'side. The refurbishment of Ormiston Park, for example, has been a boost to locals and visitors and is part of wider plans to improve outdoor access including upgrading the many core paths in the area.

Community groups working alongside the Area Partnership have made a huge difference to the area, for example, the Tranent Wombles and Blooming Belters volunteers undertaking regular tidy-up projects and creating eye-catching floral displays. A visit to Fa'side to enjoy the range of shops, cafes and restaurants can easily be enhanced by a walk on one of the many core paths where you can also learn about the area's history. There's the statue of Jackie Crookston in Tranent's Civic Square, in honour of the 11 local people killed by troops while protesting against conscription into the militia in 1797. A walk down the Heugh towards Prestonpans from Tranent

means you are following Scotland's oldest railway line, The Waggonway, dating from 1722 to transport coal to the harbour and salt pans. You'll find the Waggonway museum at the end of your walk at Cockenzie Harbour.

Tranent Parish Church sits on the Heugh, dating as far back as the 1400s. The gravestones are a history lesson in themselves. Or a walk along the old railway line that skirts Tranent, Elphinstone, Ormiston and Pencaitland will show you many pit head markers. Ormiston village itself boasts the beautiful Main Street, built in the 1700s by the Cockburn family originally to house farmers before mining took over as the area's principal industry. There's also the monument to Ormiston-born Robert Moffat, who was a missionary and father-in-law of David Livingstone.

Picturesque Pencaitland also has a historic church, dating from the 16th century and the stunning 15th Century Winton Castle which in recent years has been partly converted into private homes but the main castle is still home to the Ogilvy family and is used as an exclusive use event venue.

For more information, please visit: www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/download/12990/area_walks_and_core_paths_leaflets
Food & Drink: [www.scotlandsfodrinkcounty.com](http://www.scotlandsfoddrinkcounty.com) General information: www.visiteastlothian.org

A boost for your business



SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE for East Lothian businesses on all aspects of employing staff. Whether you're a new company looking to recruit for the first time or an established business hoping to expand your workforce, East Lothian Works can help.

The team supports a range of businesses in the county with recruiting, upskilling or retraining staff. They can also help if you're having to consider redundancies including through the Scottish Government-backed PACE scheme.

"Many businesses don't know that there are funds available to help them to recruit or employ staff," explains education and employability team manager Alison Hood. "We work with our partners to make sure that we're offering a one-stop advice shop for anything relating to employment and improving employability. We have access to the latest Government funding streams. Businesses also need to be quick to react to new opportunities and we can support them with training or retraining to make sure their employees have the skills to help the firm succeed."

The work is part of the council's commitment to supporting and generating economic growth in the region. East Lothian Works staff work in partnership with Edinburgh College, Skills Development Scotland and the Department for Work and Pensions to provide free, confidential, impartial advice. They also work closely with local employers to identify opportunities for apprenticeships and paid work experience, supporting the development of the workforce of the future.

"The last few years have been tough for businesses and we're doing all we can to support them through recovery and into growth," says Alison. "A strong local economy brings huge benefits and our team are pleased to be part of making this a reality."

To find out visit eastlothian.gov.uk/elworks, email elworks@eastlothian.gov.uk or call the helpline on 07890 066 391

Food & Drink County

East Lothian Food and Drink's new business manager on how the sector is rising to current challenges

East Lothian – Scotland's Food & Drink County is an umbrella organisation which brings together local food and drink businesses, enabling them to take part in large, joint marketing campaigns and support each other in a number of ways.

The organisation was set up in 2016, when it successfully achieved Business Improvement District status, attracting government funding to set up and run the collaborative group. It's been so successful that members have just voted to carry on operating jointly for a further five years.

The group also welcomed new manager, Emma Bouglet, who was well placed to take over the reins, having been a member for some time via her own business, Fidra Gin.

EMMA TELLS US MORE ABOUT HERSELF AND HER NEW ROLE...

Q) Tell us a bit about yourself and how and when you started your business?

I am a mum of three; Eloise, 15, Etienne, 11, and Emile, 8, and am married to Richard, a Frenchman who co-owns a wine merchants called L'Art du Vin. As well as being the new business manager for East Lothian Food and Drink, I also co-own an East Lothian gin company called Fidra Gin with my neighbour and friend, Jo Brydie. We came up with the idea of Fidra Gin back in 2017 and launched in 2018.

Q) Describe your business.

We forage for four out of five of the botanicals within East Lothian but do it in a sustainable way that does not strip or damage the countryside. We pick rosehips in and around Garvald, North Berwick and Dunbar, we grow thyme and lemon thyme

at Archerfield Walled Garden, the elderflower is picked mostly from Jo's back garden and we have a special licence from East Lothian Countryside Rangers that allows us to pick a certain amount of sea buckthorn in a specific location. We are very passionate about our East Lothian roots and have so much fantastic support from the community. You will see us monthly at Haddington Farmers' Market and it's such a buzz to get your regular customers coming to see you and to purchase a bottle of gin!

Q) When did you become involved with East Lothian, Scotland's Food & Drink County?

We joined East Lothian Food and Drink (ELF&D) as soon as we launched Fidra Gin in 2018. We found it was such a great community to be part of and we also had lots of help and advice from East Lothian Council and Business Gateway. In 2019, we attended the Royal Highland Show as part of ELF&D and we would not have been able to do that without them. We have made many friends within ELF&D and now as their business manager, I am focused on members this year.

Q) How do you think being involved has benefited your business?

To have on-tap advice and to be able to take part in large events at reduced rates has been incredible – obviously, it's been a tough couple of years, but I am hopeful that we will be able to take part in more trade shows and events this year.

Q) Tell us about taking on the role of business manager and what your aims are for the future.

I joined ELF&D as their business manager



Emma Bouglet

in October 2021 and it's been a whirlwind couple of months! We launched a social media campaign in October called The Great East Lothian Menu and it was a great success. It was very hard to judge at the finals but all the winners were very well deserved. My future aim is to make joining ELF&D more desirable by including more member-focused training courses, such as social media training and engaging more with the council and the fantastic courses and resources they offer.

Q) What do you think the main challenges are for food and drink businesses in terms of recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Businesses have had a tough time and now with issues such as Brexit thrown in the mix and delays to bottles, packaging and ingredients, I know that the focus is to rebuild the client base and create more avenues for sales. A lot of East Lothian

businesses had to think outside of the box when COVID-19 forced the closure of sales outlets and most of us ended up engaging more on social media and doing direct sales which did keep a lot of us going.

Q) What would you say to encourage people to support their local businesses?

We are so fortunate in East Lothian to have so many local and artisan producers – again, so many people's shopping habits have changed over the last couple of years and we have seen farm shops and local producers thriving. It's so important to eat sustainably more than ever now.

Q) What's your favourite thing about East Lothian?

Having access to such amazing food and drink and having such a choice! Also there is nowhere as beautiful as our countryside and beaches. We are very lucky to call East Lothian home.

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There is nowhere as beautiful as our countryside and beaches. We are very lucky to call East Lothian home





The Great East Lothian Menu competition was a great success!

ENTRANTS FROM the professional and amateur sectors were invited to the Great East Lothian Menu competition, with amateur chefs asked to use at least two local ingredients and professionals to use at least five.

Judges Peter Eccles, 2020's Farmer of the Year and co-founder of Lothian Larder at Saughland Farm; Kylie Reid, founder of the online community EGG, entrepreneur and self-confessed foodie; and David Jamieson, Executive Chef at Archerfield and East Lothian's newly appointed Food Tourism Ambassador, announced the winners on Friday 12th November.

The East Lothian Food and Drink Great East Lothian Menu Professional Chef of the year is: Brenda Pryde of The Strawberry Barn. Her cappuccino semifreddo with Italian meringue served under a candy floss cloud, strawberry frasier macarons, mango & passion fruit pate de fruit sugar cube, tuile biscuit spoon and chocolate coffee bean wowed the judges. Brenda used ingredients from The Brand Family Larder, Frasier of Scotland, Mungoswells, Yester Farm Dairies, Chocolate Tree, Brodies and The Strawberry Barn itself. Judges said her dish demonstrated "huge technique and stood out as something different; the stunning presentation caught everyone's eye and beyond everything else, everyone was desperate to taste it!"

The East Lothian Food and Drink Great East Lothian Menu Home Cook of the year is: Fiona Pollock of



@fe.east for her lamb merguez stuffed pumpkins, using ingredients from The Brand Family Larder and Kilduff Farm. The judges were "delighted to see a sustainable use of pumpkins, which are often thrown away after Halloween". Fiona won a £100 East Lothian Giftcard as well as a Commichief die cast aluminium oval casserole dish kindly donated by Gibsons of Haddington.

Highly commended by all the judges was 11-year-old Maisie Gordon from Humble, a pupil at Ross High School, who was placed second with her beef tandoori masala

burger with coleslaw. David Jamieson was so impressed with Maisie's dish that he has invited her to visit him at Archerfield for afternoon tea and to spend time with him in the kitchen. The judges were blown away that Maisie had grown many of the ingredients herself and were excited to see a young person so engaged with where her food came from. Maisie won a £100 East Lothian Giftcard as well as her visit to Archerfield.



KNOWLEDGE BANK

As well as working together to share their own knowledge and market experience, the producers will also be making use of the Knowledge Bank set up by Scotland's Food & Drink. It's a free resource for food producers providing a unique blend of customised market research, data analysis and consumer insights. The expertise available covers everything from using intelligence to inform strategy, identifying new routes to market and developing resilient supply chains. It is hoped this extra resource will help East Lothian's businesses negotiate the changing landscape created by recovery from the pandemic and the changes associated with Brexit. www.foodanddrink.scot/the-knowledge-bank

For more information on Scotland's Food & Drink County including the Great East Lothian Menu competition, visit www.scotlandfoodanddrinkcounty.com. You'll also find a great map on the website, flagging where local producers are in the county and taking you to their individual websites.

Supporting our businesses through COVID and beyond

AS WELL AS processing and paying out more than £36 million to local businesses from the Government's Business Support Grants scheme and other funds, East Lothian Council has been working in partnership across all industry sectors to provide practical help for businesses and to understand what ongoing support will be needed as we move more into the recovery phase of the pandemic.

Joint working with public sector and local partners

continues to focus on our town and village centres, the rural economy, tourism and hospitality, and employability.

Our two-way conversations with our key sector partners continue to bring positive results. While the majority of business support funds are now closed, we continue to provide expert advice and practical support via our Business Gateway service and through East Lothian Investments Ltd for business funding.

Business Gateway gives you

access to free local, professional advice and support whether you're starting up or growing your business. Our advisers can help you write a practical business plan, understand business finance and cash flow, find new ways to market your business, or help you innovate and grow.

Backed up by a national network, Business Gateway also provides free access to a wide range of webinars, events and specialist one-to-one support, for example, our

popular Digital Boost programme. Currently confirmed until the end of March 2022, we're also providing access to additional one-to-one support in a range of areas, including export and import, new product development, leadership and coaching, strategy, website development and retail.

Please see our website for more details at www.bgateway.com/local-offices/east-lothian/local-support. Turn to page 5 for an example

of how Business Gateway helped support new local business Echo Beach Designs through COVID-19

If your business needs support to start up, expand or recruit, contact bgateway@eastlothian.gov.uk or call an adviser on **01620 827870**

For business funding in East Lothian go to www.eastlothianinvestments.com or call **01620 82 7282** or email ELinvestments@eastlothian.gov.uk

You'll never know... ...unless you go!

Picturesque North Berwick has lots of great things to offer visitors

A TRIP TO NORTH Berwick isn't just about the traditional seaside resort favourites of fish & chips and ice cream – although you'll find those in abundance and you can even upgrade to lobster!

There's so much to explore in the town and surrounding area whatever your passions are – from shopping, eating or enjoying the great outdoors to enjoying a round of golf or indulging in a bit of history.

Flanked by its iconic landmarks of North Berwick Law and the Bass Rock, it is a town you cannot miss. And as it's the last stop (or the first) on the East Lothian branch railway line which connects to Edinburgh in 30 minutes, this jewel in East Lothian's crown is accessible to tourists and locals alike.

The town centre is home to a huge array of independent shops selling unique clothing, gifts, homeware, artisan jewellery, unique artwork and the best of local food and drink and much more. There's also a communal space, Why Not?, which hosts stalls from various local businesses – right in the middle of High Street.

On the subject of food and drink, surrounded by agricultural fields and the sea, it's no wonder that the North Berwick area showcases the finest local produce in its delis, cafes and restaurants. And food and drink producers take full advantage of this abundance, with both soft and alcoholic drinks and artisan food products being made in the area.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT

Whether you're a local or a visitor, the community spirit in North Berwick is obvious. The North Berwick in Bloom group has won multiple awards for its floral displays, making key areas of the town even more attractive. And there's the Coastal Communities Museum, run entirely by volunteers. www.coastalmuseum.org

The North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership has made great progress in a number of projects with the important aims of improving the accessibility of public buildings and open spaces, building on the area's history and heritage, reducing inequality and improving the extensive local path network. They are also helping to support and expand on the area's local and national events programme, which includes popular, regular events like Fringe by the Sea and the North Berwick Highland Games.

The Bass Rock Community Group is a group supporting the local community and



Jane McMinn from
the NB Harbour Trust

working on projects on its own and also in support of other voluntary groups in North Berwick. Born out of the North Berwick Resilience Group in October 2020, it is a group of individuals, partners and families who want to put something back into their community. Richard Rogers from the group said: "We meet twice a month on Zoom for no more than an hour, socially monthly and just get out there and do things! It's a great way to meet like-minded people whilst having a lot of fun at the same time. We joined the Rotary organisation in July, for the many benefits and support it provides to us as a group and as individuals, but as part of a new Rotary initiative which is very different and separate from traditional Rotary clubs. We are now 22 members and growing. Please go and have a look our Facebook page and get in touch to learn more."

The town's harbour is managed by the North Berwick Harbour Trust charity who also maintain and find funding (approximately £1million) for major necessary projects like the heightening of the esplanade wall and the north wall, both vital to the area's survival. They are currently developing plans for the future that will see the harbour area have more accessibility and community space and upgraded facilities, both outside and

inside. The Trust welcomes input, comment and requests from any group, visitor or user. chair@nbharbour.org.uk

There is also the education and environmental charity Firth of Forth Lobster Hatchery to visit, a unique facility where lobster larvae are nursed through their most vulnerable stages and released back into the Firth of Forth, giving the juveniles a phenomenal boost in their ability to survive to catchable size. Local fishermen bring the berried females to the hatchery, which sustains the long term stock and future of the fishing heritage. info@firthofforthlobsterhatchery.org.uk

A visit to the harbour wouldn't be complete without exploring the five-star visitor attraction, the Scottish Seabird Centre where you can learn all about the area's flora and fauna – in particular the famous gannet colony on the Bass Rock. Boat trips can be taken from the harbour from Easter to autumn and the Braveheart boat offers bespoke tours year-round. There's also the ruin of St Andrew's Old Kirk, made famous by the legend that a coven of witches who met there brewed up a tempest which threatened to wreck the ship of King James VI – a tale that even inspired Shakespeare and the witches in *Macbeth*.

For those who love the great outdoors, North Berwick's beaches are great for walking,

sometimes sunbathing, and just watching the world go by. There's the famous swimming & paddling pool at the East Beach that fills up when the tide is in and from the West Beach, you can see Fidra Island, which is rumoured to have inspired Robert Louis Stevenson to write *Treasure Island*, as the family spent many summers in the town. The historic Lodge Grounds, created in the 17th Century by the Dalrymple family are now a public amenity and a great place to walk, relax or for the young ones to burn off energy at the playground.

North Berwick also sits on the increasingly popular John Muir Way, which forms the basis of many local walks and connects the town to other villages in the Area Partnership catchment.

EXPLORING THE AREA

About an hour's walk outside North Berwick is Tantallon Castle and in the other direction, Dirlerton Castle – making the area a history buff's dream. For nature lovers, Yellowcraig Beach near Dirlerton is a must-visit for walks through the woods, dunes and on the beach where you get an even clearer view of Fidra. Carry on to Gullane where a spectacular beach is a huge draw for locals and tourists. And, of course, arguably the centre of Scotland's Golf Coast as it boats Open Championship venue Muirfield.

Further on is Aberlady where a glorious walk through the nature reserve awaits, leading through nesting areas for many species of birds and opening out to the stunning Aberlady Bay, where there's often not another soul around.

Gullane, Dirlerton & Aberlady are destinations in themselves, boasting more independent shops, great cafes and restaurants, challenging golf courses and many coastal and countryside walks.

Unless you're lucky enough to live in the North Berwick Coastal Area, why not stay a while? As we hope we've illustrated here, there's so much to see and do that a night or two here would be a treat – and a chance to explore every type of accommodation from luxury hotels, smart B&Bs, self-catering cottages and apartments to luxury log cabins, camping and caravan sites.

For downloadable leaflets, please visit: www.bit.ly/3EEICs6

General information:

www.visiteastlothian.org and
www.north-berwick.co.uk



The Scottish
Seabird Centre
is worthy of
a visit



The coast of North Berwick

Explore East Lothian's best attractions

There's something for all the family

VISITOR NUMBERS to East Lothian rose last year after lockdown as more people enjoyed a 'staycation' in our beautiful county. Whether you're a new resident or you've lived in East Lothian all your life, there's plenty to discover on your doorstep.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

There's loads for families in East Lothian – from paid-for activities to open space that's ideal for exploring.

Ormiston Pump Track is the perfect place to scoot, skate or bike to your heart's content. Developed by an enthusiastic group of volunteers it sits in Ormiston Park which also has some fantastic play equipment for young explorers.

Located in the grounds of Newhailes, a National Trust Property in Musselburgh, Wee Hailes is a children's adventure playpark. The park will reopen on 1 April 2022. Booking is not necessary and children under three go free. Alternatively, spend time exploring the estate's gardens or visit for one of the many outdoor events.

www.nts.org.uk

As well as the perennially-popular attractions such as the train, pedal buggies and animals, East Links Family Park near Dunbar has special themes throughout the year to make sure there's always something new to spot or do. If the weather's not playing ball, try out one of the county's soft play centres. SoftSpott is a new centre at Spott Industrial Park, Dunbar, and includes a sensory room which is available to book along with an on-site café (softspott.co.uk). The enjoyLeisure centres at Musselburgh and Tranent both have soft play facilities for children. Find out more at enjoyleisure.com

Most towns and villages have playparks so make a map and tick them off one by one: you'll find each has its own charm. Garvald playpark sits in a large green parkland bounded by woods and the Papana Water offering a varied space to explore, while Yellowcraig has a large sandy pirate-themed play park before you reach the beach.

Pull on your walking boots and explore some of our wild areas. Spot the ponies at Traprain Law and the whalebones at the top of North Berwick Law.

LIVING HISTORY

Chesters Hill Fort lies to the north of Haddington near to Camptoun. More than 2,000 years old, it is one of Scotland's

best-preserved Iron Age hillforts, defended by ramparts and ditches with the remains of several houses still visible. From the top you have an enviable view over East Lothian and, on a clear day, across the water to Fife.

Tantallon Castle is one of East Lothian's most iconic structures, on the coast east of North Berwick. Described as 'the last of the grand medieval castles', the castle and doocot remain closed but the grounds are open meaning you can walk round the site and imagine life when it was built in the early 14th century. It's a popular filming spot too, having appeared in *Under the Skin* featuring Scarlett Johansson and *A Christmas Castle* starring Brooke Shields.

One of the finest medieval collegiate churches to survive in Scotland, Seton Collegiate Church dates back to the 1100s. Collegiate churches housed a college, or community, of priests. The building suffered under the Rough Wooing in the 1540s, although a new bell tower and transepts were subsequently built, while the Reformation saw an end to collegiate life. The impressive scale of the interior, calm atmosphere and peaceful grounds make it well worth a visit. Find out about Chesters Hill Fort, Tantallon Castle and a number of other sites in East Lothian including Hailes Castle and Dirlerton Castle at www.historicenvironment.scot

East Lothian is home to some of the most important battle sites in Scotland. From the Battle of Athelstaneford in 832AD to the Battle of Pinkie (1547) and the Battle of Prestonpans (1745), take yourself on a battlefield tour. There are a number of memorial stones, interpretation panels and vantage points across the county where you can learn more about the history that has shaped our landscape. www.bit.ly/3lukDPf



There's lots to see and do

FOOD AND DRINK

East Lothian has an abundance of farm shops where you can discover and support local suppliers. From Brand Family Larder at East Fortune, The Mart in East Linton and Fenton Barns Farm Shop. Alternatively, soak up the atmosphere and enjoy a wide range of local produce at the Haddington Farmers' Market on the last Saturday of every month.

Visitors can discover Glenkinchie Distillery's storied landscape and heritage at this new multi-million pound development, the Lowland Home of Johnnie Walker. The Victorian distillery and orchard gardens is set within abundant farmland and sweet-scented wildflowers near the town of Pencaitland, a mere 15 miles from Edinburgh. The new experience takes visitors on a wonderful sensory journey, as they discover how Glenkinchie creates the rare whisky. Open Monday to Sunday, 10am to 5pm. Book online. malts.com/en-gb/distilleries/glenkinchie

Visit Strawberry Barn in Dunbar for strawberry picking in summer followed by a coffee, or try Drift in North Berwick for stunning views across the Firth of Forth. Go Italian at Caffè Lucca in Haddington, Giancarlo's in Tranent or the new pizzeria Hector's in Dunbar. East Coast in Musselburgh has been awarded a Green Tourism silver award while Gifford's Lanterne Rouge was previously named Cycling Café of the Year. Enjoy a view of the gardens at Cockenzie House from Cadell's café or enjoy a meal at the family-friendly Prestoungrange Gothenburg in Prestonpans.

OUTDOOR EXPLORERS

East Lothian has an extensive path network enabling responsible access to our

beautiful area. The 134 mile John Muir Way attracts many travellers each year and now new coastal off-route walking and cycling itineraries have been launched for those looking to explore further in the county.

Developed to tie in with the John Muir Way, these suggest attractions off the main routes, giving residents and visitors additional points of interest. Try Fisherrow to Port Seton via Prestongrange Museum and Morrison's Haven, or Dunbar to East Linton taking in Phantassie Mill and Doocot. All of the routes offer the opportunity for refreshments in local eateries. Download maps at

visiteastlothian.org/activities/walking

Looking for a new way to explore our local area? There are a number of groups that can help you to see East Lothian from a fresh perspective. Join a local walking group such as East Lothian Ramblers and Hillwalkers (www.facebook.com/eastlothianwalkers) or our Ageing Well Health and Wellbeing Walks (www.eastlothian.gov.uk/ageingwell).

Alternatively, why not try Orienteering? East Lothian Orienteers run monthly events at a range of locations including Barns Ness and Gosford Estate. Families are welcome. Find out more at www.elo.org.uk

If you'd rather make more of a splash, Foxlake Adventures (www.foxlake.co.uk) has a range of activities at its extensive site just outside Dunbar. Try wakeboarding, open water swimming or the Foxfall. If you prefer to stay dry, brave the zipline trail high in the trees or watch the fun with a warm drink from the lakeside café. Alternatively try Coast to Coast Surf School for surfing, stand up paddleboarding and coasteering (www.c2surfschool.com) Venturing Out CIC also offer a range of outdoor activities, including kayaking at Musselburgh Lagoons, hillwalking in the Lammermuirs and school holiday activities. As a not-for-profit company, they reinvest money to provide activities to local families whose children have additional support needs and those living with financial hardship. www.venturingout.org.uk

Prefer exploring woodland? Butterdean Wood is managed by the Woodland Trust for Scotland which is introducing more native trees into the space. It has two waymarked 5km trails to follow. woodlandtrust.org.uk

Find your own next adventure at www.visiteastlothian.org/hidden-gems



Michelle Gunn loves making tasty treats for her customers

A taste of success

Michelle Gunn goes from strength to strength with NB Eats

NB EATS WAS launched in July 2019 when Michelle Gunn took over the former Baguette Bar on North Berwick High Street.

During the first half of 2020, Michelle undertook a renovation programme, including the installation of energy efficient equipment, while a rebranding exercise and marketing campaign was also launched to fit with Michelle's new vision.

NB Eats took its inspiration from East Lothian's amazing coastal location. A new business name was created to provide a 'limit-less' feeling, as the food range was being expanded to include paninis, wraps, baguettes, jacket potatoes, burgers, sandwiches, breakfast rolls, full Scottish breakfasts and home cooked soup.

The menu at NB Eats has been further developed to now offer around 20-25 fillings a day. Some fillings are created on the premises with others sourced from carefully selected suppliers to offer customers fresh, tasty food, prepared to their own specifications and cooked in front of them. "I always think eating out is a treat whether that be a wrap for lunch or a full-blown meal," says Michelle.

"So I take great care and pride when people are parting with their hard earned cash in creating a little bit of indulgence,

just how they like it! Nothing prepacked or ready-made in our counters."

East Lothian Investments and Business Gateway were fundamental in supporting Michelle. "Business Gateway has been such an essential part of my business progress. They have been an excellent 'go to' for me to gain advice and information on general day to day issues as well as enabling me to reach out to experts in branding, HR and Digital Marketing which small businesses like mine cannot extend our budgets to, especially in today's market place. In addition, they provide a fantastic range of online webinars that are run weekly and cover many of the challenging issues business owners face."

Michelle had only run the business for nine months when the pandemic hit.

She says: "This really raised some difficult challenges for me as I was still very much in the early days of learning. I received grants during both waves of the pandemic. This not only helped with the survival of the business, but helped invest into a new income stream as sales had considerably dropped when the business reopened in June 2020, and knew I need to think of new ideas to generate more income," says Michelle. "So in April 2021 we collaborated with Giacobazzi of Eyemouth and started

to sell their ice cream. This was very popular over the summer and has helped sustain our cash flow. However, the demand dropped away and I decided to close our freezer during the winter months but will restock over the spring. We will be back with an extended product range to include new flavours of ice creams, sundaes and milkshakes. Our food menu is a continual work in progress as I continuously try to add new sandwich fillings, new ways to prepare our food and source new suppliers to extend our already extensive range offered. But there is more to go! The addition of sweet and savoury crepes will add income stream as well as fitting very well with our existing menu."

In 2022, Michelle will review packaging policies, eliminating where possible to use the 'bare minimum'. She will continue to replace older appliances to more energy efficient equipment as part of her pledge to her customers in response to COP26.

Michelle is delighted to be part of a vibrant East Lothian town centre. "We have all sorts of customers. I'm passionate about learning about people and enjoy nothing more than a natter. The business, and the town has got a heart and soul – that's something to be proud of."

A FEAST of food at Gosford House



EAST Lothian's first-ever FEAST food festival took place in December as part of the Rogue Village Winter Wonderland at stunning Gosford House.

The FEAST East Lothian event was a huge success, with many thousands attending Gosford over the course of the festival.

As well as a range of events set in and around the historic house, focusing on the best of the best of East Lothian's food and drink – from whisky to cheese to artisan cakes and everything in between – the FEAST larder was set in a large vintage tent in the grounds. The marketplace sold local produce and provided the perfect opportunity for visitors to pick up Christmas gifts and treats including local favourites Buck & Birch (spirits produced from ingredients found in the wild), Steampunk Coffee, Edinburgh Kombucha and The Brand Family Farm Shop.

For more information, please visit www.visiteastlothian.org

New online platform piloted to showcase local business and events

WOULD YOU LIKE to have a single place online with information about what's happening in your community and local businesses?

A pilot of an online community engagement and local economy support platform called SOLE (Supporting Our Local Economy)

has been running in Dunbar. Developed by the not-for-profit organisation the Scottish Tech Army and their technology partner OCS, an East Lothian wide initiative has received funding from the UK Government. Volunteers from Dunbar Trades Association and community council have provided

valuable guidance and feedback. Thanks to their input the new online platform and app are being refined and made ready for potential wider use in East Lothian.

SOLE is both a website and a mobile app and in the coming months teams will be contacting businesses and community groups

to fill the platform – participation is free. The platform will be a place to showcase new businesses and will be refreshed with news and events. You'll be able to find businesses where you can shop in person and online, where you can redeem your East Lothian Gift Card, and be notified about special offers. It's an

easy way to discover what's on your doorstep.

Email: info@sole.scot - to register interest. Visit www.sole.scot - for more about the concept. Visit: www.sole.scot/eastlothian - for information specifically about the SOLE project in the county

The spice of life

Melanie's business wins deals for products to be sold across the UK



Melanie and her team have built a successful business

HADDINGTON-BASED Spice Pots, which has received business advice and support from East Lothian Council, has successfully secured sales agreements with national retailers.

As a cooking enthusiast with limited time to source all the difference spices from scratch and prepare meals for her young family, Melanie Auld decided to make her own spice blends which she then started to share with friends. It then evolved into a business idea with Spice Pots being launched in 2014.

Each blend of spice is 100 per cent natural, vegan-friendly and designed to make the cooking of curry easier. The business has gone from strength to strength, tasting success at last year's Scottish Retail Food and Drink Awards and reaching the finals of the WeDO Scottish Business Awards. Melanie also recently won the Entrepreneur Spirit Award at the Great British Entrepreneur Awards in London.

"Business has really picked up in the last couple of years," explains Melanie, who

lives in Gullane. "We've experienced a number of challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, including supply chain issues, but saw online sales skyrocket as a result of more people looking to cook at home.

"We've really upped our game in terms of production and we've invested in technical solutions so that we can cope with demand. We supply Aldi special buys a couple of times a year, WW (formerly Weight Watchers) and we are about to launch our curry kits with Lakeland."

Melanie says that the support she has received from East Lothian Council's Economic Development team and Business Gateway has been invaluable and that anyone looking to set up their own business should get in touch.

"My business adviser Fiona has been immensely helpful from day one," explains Melanie.

"I've been given help and advice in the areas where I am not so strong. I've been given support on functions such as cash flow, packaging, forecasting and assistance

in finding grants. I've received marketing support and doors have been opened for me to attend events such as the Royal Highland Show as well as trade fairs further afield.

"I also received an interest free loan from East Lothian Investments Ltd (ELI) which was really helpful."

Spice Pots is now on sale in more than 400 stockists across the UK and Ireland and has achieved a best-selling product on Amazon marketplace.

Melanie, who is a member of East Lothian Food and Drink, Scotland's Food and Drink County www.scotlandsfooddrinkcounty.com is keen to see Spice Pots develop further.

Melanie is proud of her small team – she has been very keen to offer flexible employment opportunities based around family life.

"My team are all mums who have been able to get back into work. Removing barriers to work has been a real focus and we've built up a small but fantastic team."



Superfast broadband

THE SCOTTISH Government has committed to providing superfast broadband access – speeds of at least 30 megabits per second – to every home and business in Scotland. Unique in the UK, the Reaching 100% (R100) programme ensures universal superfast broadband access through three strands of activity – the £600m R100 contracts, the R100 Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme and commercial coverage.

Visit the Scotland Superfast address checker to find out the status of your superfast broadband connection.

If your home or business is sub-30Mbps and there are no plans for commercial or R100 contract build, you will be eligible for a main voucher which offers a subsidy worth up to £5,000. These vouchers are designed to allow communities to work together to combine their vouchers and extend available funding.

Sub-30Mbps properties where superfast broadband roll-out is planned from 2022 onwards, will be eligible for an interim voucher, offering a subsidy worth up to £400 to deliver a temporary connection – with an additional £250 for those in the hardest-to-reach areas. The voucher can be used to access a range of technologies such as fixed wireless, mobile or satellite.

Applications for interim vouchers must be received by 31 March 2022, whereas applications for main vouchers will continue to be accepted after March 2022.

To find out more about the R100 Scottish Broadband Voucher Scheme and wider R100 programme visit www.scotlandsuperfast.com



V2G chargers have the power to inspire

EAST LOTHIAN Council has installed 'Vehicle to Grid' (V2G) chargers at Penston House, Macmerrie which enables the fleet's electric vehicles to discharge surplus electricity from the EV batteries back for use in the building or for export back to the grid.

The 'E-flex' initiative is funded by InnovateUK which is using public sector fleets for large scale trials of V2G before rolling out for wider use.

Council Leader, Norman Hampshire, said: "It's an exciting development that brings environmental and financial

benefits and contributes to the council's climate change aims and objectives. By adding V2G our electric vehicle batteries can store energy and when the vehicles are not in use they can discharge it back to the electricity network when it is most needed – for instance at

peak times of the day when usage across the UK is at its highest."

Being part of this project means East Lothian Council is at the forefront of testing smart charging and helping to assess its development for future applications.

Dolphin delight

Inn's re-opening as a hostel brings Dunbar site back to life



THE RE-OPENING of the Dolphin Inn, on Dunbar's Queen's Road, has breathed new life into a prominent building which had become derelict and unsightly over a number of years.

After an extensive restoration project, the Dolphin Inn now provides hostel accommodation for visitors to the town, with 11 rooms over two floors.

With staycation holidays becoming increasingly popular, the Dolphin Inn offers individuals, couples and small groups with a base from which to enjoy active seaside holidays taking in the very best of what Dunbar, and East Lothian more generally, has to offer.

"The Dolphin Inn was in an awful state both structurally and with extensive damp and rot," explains Director Jo Waddell.

"There had been water leaking in above the staircase and as a result the staircase had effectively fallen down and many of the joists and floorboards in this area were beyond salvaging.

"We had always looked with interest at the building. It is in a prominent position in Dunbar and had often thought it would make an excellent hostel with its proximity to the railway station, harbour, beaches and High Street. Dunbar is also an amazing place for outdoor activities and is situated

on a number of long distance walking and cycling routes so we felt sure there was a market for this type of accommodation."

Supported by a strong professional team and using East Lothian contractors, Jo embarked on a two-year renovation project, leading on the building's fresh interior decoration with a focus on creating a 'retro vintage' look.

The process involved stripping all the walls back to stone, reroofing and significant structural reinforcements. The rebuilding of the main stairwell was a key aspect as well as reinstating several floors that were lost to damp and rot. All walls have been fully insulated with solar panels installed in order to increase energy efficiency.

The result is a vastly improved building consisting mainly of twin and double rooms, as well as a bunk room for those looking for cheaper beds.

The ground floor comprises a lounge, dining area and self-catering kitchen with a laundry and large courtyard to the rear. The courtyard has an outdoor tap, bike storage and a seating area.

The Dolphin Inn's re-opening has been warmly welcomed. Jo and the team are able to direct guests to the range of fantastic local businesses in the town and area, with a map on the lounge wall highlighting local

shops, cafes and restaurants. "There has been lots of enthusiastic support as the building has a long history in the town having been a hotel since the mid 1800s," explains Jo.

"It also fills a gap in the accommodation market in the town which also has a good range of other accommodation. The entrance to the town from the east is now much more attractive and welcoming and the land behind the building that was previously an eyesore has now been walled in and landscaped.

"The renovation of the Dolphin, and other buildings in the town, the Harbour Chapel in particular, definitely draws more visitors to the historic town centre. The High Street and harbour are beautiful areas and have a great history and we have two beaches within a short walk of the town centre."

Jo and her team have also created the website www.60thingsdunbar.scot which suggests 60 things (in no particular order) for people to do in the area – including getting out on the water, being active on the land and having fun with kids.

While of benefit to the visitors, the website also has ideas and suggestions to appeal to local people – including newer residents to the area.



Great days out

DUNBAR IS AN increasingly popular location for fun family days out, holidays, and as a great place to live and work. Established as a Royal Burgh in 1370, the town boasts a marvellous array of local shops, great places to eat and drink, and picturesque natural surroundings.

From coastal walks to surfing, it's a fantastic location for adventures in the great outdoors, with spectacular beaches, countryside and marking the end point – or start – of the John Muir Way walk, which stretches all the way to Helensburgh in Argyll and Bute.

Lauderdale and Winterfield parks are popular places to visit, while the town also benefits from its fantastic leisure pool and close proximity to John Muir Country Park.

As well as being recognised as one of the sunniest places in Scotland, Dunbar is well known for being the birthplace of the naturalist and conservationist John Muir.

Born in the town in 1838, Muir developed a deep love of the natural world as a child. After emigrating to the United States, his campaign to 'preserve wilderness for wilderness' sake led to the establishment of the world's first national park system, with Muir remembered today as a pioneer of the conservation movement.

John Muir's Birthplace, on Dunbar High Street, is a fascinating museum which provides visitors with the opportunity to find about the journey of John Muir's life. More information is available at www.jmbt.org.uk

Other historic buildings in the town centre include Lauderdale House, the old Barracks and the Abbey Church.

For shopping, you'll find Dunbar has a good selection of outlets including a butcher, a baker, a fishmongers, a greengrocers, garden centre, bike sales and repair, and a wide and accessible High Street.

Many businesses in the town and local area offer delivery services, click and collect or online shopping. You'll also find services including beauty therapy, massage and hairdressing to printing, embroidery, framing and laser cutting. The local Zero Waste shop is a treasure trove of terrific second hand items.

The town also has a number of restaurants serving high quality food.

Other communities in the area, including East Linton and West Barns and nearby villages, have a number of local businesses and shops for the benefit of customers.

City Region Deal supports East Lothian's growth

THE EDINBURGH and South East Scotland City Region Deal is a programme designed to accelerate economic growth across South East Scotland and plans a range of projects to achieve this. The Deal involves six local authorities including East Lothian and was signed by the First Minister, Prime Minister and City Region Leaders on 7

August 2018. The Deal amounts to £1.3 billion of investment across the region over the next 15 years, using £300m from UK Government, £300m from the Scottish Government and further commitments from the six local authorities, universities and colleges, and the private and third sectors.

The City Region Deal is

governed by a Joint Committee made up of the various funding bodies and this committee takes decisions on how to bring the Deal commitments to fruition. The Joint Committee has now approved projects using £510m of the governments' grant funding. Due to this success, a regional economic framework setting

out an aligned future economic vision, ambition and priorities for south east Scotland has been developed. The members of the City Region deal have also prepared a regional prosperity framework, a document that aims to enhance the area.

For more information, visit esescityregiondeal.org.uk

Fans of Prestonpans

There's lots going on across the Preston, Seton and Gosford area...

THE COMMUNITIES of Prestonpans, Cockenzie and Port Seton and Longniddry have always been popular places in which to live and visit – with lots going on and excellent local businesses including shops, cafes, restaurants and pubs.

Running parallel with the coast and the John Muir Way, Prestonpans High Street boasts some great local business, look out for exceptional wood-fired pizza and fish and chips, post office, chemist, artisan scones, cakes, specialty pies and confectionary, pop into the bakers or update your look at the barbers or beauticians!

In the past, Prestonpans relied heavily on coalmining. Other industries were also important to the town including salt panning (hence the name), soapmaking, brewing, brickmaking, and potteries.

Prestonpans contains some fine historic buildings such as the 15th century Preston Tower, 16th century Northfield House and 17th century Hamilton House. The town can perhaps claim Scotland's finest example of an old Mercat Cross – the only one in the country that retains its original form and location.

BATTLE MEMORIAL

The town also has a memorial to the Battle of Prestonpans at which Prince Charlie's Highland army defeated Hanoverian redcoats under General John Cope during the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion. A local farmer, Adam Skirving, is reputed to have witnessed the affray and written the famous ballad, Hey! Johnnie Cope Are Ye Waulkin Yet?

Cockenzie and Port Seton are historic fishing communities with long histories. The burgh of Cockenzie was created in 1591 by King James VI. Between 1655–65 George Seton, the eleventh Lord Seton, built the first harbour at Port Seton, using this name to distinguish it from the harbour at Cockenzie.

Seton Palace, replaced in the 18th century by Seton Castle, was frequently visited by Mary, Queen of Scots. Seton Collegiate Church is an important 15th century building containing a fine vaulted apse.

Cockenzie and Port Seton still have a fishing industry today, but on a much smaller scale than in the past. Its coastal walkway, links and harbours help make the area popular with day-trippers and holiday makers.

The beaches at Seton Sands and Longniddry Bents have a mix of sand and rocks, providing an ideal location for exploring and days out, while windsurfers and canoeists often make use of the sea.



The Goth has a rich history

Gosford House, near Longniddry, is an imposing neo-classical mansion which was one of the last great architectural commissions of the celebrated Scots architect, Robert Adam.

Longniddry itself has a number of pleasant walks, including along the coast, through woodlands and is a starting point for the Longniddry to Haddington railway walk, along a former branch line.

The Preston Seton Gosford Area Partnership established its Great Place - Heritage Connections Project (known locally as "Salt of the Earth") with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, community groups have been working together with the Council to identify and celebrate the important natural, cultural, and physical heritage in their area.

Through Salt of the Earth's work the Area Partnership wants to underline the sense of local pride the heritage of the area

gives, recognise its potential to bring people and communities together, raise ambition for the area, and reduce inequalities and social exclusion. They believe that everyone in the ward should have the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the area's heritage.

As a result of this partnership approach, East Lothian Council has been able to secure significant additional capital funding for some of the heritage assets identified and plans for the regeneration of sites in and around Prestonpans are making good progress.

PRESTONGRANGE HERITAGE PARK

Planning is underway for the regeneration of Prestongrange site.

Planned works include

the repair and refurbishment of the bathhouse building providing a volunteer hub, future potential commercial and exhibition space, the construction of a new 'engine shed' to better develop and display the museum locomotive collection, as well as repairs to important structures and improvements to access around the site. The project team are also exploring the potential of the underground water on the site from former mine workings, to provide low carbon energy for heating buildings at Prestongrange. This project is intended to be the first of several phases of regeneration working towards a vision of a destination heritage park.

PRESTONPANS CIVIC SQUARE

Following work to restore the World War One War memorial led by the Local Area Partnership and Community Council in 2018, a second phase of improvements to this important part of Prestonpans High Street is underway

The project aims to improve the setting of the memorial by repairing the surrounding walls, renewing paving and improving seating, and providing new space for commemoration and local heritage interpretation. The proposals also include the removal of the 1950s viewing platform in favour of new openings in the existing walls so views of the Forth can be accessed by everyone.

The Community Council's vision for the site is that it can become a focal point for the High Street, hosting events and markets as well as being a safe comfortable space to rest and spend time.

PRESTON TOWER

A third local project will see a number of improvements made to the late Medieval towerhouse and surrounding structures, including new paths, and access stair, and interpretation boards developed in collaboration with the community.

Restoration is focused on improving access and encouraging more people to visit in future while contributing to local regeneration.

FOLLOW THE MURAL TRAIL!

Providing a visual treasure hunt, the Prestonpans murals of more than 50 artworks depicting the history of the town attract thousands of visitors each year. The trail starts at the Gothenburg pub and takes in locations along the coast and on the streets of the town. Will you be able to spot John Knox, Sir Walter Scott and The Witches Gate? The Murals Trail Prestonpans (prestonpans.org)

ALL GO AT THE GOTH

The Prestoungrange Gothenburg (known locally as the Goth) on Prestonpans High Street is a Grade II listed building with more than a century of rich history. Built in 1908 it still runs under the original 'Gothenburg Public House' system, which originated in Sweden in the mid 1800s, which allocates a proportion of its income to be used to benefit the local community,

COCKENZIE HOUSE

Located on Edinburgh Road, Cockenzie House and gardens offers visitors an exciting array of craft shops, café and secret garden. The house dates back to the late 17th Century and is now a charitable trust providing local artists and craftspeople with studios and work spaces to rent for workshops.

To find out more about the area visit www.saltoftheearthheritage.com



Prestonpans War Memorial statue by Birnie Rhind



Cockenzie House and gardens

County living

Set amongst agricultural land, Haddington is a beautiful market town



HADDINGTON IS often referred to as 'the hidden town' because of the way it sits low in its rural landscape, but it's certainly worth discovering.

A 'Royal Burgh' as early as 1138, Haddington has had a turbulent history. Birthplace of King Alexander II of Scotland, sacked and burned by the English, visited by William Wallace, given a new Royal Charter by Robert the Bruce, flooded, rebuilt, burned again – the list goes on!

The town, once fourth largest in Scotland, has always played an important role in agriculture. Today, the Haddington Farmers' Market, which takes place on the last Saturday of every month in front of the historic corn Exchange, is a popular local event with the very best of local produce and other goods drawing people from far and wide. A true market town, Haddington has banks and a post office, butchers and bakers, cafes, restaurants, and pubs. You can buy books, sportswear, gifts, dancewear, traditional Indian home cooking and everything in-between!

There is plenty to do on the town besides shop, including enjoying a stroll along the

riverbank and visiting historic St Mary's Church, or unwinding in nearby St Mary's Pleasance, a stunning garden next to Haddington House – which dates from 1648. St Mary's, which dates from the 14th century, is one of the three great pre-reformation churches in the Lothians and the largest parish church in Scotland.

Not far from St Mary's and the Tyne you'll find the Aubigny Sports Centre, named after Haddington's twin town Aubigny sur Nère in France. The centre has all the usual facilities, pool and health suite, gym and badminton courts, a synthetic pitch, a dance studio and a café. Nearby is Neilson Park, founded in 1906 through a bequest by a local shop keeper, it has a modern play park, tennis courts, and is one of the main venues for the Haddington Festival, which takes place every summer and is a must visit event.

The John Gray Centre, in the town centre, is a major visitor attraction. The centre brings together an East Lothian museum as well as the town's library and tourist information, local history centre and archives. Housed in what was previously four historic buildings, the centre is a bright, welcoming place that

aims to inspire the people of East Lothian to explore and engage with the history of the communities, environment, and families. The centre is named after John Gray, who died in Haddington in 1717.

Amisfield Walled Garden can be found just outside of the town beyond the golf course. Dating from the late 18th Century it's one of the largest walled gardens in Scotland with extensive herbaceous borders, fruit and vegetable beds, wildflower meadow, orchard and woodland plantings. A community garden, managed by the Amisfield Preservation Trust and a large band of volunteers, is open to the public free of charge.

The wider Haddington and Lammermuir area has a number of picturesque villages and thriving local businesses, and can be a great place to explore – including on foot and by bike. The village of Athelstaneford has become synonymous with the establishment of the Saltire as the flag of Scotland. This is commemorated by Flag Heritage Centre to the rear of Athelstaneford Church while the Saltire Memorial, erected in 1965, is located within the churchyard.

Key areas for development

AS EFFORTS STEP up to boost East Lothian's economy, particularly in the wake of the pandemic, there are three key sites developing that will support our aim to make East Lothian the best local authority area in Scotland in which to live, work and do business.

FORMER COCKENZIE POWER STATION AND SURROUNDING AREA

Since acquiring the site in 2018, the Council has engaged with Scottish Government colleagues to establish a new planning strategy for its regeneration. The Scottish Government has recently published draft National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), which looks ahead to how Scotland should develop between now and 2045. This indicates the value of the Cockenzie site for economic development and reinforces the council's strategy to redevelop the area to encourage new businesses to locate and provide much-needed jobs. This new National Planning Framework 4, when approved by the Scottish Ministers, will replace the third National Planning Framework's ambition to use the site for a gas fired power station with carbon capture and storage. The council will continue to engage to ensure that the Cockenzie site can be used to support East Lothian's economic ambitions.

NEW DEVELOPMENT: BLINDWELLS

The Blindwells Development Area comprises the first phase which is under construction and a wider area with potential for development. Taken together these cover 540 hectares. This new town area is located to the north of Tranent, south of Cockenzie, and close to the A1 and East Coast Main Line.

LAND AROUND QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY

East Lothian Council and Queen Margaret University are delivering an Innovation Hub, which is Phase One of a wider Edinburgh Innovation Park on land located adjacent to the Queen Margaret University campus. The Food and Drink Innovation Hub is supported by £28.6 million from the UK Government, £1.4 million from the Scottish Government and £10 million from East Lothian Council as part of the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal.

You can keep up to date with all of these key development sites on the council website: www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Diversifying business opportunities

THE RURAL ECONOMY has long been at the heart of East Lothian life. Diversification has become an increasingly significant aspect of the rural economy in recent years, with farms and other businesses finding new ways of generating income and supporting jobs.

Castleton Farm, located near Tantallon Castle, has been home to four generations of the McNicol family. Jo and Stuart McNicol launched DRIFT as an agri-tourism business, close to the farm, in 2018. It sits alongside an events business, while the family continue to grow cereals on the farm as well as providing storage and office lets for other businesses.

Created sustainably and housed in used shipping containers, DRIFT is a café perched on top of cliffs, with



stunning views towards Fife. Food is produced fresh on site and currently focuses on soup, scones, cakes, teas and coffees. The café also sells a range of retail coffee, tea selection along with jam and honey from Scottish producers. (These are also used within DRIFT). Barista coffee and loose leaf teas are served along with hot lunches and fresh home baked goods plus adventurous cuisines through their pop-up nights.

"Our aim was to create a comfortable refreshment stop for visitors, in sympathy with

the environment as the containers do not require foundations. This has always been a popular site because of the proximity of the castle and Bass Rock as local landmarks, but lacked facilities for people to stop" explains Jo, a former teacher. "In doing so we wanted to diversify and help secure the future of our family farm."

Supported by Tyne Esk LEADER funding, the project exceeded anticipated job creation in its first months of opening, with DRIFT now

employing 22 people.

Tyne Esk LEADER want to build an understanding of local residents' priorities. As a powerful force influencing national policy, the Scottish Rural Parliament is being promoted with its priorities being an important touchstone for East and Midlothian.

A survey has been launched that is a chance for you to identify what the big issues are for you, your family, your neighbours, and your community. Tyne Esk LEADER are being supported by Community Enterprise.

If you have any questions, please email douglas@communityenterprise.co.uk Type bit.ly/3lv0aju into your browser to access the survey and tell us what you think.