



FIVE STARS

Picture supplied by The Herald & Times Group.

Children from Viewpark celebrate as their nursery is recognised as one of the best in Scotland. Education inspectors awarded Laburnum Nursery a rare five-star rating in an HMIE report. Their only recommendation was to keep up the good work. Find out more on page 5.

We said it with flowers



Beautiful North Lanarkshire
bringing beauty to life

By Joan Grady

North Lanarkshire is beautiful! That's the message delivered loud and clear last month, when judges from Beautiful Scotland paid their visits.

Calling at each of the 22 towns and villages entered into this year's campaign, the judges had the chance to see for themselves all the hard work put into improving local environments. Marks were awarded for the design and quality of planting and floral displays; projects designed to conserve energy, protect wildlife or minimise waste; quality of environment – like the absence of litter, dog fouling, graffiti and flyposting – and the extent of community involvement.

As well as visiting our well-known parks, landmarks and open spaces, the judges met some of the people who have been delivering projects across the North Lanarkshire area.

Going to schools, allotments, community parks and local projects has given the judges an excellent picture of the breadth of achievement across North Lanarkshire, and a very clear picture of our reasons for entering this competition.

"Feedback has been very positive," said Councillor Helen McKenna, Convener of the council's Environmental Services Committee. "The judges have noted the huge efforts that have gone into North Lanarkshire in recent years, both by the council and by the people who live here, and they are impressed.

"The next stage is the presentation of awards, but whether or not any North Lanarkshire town wins outright, we can be proud of the work we have done so far and look forward to continuing and building on that work for many years to come."

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Contacting us

NORTHLINE

General enquiries 01698 403200
Punch the Crunch hotline 01698 403150
Environmental services 01698 403110

BOOKINGS 01698 403120

(Bookings for community centres, parks and the Civic Theatre box office)

Telephone payments 01698 403130
(Accepting payments for council tax and rent)

Antisocial behaviour helpline 01698 403222

Recruitment 01698 403190
(to apply for a job with the council)

FIRST STOP SHOPS

Airdrie	Coats House, Gartlea Road
Bellshill	26 Motherwell Road
Coatbridge	195 Main Street
Coatbridge	50 Woodside Street
Cumbernauld	2/4 Forth Walk, Town Centre
Harthill	22 Victoria Street
Kilsyth	9 Parkfoot Street
Moodiesburn	17 Blackwoods Crescent
Motherwell	69-71 Merry Street
Shotts	162-164 Station Road
Viewpark	135 Burnhead Street
Wishaw	236 Main Street

First Stop Shops are open 8.45am to 4.45pm, Monday to Thursday and 8.45am to 4.15pm Friday. The cash offices within the First Stop Shops are open Monday to Thursday 9am to 4.30pm and Friday 9am to 4pm. Moodiesburn cash office closes between 1pm and 2pm. Contact Northline for details.

NLC EMERGENCY OUT-OF-HOURS

Social work standby services	0800 121 4114
Repair reporting (24 hour service)	0800 678 1166
Gas & solid fuel central heating faults (24 hour service)	0845 606 1555
Antisocial Task Force	01236 638580

OTHER USEFUL NUMBERS

Support and Advice for Independent Living (SAIL)	01698 338899
SAIL textphone	01698 338925
Benefits fraud hotline	0800 953 0400
Insurance fraud hotline	0800 328 9270
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111

You can find information on the council and its services by logging on to the council's website: www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk.

Get in touch!

North Lanarkshire News is your council newspaper and we'd like to hear your views. If you have any comments please call 01698 302582, email corporatecommunications@northlan.gov.uk or write to:

**Communications and Marketing,
North Lanarkshire Council,
Windmillhill Street, Motherwell ML1 1AB**

Provost's plaudits



Provost Curley joined Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Major David Reeks to celebrate the Diamond Wedding anniversary of Coatbridge couple, Mr and Mrs Lynn.

During the past few weeks I have been busy with both civic events and enjoying my summer holidays. The Depute Provost as always has been busy meeting and greeting people across our communities and supporting a variety of civic functions.

Towards the end of July, I had the honour of hosting a civic lunch recognising the achievements of our Polish/Scottish summer school at St Margaret's Primary School in Cumbernauld. I was also very pleased to join local couples Mr and Mrs Lynn and Murphy in celebrating their special wedding anniversaries, which occurred during the last month.

I am very excited about a forthcoming event I have been invited to represent North Lanarkshire at, which is taking place in our twin town of Airdrie, Canada. The town in Alberta is holding its centennial celebrations and the local Mayor extended me the great privilege of attending the occasion and re-affirming the long-standing twinning and friendship links between our towns.

I look forward to the civic occasions planned over the next month and providing an update on my Canadian visit.

Councillor Tom Curley
North Lanarkshire Provost

More classes, more options

Parents in North Lanarkshire now have more childcare options following the opening of five new nursery classes.

The classes have opened in the following primary schools:

- Clarkston Primary School, Airdrie;
- Cambusnethan Primary School;
- Stane and St Patrick's primary schools, Shotts; and
- St Brendan's Primary School, Muirhouse.

Each class will be able to accommodate 30 children aged three to five years, both morning and afternoon, and will be managed by the headteacher of the local primary school.



Jane Liddell, Head of Education and Quality Development in Learning and Leisure Services, said: "I am delighted that we have been able to extend the range of nursery services available, bringing the total number of nursery classes within local primary schools to 64. The demand for the new services from local parents has been high and many of the available places have already been allocated for the session 2009/10 indicating the positive response from local communities for these services."

If you'd like to find out more about any of these new nursery services or if you have any other nursery-related enquiries, please call the Childcare Information Service on 01236 812281 or email chis@northlan.gov.uk.

We said it with flowers



The Beautiful Scotland judges visit gardens in Motherwell.

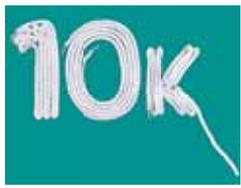
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Beautiful Scotland itself is delighted at the huge increase in the number of entrants this year. In 2008, a total of 49 communities took part. This year, that total has increased to 72 – an increase almost entirely made up of North Lanarkshire's record 22 entries!

Keith Jackson, Chairman of the Beautiful Scotland Advisory Group, said: "These judging visits are the culmination of a year's hard work from our entrants.

"They gave the North Lanarkshire groups the chance to show how that work has benefited local communities. All of them should be proud of their achievements, and I wish them luck in this year's campaign."

On your marks, get set...register!



As the countdown continues to the Cumbernauld 10k and 1k races, runners are being urged to register before next week's closing date (2 September).

Now in its third year, the race starts at 10am on 13 September at Broadwood Stadium. The 1k race for primary school children follows immediately after at 10.05am. Last year, more than 500 runners competed in the 10k race.

Martin Dickson, Local Regeneration Manager, said: "There's just one week left until the closing date so I'd

urge everyone to sign up, especially as applications can't be accepted on the day.

"In a short time it has become a very popular event, not just with serious athletes but also with fun runners looking to improve their fitness, as well as our budding young athletes. There's also a lot of entertainment for families with face painting, music, giant slide, bouncy castle, golf and small-sided football".

The 10k is organised by North Lanarkshire Council in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire, Campsies Centre Cumbernauld Ltd and North Lanarkshire Leisure

with support from the Cumbernauld News, Kilsyth Chronicle and AG Barr. The event will raise money for The Scottish Spina Bifida Association.

Entry fees for the 10k range from £14 downwards, with discounts available for members of the Scottish Athletics Federation, jogscotland, Access NL and Passport to Leisure. Fees for the children's 1k are just £1.50.

Entry forms for both events can be picked up in North Lanarkshire libraries, First Stop Shops, theatres and NL Leisure sports facilities. You can also download an application form from www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk or call 01236 437756.



Primary school children compete in last year's 1k race.

Kayaking fun for Lanarkshire kids

By Andrew Craney

Young people from North Lanarkshire had a splashingly good time over the summer holidays as they enjoyed kayaking lessons at Strathclyde Park.

The kayaking programme helped children aged 8 to 11 learn all aspects of the sport, using first-class facilities in a safe and fun environment.

The lessons were taken under the supervision of Scotland's only canoeing development officer and focussed on paddling junior-racing kayaks, learning the basic techniques and competing in regattas. Some of the participants are currently competing in various regattas supported by the Scottish Canoe Association.

Russell Daniels, North Lanarkshire Leisure's canoeing officer, said: "Kayaking is a great sport and the focus is on getting more juniors interested and completing a kayaking course that will hopefully keep them involved in the sport. My coaching focus is to ensure that kids of all kayaking abilities have fun and get the chance to compete at a higher level if they wish."

With Strathclyde Park being used as a key venue for the International Children's Games being hosted in Lanarkshire in 2011, kayaking lessons will provide a great chance for kids to get fit and active ahead of the games.

The next kayaking programme is planned for October. For more information about taking part, call Russell on 01698 346810 or email danielsr@northlanarkshire.gov.uk.



Canoeing officer Russell Daniels puts the kayaking students through their paces at Strathclyde Park.

Fonz competition winners

Congratulations to the winners of our Fonz Competition:

William Wheeler from Wishaw; Alanis Blades from Airdrie; Jordan Campbell from Kilsyth; and Cameron and Kyle Easton from Motherwell will each receive a Hank Zipzer novel, signed by the author, Henry Winkler and supplied by Borders Books.

They correctly answered the following question: In which television series did Henry Winkler appear as The Fonz. The answer, of course, was 'Happy Days'.

Congratulations to our winners and thanks to the many readers who entered the competition.

Shotts is shaping up

Shotts Leisure Centre has unveiled its refurbished and extended gym areas. The £300,000 programme of improvements includes new treadmills and cross trainers with LCD interactive TV screens for personal audio and visual entertainment and fully integrated iPod connectivity. The gym is now spread over three areas and boasts a new air conditioning system and huge plasma screens with satellite TV.

For more information about visiting Shotts Leisure Centre or becoming a member, please call 01236 442644 or email accessnl@northlan.gov.uk.



Home of the International Children's Games



Doors of opportunity

Doors Open Days
get into buildings!

This September, you have the chance to see a side of Lanarkshire life you might never have seen before. You could reach for the stars at Airdrie Observatory. You could step into the past at the New Lanark Heritage site. You could even see if Irn Bru is really made from girders!

On Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September, all over Lanarkshire, more than 50 buildings not normally

open to the public will invite you in – completely free of charge. It's part of Doors Open Day, the annual event that aims to raise the profile of local architecture and cultural heritage.

A complete list of all the buildings taking part is available from North and South Lanarkshire Council offices, libraries and First Stop Shops, or by logging on to www.doorsopenday.org.uk. Old favourites like

the North Lanarkshire fire stations and New Lanark will be taking part again, and this year they're joined by newcomers Summerlee Heritage Centre, Colzium House, the new Motherwell College and the Irn-Bru factory in Cumbernauld.

Opening times vary for each building, so make sure you pick up your leaflet, or check the website before you go.

Doors Open Day times and venues

For more information about the times and venues for this year's Doors Open Day, visit www.doorsopendays.org.uk.

Abronnhill Parish Church

12 Sep (10.00-12.00) – 13 Sep (11.15-12.30 and 18.30-19.15)

Airdrie Library

12 Sep (09.00-16.00) – 13 Sep (12.00-16.00)

Airdrie Observatory

12 Sep (09.00-16.00) – 13 Sep (12.00-16.00)

Barrs Irn-Bru Factory, Cumbernauld

12 Sep – 13 Sep (10.30-15.00) **NEW FOR '09**
(All tours now fully booked)

Bellshill Fire Station

12 Sep – 13 Sep (10.30-17.00)

Calvary Church, Motherwell

12 Sep (10.00-15.30)

Coatbridge Fire Station

12 – 13 Sep (10.00-16.00)

Coltness Memorial Church

12 Sep (09.00-17.00)

Colzium House & Lennox Estate, Kilsty

13 Sep (12.00-16.00) **NEW FOR '09**

Cumbernauld Old Parish Church

13 Sep (12.00-17.00)

Finish Timing Tower, Strathclyde Country Park

12 Sep (10.30-16.30)

Gospel Literature Outreach Centre, Motherwell

12 Sep (11.00-15.00)

Kildrum Parish Church

12 Sep (10.00-16.00) – 13 Sep (10.30-13.00)

Kilsyth Burns and Old Parish Church

12 Sep (10.30-17.00) – 13 Sep (11.00-12.00 + 14.00-17.00)

Kirk O' Shotts Church

12 Sep (10.30-17.00) – 13 Sep (13.30-17.00)

Lanarkshire Central Mosque, Mossend

12 – 13 Sep (10.30-17.00)

Motherwell College

12 – 13 Sep (10.30-17.00) **NEW FOR '09**

Motherwell Fire Station

12 Sep (11.00-16.00)

Sacred Heart Church, Cumbernauld

13 Sep (10.30-17.00)

St Andrew's Church, Coatbridge

12 – 13 Sep (14.00-16.00)

St Augustine's RC Church, Coatbridge

13 Sep (09.00-17.00)

St Ignatius RC Church, Wishaw

12 – 13 Sep (14.00-17.00)

St Mary's RC Church, Coatbridge

12 Sep (09.00-17.15) – 13 Sep (09.00-17.00)

St Patrick's RC Church, Kilsyth

13 Sep (09.00-17.00)

Summerlee Heritage Museum, Coatbridge

NEW FOR '09
12 Sep (10.00-17.00)



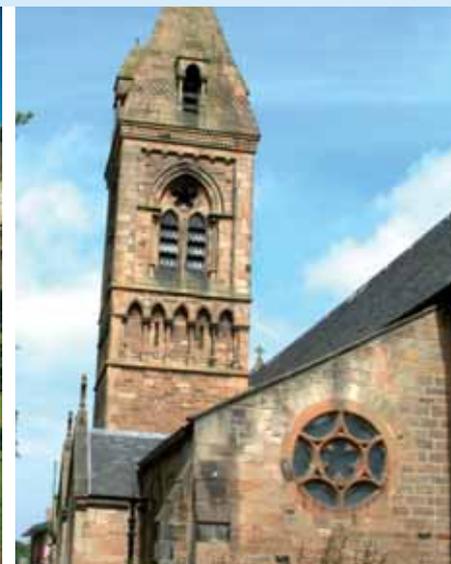
Airdrie Observatory



Motherwell Heritage Centre



Colzium House, Kilsty



St Ignatius RC Church, Wishaw



Gospel Literature Outreach Centre



Summerlee Heritage Museum, Coatbridge



Robert Hamilton Memorial Fountain



Motherwell College

Football programme is streets ahead

By Andrew Craney

A street football programme for young people across North Lanarkshire reached a tremendous conclusion with a high profile finals day at Broadwood Stadium in Cumbernauld.

Motherwell Football Club captain Stephen Craigan, the Champions League theme tune and the Sky Sports cameras were all on hand to generate excitement for the event which helped to tackle youth disorder problems.

The Street Football programme, organised by North Lanarkshire Council, has been almost a year and a half in the making and has reached over 1,000 teens and young children. Just before the summer, £20,000 of funding was secured from the Community Safety Partnership to run the programme for youths in North Lanarkshire over the summer period.

The council identified local communities where youth disorder was a problem. One of the main issues was that young people felt they could rarely venture outside their own community for fear of gangs from other areas. So, with the use of the mobile football pitch, newly acquired 4-a-side goals and the help of police and local regeneration managers we identified community 'hotspots' with a high rate of youth disorder.

The programme involved 4-a-side games which encouraged players to show off their creative skills and learn to communicate and play together as a team. All these coaching days were delivered on the days and times where youth disorder was at its highest, usually Friday nights between 6pm – 9pm.



Assistant Development Officer Willie McNab helps to run Street Football.

One of the key co-ordinators of the programme is Willie McNab, an Assistant Development Officer with Learning and Leisure Services and a youth coach with Celtic FC. Willie said: "The programme is a unique event with communities from all over North Lanarkshire coming together with football being used as the vehicle to make this happen.

"Hopefully this will provide us with a platform to build on the success of the programme and we will be trying hard to secure funding to make this a more sustainable event, giving the youth of today and tomorrow the chance to play and maybe find a career in the world of football."



Laburnum is a five-star nursery

By Colin Fraser

Laburnum Nursery in Viewpark is among the best in Scotland, after education inspectors awarded it top marks.

The inspectors awarded a rare five-star rating in an HMIE report and their only recommendation was to keep up the good work.

North Lanarkshire Council leader Jim McCabe said the

rating confirmed Laburnum Nursery as one of the top pre-school centres in the country.

"The report is full of praise for the learning environment the children experience - everyone in Viewpark should be very proud of their nursery," he said.

Inspectors who visited the nursery in June praised the dedication of staff in helping the children develop, while the high level of involvement parents had with Laburnum was also recognised.

They also identified the following as particular strengths of the centre:

- Children who are confident individuals, successful learners, effective contributors and becoming responsible citizens.
- The success of staff in providing high-quality learning experiences that meet the needs of all children.
- Seamless transitions at all stages.
- Involvement of parents in the life of the nursery.
- The leadership of the management and staff teamwork in taking forward centre improvements.

The nursery's head teacher, Ruth Eglinton, said: "We have established an excellent learning environment within the community of Viewpark, building highly positive relationships with the children, parents and other agencies."



HMIE evaluations for Laburnum Nursery Centre	
Improvements in performance	excellent
Children's experiences	excellent
Meeting learning needs	excellent
The curriculum	excellent
Improvement through self-evaluation	excellent

Managing Inspector: Hilary Long
5 August 2009

Young people share their future hopes

By Colin Fraser

Young people with disabilities from Wishaw and Cumbernauld came together to present their hopes and dreams for the future at an event called "Listening for a Change", held in the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld.

The moving and inspiring event was attended by families, friends and people who work in services which support young people. It followed a five-day workshop run by the arts organisation Moveable Feast.

Staff from Moveable Feast used their skills in drama and art to capture the views of young people and help them reveal their aspirations and present these through music, songs, artwork and drama.

For Jane Johnstone, Community Social Work Manager, the aim of the event was to encourage young people to have their voices heard and feel included in mainstream

opportunities. She said: "The aspirations the young people identified were much as they are for the rest of us: to travel; to have a job; to find love and have a house."

Two of the young people who took part in the event, said: "Don't see the wheels see me... now I feel more confident about my choices and dreams for the future, which might be a career working with young people."

"Disabled people can do anything they put their minds to - they are just the same as everyone else."



Kaitlin Caldwell

Outstanding achievements in North Lanarkshire



William Boyd collects his Outstanding Achievement Award.

Nineteen people from North Lanarkshire have been rewarded for their achievements in overcoming barriers to finding work. North Lanarkshire's Working presented the individuals with an Outstanding Achievement Award at a recent ceremony in Airdrie.

The winners received their awards from Maureen McConachie, Head of Regeneration Services at North Lanarkshire Council, and Robin Turner, General Manager, Routes to Work Ltd.

Maureen said: "We are delighted to be celebrating the achievements of those that received awards today as well as the many others who have found work, education or training through the initiative.

"All those that picked up awards have had to overcome great barriers to do so and it's a testament

to the hard work of everyone involved that they have been able to make the journey towards a new career.

"We hope that today's event will help to inspire others to make a great change in their lives."

Motherwell man, William Boyd was one of the winners to receive an award at the ceremony. After being out of work for a considerable amount of time with an injury he sustained two decades ago, William has found work in healthcare with the support of Routes to Work Ltd, a North Lanarkshire's Working partner.

William, 52, said: "I feel really proud to be picking up this award and grateful for the support I've received from North Lanarkshire's Working for helping me to do so.

"I'm really enjoying the work I'm doing and I'm sure that I wouldn't have found this opportunity without the support of my key worker and my supervisor at the Heather Park care home where I work. They gave me the chance to prove I had something to contribute to the workplace and receiving this award marks a great transition in my life."

North Lanarkshire's Working combines the services of the council, NHS Lanarkshire, Motherwell, Coatbridge and Cumbernauld Colleges, Routes to Work Ltd and North Lanarkshire Volunteer Centre.

For more information call 0800 730226 or visit www.lanarkshiresworking.co.uk.

Recession challenges public spending

The money available for vital local services provided by councils will be cut for the foreseeable future as a result of the global economic crisis. This is the stark situation facing Scotland's local authorities, says North Lanarkshire Council Leader Jim McCabe.

Public spending by the Westminster and Holyrood governments has to be reduced as a result of the recession. This means that councils will see their budgets, at best, remain the same or be cut.

"Even if our budgets are pegged at their current levels, in real terms that will mean a reduction, taking into account inflation," Councillor McCabe explains. "Added to that, we face an ever increasing demand for services.

"This is an extremely challenging time for councils and tough decisions will have to be made about the level of services we can deliver in future.

"In North Lanarkshire we believe we are as well placed as we can be to weather these difficult times because we have managed our budgets effectively.

"We are on target to achieve £30 million in efficiency savings over three years which is being reinvested in frontline services, and we are targeting our resources to help residents and businesses cope with the effects of the credit crunch.

"We are monitoring the economic situation and, through Cosla, we will press the UK and Scottish governments for the funding we need to continue to deliver quality, efficient local services that meet the needs of our residents."



Home of the International Children's Games



Kildrum regeneration gathers pace

By Gaynor Bell

A new chapter opened in Kildrum's regeneration story recently.

A ceremony, marking the completion of 51 new homes on the site of the former Kildrum Primary School, took place marking an important phase of Kildrum's regeneration.

Moving into their new homes are many of the residents of the Ainslie Road and Maclehose Road flats. These flats were recently compulsorily purchased by the council after structural defects were found. As a result of these defects the market value of the properties plummeted, leaving many of the owners facing negative equity. A funding package, put together by the council and the Scottish Government, allowed owners to buy one of the new properties on a shared equity basis. Cumbernauld Housing Partnership tenants living in the flats

have also been re-housed in the new housing development built by Lovell Partnerships Ltd.

This innovative project, managed on behalf of Cumbernauld Housing Partnership by Forgewood Co-operative, received a £4 million grant from the Scottish Government for the first phase and £3m from the council. In addition, the council contributed the land for the new houses.

Council leader Jim McCabe, depute provost Jim Robertson and Alex Neil MSP, the Minister for Housing and Communities joined local residents and invited guests, which also included a fun day for local children.

The next phase of the regeneration involves the demolition of the existing 108 flats at Ainslie Road and Maclehose Road. These are to be replaced with new, high-quality housing for rent and low cost home ownership.



Kildrum's new residents at the opening ceremony.

Minister stops by social work service

Justice Minister Kenny McCaskill MSP visited Coatbridge recently to see first hand the Community Alternatives service specifically designed for young people.

Run by social work services, this project helps young people aged between 12 and 21 remain at home rather than be in care or in youth custody.

Those referred experience a variety of problematic issues such as offending, school behaviour/truancy, drug or alcohol misuse or family breakdown.

Each year the service supports around 200 people. Depending on their needs, sessions range from group work, individual and family work, education, a behavioural programme for young people involved in offending and counselling for young people and their carers.

"We believe the solution to supporting young people to remain within their home and community is to work jointly with our partner agencies," explained



Justice Minister Kenny McCaskill spends some time getting to know the Community Alternatives service.

Jackie Irvine, manager of the Children and Families service at North Lanarkshire Council. "We continue to achieve positive results and were pleased to give the justice minister a tour of our service and an opportunity to chat with staff and service users."

Changes affecting homeowners

Changes are being made to the way councils provide support to deal with repairs, improvements and adaptations for people living in private housing.

All councils are required, under The Housing (Scotland) Act 2006, to develop a Scheme of Assistance outlining the range of assistance for home owners.

The idea is that owners are primarily responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of their own homes. This scheme sees a move away from the provision of grant assistance towards more targeted assistance, such as information, advice and alternative funding options.

The Draft Scheme of Assistance is currently being produced. A public consultation exercise is set to be carried out later in the year giving you an opportunity to have your say on the council's proposals. The implementation date for the scheme is April 2010.

Residents love their new-look Pirnie Place

Pirnie Place sheltered housing complex in Kilsyth is boasting a fantastic new look.

With new re-rendering improvement work costing £125,000 the old building is revealing a striking new appearance. Not only that, but this work is in addition to a new door entry system previously installed bringing improved security and peace of mind for Pirnie Place residents.

One resident, 94-year-old Jessie Machray couldn't praise the work highly enough. Talking about the improvements carried out to her home, she said: "The work carried out by the council is beautiful and the complex could now be called Pirnie Mansions."

These works are part of the continued commitment of housing and social work services to improve housing conditions across the area.



Pirnie Place sheltered housing complex shows off its new look.



Residents Amelia Mudie, Christine Aisthorpe, Margaret Hamilton, Relief Warden and Jessie Machray are delighted with the new-look Pirnie Place.

Playtime in North Lanarkshire

Showcasing North Lanarkshire's new play areas

By Andrew Craney & Mark Barbieri

Parents across North Lanarkshire can finally breathe a sigh of relief this month as they watch their children return to school. It might have been a long summer, but there's been no shortage of activities to keep the kids happy.

As always, the council's play areas have been busy and this summer, we've added three new facilities

at Palacerigg, Plains and Holytown to give parents even more choice.

Since 1996, the council has replaced 120 old play areas with 40 larger, more modern facilities. Over £4 million has been spent in the last three years with a further £1.6 million being spent on nine play parks in this financial year.

This month North Lanarkshire News takes a closer look at the latest three facilities.

All's Fair at Dornoch Road



Fairplay for Families has worked closely with North Lanarkshire Council to create the play area at Dornoch Road.

Creating the new £310,000 outdoor play area at Dornoch Road, Holytown was a real community effort.

Grass roots group Fairplay For Families, representing local mums, dads and grandparents, identified a shortage of play facilities in the area. They worked closely with the council's play services to create the kind of facility they needed – somewhere safe and fun for their children to play.

Included in the development are safe play areas for both young and older children, dog-proof fencing, and a multi-use games area, as well as new trees and wetland planting for the park.

North Lanarkshire Council's Convener of Planning and Transportation, Councillor James Coyle, opened the facility at a special summer fun day. He said: "This tremendous new activity area goes a long way to demonstrating our commitment to young people in Holytown and the surrounding area."

The council contributed £262K to the project, including £27k from the Local Development Programme with the remaining £48K being made up by from Waste Recycling Environmental Limited (WREN).

Variety is the key at Plains



Councillor Tommy Morgan opened the new multi-sports court while Courtney Higgins, 6, Emma Kane, 5 and Cerys Kane, 9, enjoyed the fun day.

Local people in Plains enjoyed a community fun day to mark the opening of their new multi-use games area.

The £84,000 project has transformed derelict tennis courts at Bruce Street into a new facility offering a variety of activities including football, basketball and netball.

Airdrie Local Area Partnership Convener, Councillor Tommy Morgan opened the new games court. He said: "This investment reflects the council's



commitment to providing safe and fun play areas for young people. The fantastic new court will allow young people and adults alike to enjoy sports and games while keeping fit and active."

The council, working closely with the local community council, has made funding applications which should allow the area next to the multi-sports court to be further developed and filled with additional play equipment for the local community.

East meets West at Palacerigg

The new outdoor play area at Palacerigg Country Park has been specially designed for younger children and those with special needs.

The £207,000 facility includes large chime bars, a giant sand pit and activity unit with two diggers, special swing seats, a pod swing, a roundabout and cable runway. Part of the play area, a tranquil bamboo hide-and-seek area, which includes a bench running through the play site, was designed by a Chinese art student, Minhui Ma. Minhui is studying at the Edinburgh College of Art and is currently working for the council's landscape services. She said: "As a student, I felt very lucky to have such a big involvement in this project. I had the opportunity to include some Chinese elements such as the bamboo seating areas. I'm very happy about the way the playpark now looks."

Opening the new area, Councillor Barry McCulloch said: "Hopefully, the new area will encourage more visitors to Palacerigg for what can be a great day out."



Councillor Barry McCulloch opened the new playpark during a summer fun day. Young people including Beth Currens, 2, and Paul Malloy, 6, had a great day enjoying activities including face painting, mobile playgrounds, parachute games, giant bubble making and much more.