

CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POSITIVE PRESS

ISSUE 18 WINTER 2021

FREE



CRAFTING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

INSIDE: TAKING CLIMATE ACTION...A FAMILY OF TREES...CANAL LIFE...A HOME FROM HOME

POETRY COMPETITION WINNER

THE FINAL COST

BY CHRIS MARTIN

When the seas start washing faster over ancient lands
And ignored island populations stand weeping with open hands
Will that be the time to give long and elaborate speeches?
As the sea encroaches higher and higher on our beaches
Warnings that were given, that have long been ignored
Have now become a reality of all those dangers they stored
Data that was produced since the first signs were made clear
Were just brushed aside as wrong and a ridiculous fear
Yet as the polar ice caps start to melt at an ever-increasing rate
Some still question the data and would rather just wait
There are others who will tell you it's just the earth's way
And that the planet has such normal changes day by day
But we created that carbon waste that now attacks the sky
And any excuse against these facts is clearly just a lie
The fact is time is running out and the battle might be lost
Are we leaving all that for our children, is that the final cost?

WELCOME

The planning for this issue began back in 2019. We intended to make 2020 a year focused on all aspects of health and well-being, ironically Covid-19 had other plans.

So we had no idea Issue 18's theme of Environment and Well-being would coincide with Glasgow's hosting of COP26.

As I write this welcome, we are one week down and, until the weekend rallies, I wasn't overly inspired by most of the coverage of the global climate summit. The focus was more on the conference logistics and behaviours of so-called 'power brokers', than the voices either of those endangered by the climate emergency or those creating solutions.

So, I am proud Clydesider volunteers tapped into their local networks and knowledge to share stories of the many inspirational environmental actions and activists creating change, right here in West Dunbartonshire.

From community gardens to litter picks, recycled crafting to active travel options – a lot is happening on our doorsteps.

The impact of these community initiatives helps not only our local environment but also our individual well-being. Whether digging, planting, walking or litter-picking, physical and mental health gets a boost, plus each action helps create a healthy planet for our children and grandchildren.

And Issue 18 is packed with information on how to get involved. Enjoy!

Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry
Clydesider Editor



CLYDESIDER CREDITS

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteer contributors you are all a true joy to work with. We would also like to thank our advertisers, members and funders. Your support helps us shine a light on the inspirational stories and creative talents in our communities. An additional vote of thanks goes out to all the community groups and organisations helping with the distribution, making sure the magazine reaches those least likely to read our stories online.

Clydesider Creative Mission Statement

Inspiring change by sharing positive stories and solutions, creating opportunities for individuals and organisations to build connections so together we can challenge the negativity and stigma too often associated with our community.

ABOUT CLYDESIDER

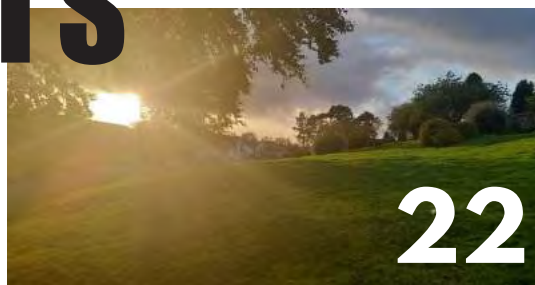
Clydesider Creative Ltd is a not-for-profit community media social enterprise based in West Dunbartonshire.

The Clydesider community magazine, website and social media promote the positives our area has to offer in terms of people, place, scenery, and history and showcase the creative talents, ideas, and experiences of local people.

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Youtube and Instagram for more. If you would like to get involved and contribute to Clydesider please email theclydesider@gmail.com

CONTENTS

38



22



33

09 Crafting Together
By Caroline Finn

13 A Home From Home
By Zoe Weir

16 Walk This Way
By David Crawford

19 Community Growing
By Angela Clark

22 Family of Trees
By Johnny Dale

24 Clydesider Photo
Competition

28 Taking Climate Action
By Emily Fraser

32 Going Green in WD
By Zoe Weir

33 Canal Life
By Chris McCaughey

38 Gardening Through Covid
By Andy Devine

39 Clydesider Creative
By Jenny Watson

40 Reviews &
Recommendations

44 Your FAQs with WD
Citizens Advice

47 What's On



09

16



28



39

Martin Docherty-Hughes

Your MP for West Dunbartonshire (SNP)

CONSTITUENT ADVICE SURGERIES



Here to help you

Throughout the Coronavirus pandemic my constituency team and I have been working hard to provide advice and support to people across West Dunbartonshire.

As your local MP, I have dealt with more than 1,800 constituent case enquiries through my office in the past 18 months - via email, telephone, and video calls at my weekly virtual advice surgeries.

In order to be as accessible as possible, I'm now running surgeries both virtually and in-person. Please get in touch if you'd like to book an appointment at my next surgery.

Thanks,

Martin Docherty-Hughes MP

Contact information

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Clydebank, G81 1BF

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Twitter: @MartinJDocherty



Surgery dates may be subject to change depending on public holidays or parliamentary commitments.

Due to high demand appointment slots of 15 mins are allocated on a first come first served basis.

COMMUNITY NEWS ROUND UP

WINNING MESSAGE

Pupils at St Eunan's Primary School have won a national competition to promote green travel.

The talented youngsters won £2,500 to buy a media kit for the Clydebank school after the video they made from their classroom, depicting them on a train, was selected as the winner in the Scotland's Railways contest.

In the video, pupils deliver an important carbon footprint message and encourage everyone to use trains - the greenest form of public transport.

The competition was open to all schools across Scotland to coincide with the COP26 climate conference.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT MILESTONE

A pilot Health Appointment Transport Service launched this autumn for people living in G81 postcodes.

The pilot, funded by SPT and West Dunbartonshire Council and operated by South West Community Transport, will run for six months offering eligible residents free transport to clinic or hospital appointments.

The aim is to develop a new Community Transport operator for all West Dunbartonshire by recruiting enthusiastic volunteers to help plan and run the service.

Find out more on the group's Facebook page - West Dunbartonshire Community Transport Action Group, send a message to wdctag@gmail.com or phone 0141 881 9998.

GREEN GIANTS

A local environmental charity was shortlisted for the Scottish Government's Holyrood COP26 Green Giant awards.

Isaro Community Initiative was selected as an example of best practice for their work promoting diversity and inclusion in climate change discussions and decisions.

The organisation recently worked with students from St Peter the Apostle's Primary to donate, collect and sort household goods and clothing for Afghan families newly resettled in West Dunbartonshire. Together they found new homes for over a tonne of goods!



CLIMATE LESSONS

While world leaders met in Glasgow to discuss steps needed to address the climate emergency facing the world, young people across West Dunbartonshire learned important lessons about the subject.

The topic was embraced by local schools and early learning centres, with pupils learning about a range of climate and environmental topics.

Pupils at Our Lady and Saint Patrick's launched an Eco Committee with a strong focus on Climate Action and took part in a Dragon's Den competition to raise funds to develop a whole-school strategy to reducing climate change in the local community.

Children from St Martin's and St. Mary's Primary School in Alexandria studied the impact human actions have on nature and the environment. They also looked at how to reduce, reuse, recycle and the litter polluting our waters. And the schools' senior pupils focused on displacement of children and how refugees are supported by governments.

Many schools encouraged pupils to look at their own carbon footprint and food miles and the impact on wildlife and the environment.

CLYDESIDER NEWS

COMMUNITY CANVAS

This amazing piece of multi-media art featuring 42 individual canvases was created in partnership with 18 community organisations and local creatives.

Earlier this year as part of our Creative Cafe From Your Couch project, we provided 50 Process Painting art packs to local groups asking their members to get creative - and they certainly did. The canvases were then put together by Caroline Finn, our Creative Development worker, and framed by The Framing Workshop in Dumbarton.

We are now planning a local touring exhibition and looking for community venues with a large wall space so the artists can see their beautiful artwork on display. If you can help please email jenny@clydesider.org



CLYDESIDER FUNDING BOOST

The Clydesider team is celebrating the good news we have been awarded two grants totalling £175,041 over three years.

The funds from National Lottery Community Fund Scotland and the Volunteer Support Fund will help cover staffing and magazine production costs plus allow us to run media training workshops with local community organisations and provide our volunteers with Media Mentors to help develop their skills.

We hope this will encourage more people whose voices are rarely heard or who are perhaps stigmatised by mainstream media coverage, to share their knowledge and experiences in our magazine, website and social media.




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DIGITAL STEPPING STONES

#hopeforthe future



Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the people who have borne the brunt of the isolation we have experienced generally came from the most vulnerable in society.

Vulnerable because of their financial, health or any other social circumstance you can think of.

The stay-at-home message was required because we needed to get on top of the virus, however, the mental health of the most vulnerable was another casualty in the war against Covid-19.

In Stepping Stones we noticed not everyone we supported had the means to access technology, or support to use the technology that would keep them connected - albeit remotely.

We were fortunate to see our service members face-to-face throughout the pandemic although, inevitably, our thriving group programme was decimated.

Consequently, we have been able to secure funding from Cellnex, through the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, and have launched our first digital support service.

Our Digital Stepping Stones project is now ready to support our service members to access technology with the support of Stepping Stones'

very own digital champions.

David, one of our service members has been working with us to complete the process and we are delighted we are now ready to #moveforwardwithhope.

While talking with David he said: "This project will help me a lot. It will help reduce isolation and the disconnection I felt when unable to get online.

"I regularly used various locations to access IT and Internet, this was not available during lockdown and limited my interaction with others.

"This can help me stay connected to others by attending groups on Zoom and finding out about other things I am interested in like music, railways and self-help tools which I have heard are plentiful online. My skills are a bit rusty but looking forward to getting a bit of guidance and support for this."

Our service members, who have already registered for this service will be contacted over the next few weeks to get started. We are looking forward to playing a role in supporting the people who use our services get connected and move forward with hope!

Elaine McWilliams – Group Development Worker

John White – Operations Director

CRAFTING TOGETHER

Words & photos by Caroline Finn

A creative calm welcomes visitors to Crafting Together CIC's new studio in Clydebank's Titan Centre.

Young makers' eyes smile a greeting from behind their masks as they look up from their intricate work building sparkly angel bracelets.

The studio walls are covered with bright works of art, woven tapestries and shelves of art materials and jewellery-making supplies fill the room.

What started as a craft group at Kilpatrick School back in 2017, has turned into a social enterprise building creative links and employment opportunities both for local young people with additional support for learning needs, and African artisans thousands of miles away.

Thanks to Young Start Lottery funding which allowed the social enterprise to rent their studio space, they now sell their handmade jewellery and craftwork in independent shops in Dumbarton, Glasgow and Paisley, as well as online.

Linda Murray, a teacher at Kilpatrick School for 20 years, has been with Crafting Together from the start.

She explains: "For a lot of our young people the expectation of what you do when you leave school is to keep your days busy with social activities; that's great but there should be the expectation of some kind of work activity as well. This is what we're trying to address while also showcasing our young people's talents and skills."



Crafting Together grew from the school's Developing Young Workforce programme which believe any young person should have the opportunity to enter the workplace if they wish, there should be the expectation of that possibility.

And with their new studio beside West College Scotland, the transition from crafting together to independent studying is made a little bit smoother.

"We started as a craft group, and crafting is what we do. But there's also that sense of getting the skills for life and work and building on what we've done," Linda adds.

Gillian is at college three days a week. She said: "I'm doing Steps to Work, it's a mixture of

classes. A lot of our friends from school go to the college."

For Sarah, who is starting a catering course, the makers group has helped grow her confidence and she is looking forward to becoming a college student.

Christmas Crafts

The run-up to Christmas is a busy time for the young makers as demand for their unique handiwork grows.

Danielle proudly displays the row of sparkly angel earrings she is working on to fulfil their orders in time for Christmas. She loves her jewellery making so much she asks for a kit of materials and tools to take away to work on at home each week.

"Danielle is the only person in the world who asks for homework," Linda laughs.

The positive impact of the social enterprise stretches far beyond Scotland's shores as CraftingTogether is passionate about creating with recycled and fairly sourced materials.

Many of the recycled beads have an interesting origin Linda says. "The powder glass and hand-painted beads come from Ghana and the paper beads are from Uganda."

She explains the maker in Uganda is given Scottish maps which are cut into strips then spun to make the beads, creating a unique product of Scottish heritage. And the group is keen to develop more pieces connected to local and national heritage.



Place is a huge inspiration to the group. Drawing on local heritage across West Dunbartonshire they made jewellery pouches influenced by Renton's Turkey Red dyeworks and learned to sew on Singer sewing machines. They are keen to learn about Faifley's Cochno Stone to inspire future work.



The young creatives are thrilled at their recent admission to sell their unique Scottish map jewellery at the prestigious Scottish Design Exchange in Glasgow.

Sarah is one of the original makers, working with the group since 2017. She recently visited the store in Buchanan Galleries to show her mum some of her work on sale.



"What we want to do is to create a new twist on the traditional Scottish gift using heritage inspired stories," Linda adds. "I don't think there's anybody doing anything quite like this at the moment."

Recently the makers have learned different skills like lino printing, sewing and weaving, allowing them to create new lines to sell. They also have their own line of Christmas cards.



"It was exciting to see the bracelets I made. I like making them," she says.

And Linda is excited for Crafting Together's future: "We've got some great artists in our team, the work they're doing is just amazing, we love to provide inspiration and see what artwork they come up with."



Many of the makers have asked to attend the studio full time but more volunteers are needed to support the young people.

Linda hopes the organisation will be run entirely by the young people in the future. "Our ultimate aim is to create employment. So if our social enterprise could become sustainable, and ultimately self funding, that would be a dream to be able to offer full time employment."



Locally Crafting Together products are available from Made Guid in Dumbarton or can be purchased from their website: www.craftingtogethlercic.co.uk where you can also find out more about the young makers.

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HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND

With energy bills on the rise, visiting Home Energy Scotland online could really pay off.

Check homeenergyscotland.org/warmer-winter to see if you could be eligible for Scottish Government-funded heating and insulation improvements to help make your home cosy in time for winter. Over 23,000 households in Scotland have already benefitted since the Scottish Government's Warmer Homes Scotland programme launched in 2015.

You could get around £5,000 of support and reduce your heating bills by around £300 per year too.

Nichola's Story

With a young family and working in an industry hit hard by the pandemic, musicians Nichola and her husband began to feel the financial strain of heating their home with an inefficient heating system.

A conversation with Home Energy Scotland found that they were eligible for support through the Scottish Government's Warmer Homes Scotland programme. Nichola said: "I'm a musician by trade and so is my husband. We've

both been hit hard by the pandemic. We also have a young daughter at home. I began to claim

Universal Credit which meant we were eligible for Warmer Homes Scotland support. We were referred and I have to say the process has been very slick. After an initial survey, we were eligible for a whole new heating system which included new radiators, pipework and an energy efficient boiler. The installation was clean and straightforward and I feel a lot more at ease heating my home."

Help is Just a Call Away

Our expert advisors offer free, impartial advice on saving energy, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel and cutting water waste.

To speak to a friendly advisor about support with your energy bills, call 0808 808 2282 or visit homeenergyscotland.org to request a call back.

*Home Energy Scotland, funded by the Scottish Government, helps people in Scotland create warmer homes, reduce their energy bills, and lower their carbon footprint.



A Home From Home

by Zoe Weir



PHOTO CREDITS: STOP POLLUTION IN GABES

Zoe's daughters Tabby (left) and Pepper (right) enjoyed joining in with Meriem (centre) on the Fridays For Future youth demo

When international COP26 delegates were left without accommodation due to high demand and rocketing prices, folk across West Dunbartonshire opened their homes to welcome them via the COP26 Homestay network.

Zoe Weir, a 49-year old ecologist and anti-plastics campaigner from Dumbarton, hosted Tunisian guest Meriem, a 22-year old English language and literature student with the campaign group "Stop Pollution in Gabes". She shared their experience with Clydesider.

For Meriem this was her first time abroad and she was so excited with every detail of Scotland. On the way to the train station on the first day, she wanted to take photos of every bit of greenery.

Meriem said: "I feel like I'm in my second home, with members of my own family - I feel so lucky. The rivers are incredibly beautiful! I was very excited to feed a nut to a squirrel in Kelvingrove Park – we don't have them in Tunisia.

"I did take awhile to get used to the trains, but I found I could ask anyone, everyone is so nice and helpful. I definitely struggled with the strong accent though.

"My friends and I really like the chip shop chips here, they taste like the fried potatoes we eat with fish or scallops at home.

"I made Zoe some Tunisian food but she didn't cope with the hot chilli seeds too well!"

Our family enjoyed returning the sharing of local cuisines with an early Burns Night supper for Meriem's group.

The young student added: "We love bagpipes and wanted to try vegetarian haggis. We had a go at the poetry, I love that, no whisky for me though!"

Meriem said Scotland is so different to her hometown of Gabes, which is not so lush. This is not just due to the heat but also because pollution has turned the palm trees and bushes brown – there's phosphorus, ammonia and other fumes from a chemical complex.

My kids and I went on the big demos with Meriem and her friends. They were brilliant, singing Tunisian folk songs at the top of their lungs and sharing chocolate.

I kept seeing them being kind to random people, I was so impressed and would pretty much trust them with my life at this point.

They've been living under this cloud of bright yellow poison gas – but they're still so upbeat, making jokes and working so hard for their cause.



One of the group needed to have a kidney transplant from his Dad because of the pollution in their town, he's only 26! It made me really want to do the most I can.

Seeing my local area through their eyes also gave me an even sharper sense of how beautiful it is here, and how easy it is to take clean air, drinkable water and functioning ecosystems for granted when we could lose them - we are losing them.

I hope the positive atmosphere and convivial Glasgow welcome will give her the strength to cope with the pressure of representing her region to the world's rich and powerful.

The four young activists from Stop Pollution in Gabes met with the Tunisian minister attending COP26, to share the life-or-death plight facing their community.

Their request is to curb the emissions from the chemicals factory, which is linked to sky-high rates of cancer and organ failure in the area.

Meriem added: "Twenty years ago our area was a paradise with an oasis as well as river, coastal, and desert habitats. Now, the trees and plants are dead and birds and turtles wash up on the shore with symptoms of uranium poisoning.

"If the pollution stopped, we could recover and have a great tourism industry. But first our politicians must act to prevent this unforgivable human suffering."

I have learned so much from Meriem and her friends, it's unbelievable what is happening to their home has been going on for so many years.

Many local activists from Dumbarton, the Vale and Clydebank have been involved with behind-the-scenes COP26 support and organisation, as well as hosting, marching and networking to plan future campaigns.

People young and old here have been fired up for the long fight ahead.

And I feel more tapped into a global network now. Our litter-picking group, Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore, has the chance of twinning with a Tunisian group – we can swap photos and data and use them to help highlight corporate and governmental pollution, both locally and as one global movement.

For more details on the pollution in Gabes visit:<https://inkyfada.com/en/2019/11/12/pollution-gabes-lutte-gct-2/>



2002



2020

Tunisian ministers have ignored the problem for decades



Meriem (left) and Zoe exchanged gifts from their countries



The factory is situated close to schools, homes, and a once-beautiful oasis



Foul-smelling yellow smoke pours from the factory in their town of Gabes, Tunisia

THE LAST TREE

I am the last tree on planet earth
Tomorrow I will die
Because the humans did not know my worth

They had no respect for nature
Now they have no future

A once green earth with crystal seas
Now lies ravaged and on its knees

Cars and planes lie rusting with the dead

As the blackened skies loom overhead
Air so polluted no sign of life remains
As the world lies drowning in incessant rains

This once beautiful world
Has ceased to exist
And the humans were the catalyst

If only they had tried
To save all the forests
And minimise pollution
To end global warming
That was the solution

By Maureen Spratt

WALK THIS WAY



Walking With Nature

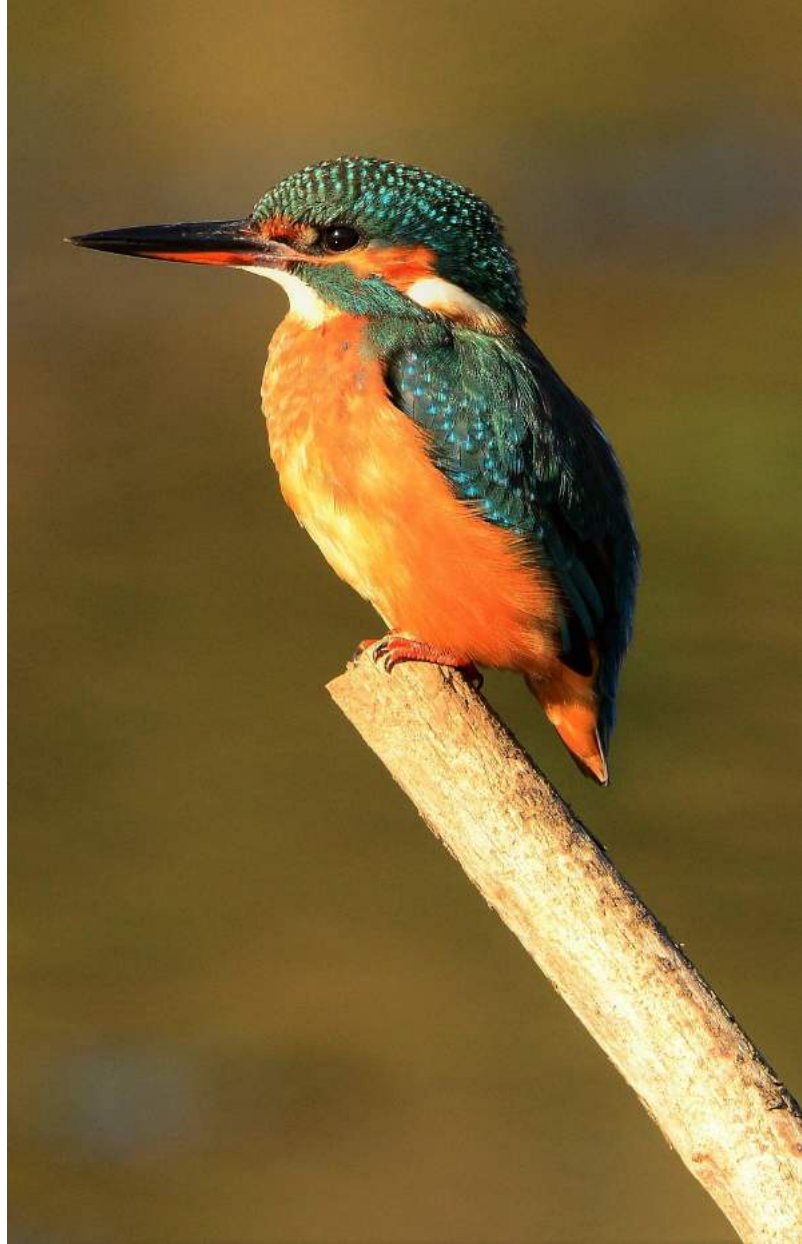
By David Crawford

Like everyone else I never knew what lockdown would actually mean for us all. I work for Youth Football Scotland and overnight all football was indefinitely cancelled.

On my lockdown walks I would carry my camera and started to photograph the birds. As well as enjoying this new challenge I found that nature was having a calming effect on me.

This is the fruits of my labour from lockdown 2020 until the present day.







Carers
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The Carers' Centre has officially reopened to the public!

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- If you test positive for Covid, or experience symptoms before your appointment, please get in touch and we will work to reschedule your visit
- We ask that visitors wear a face mask when inside the building (unless exempt)
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Community Growing

By Angela Clark

A community farm in Dumbarton is being brought back to life and is helping people improve their mental and physical well-being.

The 15.5 acre site at Dumbarton's Castlehill Road will provide a place where people can take time out of their daily stresses of life. They can grow their own vegetables or get involved in the horticulture side of things where they will learn new skills whilst improving their chances of finding employment.

One person who is already reaping the benefits of volunteering at the site is local resident Andrew Baird, who has spent the last 10 years of his life struggling with homelessness and isolation from the outside world.

Andrew said: "I had a lot of confidence issues and health issues, so it was about getting back into a social environment around people in an employable setting.

"Volunteering has got me in a regular routine and is helping get my body back to work, even the confidence of going somewhere and not being nervous about doing stuff I know nothing about

and meeting people that I don't know, it's helped me out a lot."

Andrew has become a familiar face in his community and enjoys chatting and getting to know the people from his local area. He has particular interest in horticulture where he finds he can connect with nature and find peace within himself.

He said: "When you are in there and it's all wild and you start digging or cutting out a root or old path that used to be there or making a new path you can see what's happening, you see an improvement and that's satisfying in itself, you can see the area being improved.

"I'm trying to get back to where I was, get my confidence back up and hopefully get a job. I still need qualifications and training and hopefully I will get this type of job working outdoors, working maybe in gardens, horticultural something like that. I really enjoy it a lot."

Fellow volunteer Steven Corrigan recently started helping at the site. He is enjoying being outdoors in the fresh air and doing something

that is having a positive effect on his mental health.

He said: “Andrew suggested to me to get involved. It sounded interesting and I wanted to get out the house and have something productive to do to help my mental health.

“Getting some exercise outdoors in the fresh air is good, I’m looking forward to seeing how it goes from what it looks like just now and how it will develop.”

Alternatives community drug service took over the site from West Dunbartonshire Council in 2020. They are keen to encourage local people to get involved, connect with nature and help their well-being.

Claire Travis Horticulture & Wildlife Supervisor said: “Engaging with nature in a green space is really beneficial to people’s health and wellbeing.

“Over the summer we ran children’s activities up there. We have a monthly children’s club, we’ve got community volunteering and we are delivering a programme with local schools who are using the site for their outdoor learning in nature work.

“There will be eight community food growing spaces for local groups. We will support them by providing the tools and we will run workshops and training. The space is for everyone to use and enjoy.”

If you would like to get involved whether it is to improve the area or your own well-being or just to reconnect with your community contact Claire.Travis@alternativeswd.org





TO ALL OUR READERS

*Merry
Christmas!*

FROM THE CLYDESIDER TEAM



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jackie Baillie MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumbarton Constituency

Constituent Advice Surgeries:

Third Friday of every month in

Alexandria Library, Gilmour Street, Alexandria

2.45pm-3.45pm

Helensburgh Parish Church, Colquhoun St, Helensburgh

4.45pm-5.45pm

Dumbarton Constituency Office, Church Street, Dumbarton

6.30pm-7.30pm



Contact Jackie:

Office: 6 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL Email: Jackie.baillie.msp@parliament.scot Telephone: 01389 734214

The costs of this publication have been met from parliamentary resources

FAMILY OF TREES

Words and Photos by Johnny Dale

Trees are more like us than we think.

As the Silver Birch says, "you call me the mother tree, tree of endurance and survival, tree of air and water, Betula Pendula, the lady of the woods - you call me many names."

As Birch Betula she was the first tree to colonise Europe and the North, she was the first arrival on these shores after the melting of the Ice Age, she is so strong, so tough and can colonise rapidly.

She is the nurse tree, preparing and nourishing the soil and protecting against stormy weather.

Her small leaves and branches keep the earth and soil below her so damp and don't shade out all the light, allowing plants like primroses to flourish.

"Humans, press your little ears and the side of your cheeks against my bark in early spring, before my tender green leaves burst open and unfold; you can hear my blood, as in sap, rushing through my veins, rising to the top of my branches and bud tips."

Our Rowan tree: "Humans call me Sorbus Aucuparia, the bright one for the red, rosy berries I bear in autumn when my leaves turn bloodlike from the dye of my lush red berries.

"Birds gorge on my sweet juicy berries, so my family is also found in Western Asia, the mountains of Morocco, Russia and as far north as the land of the reindeer.

"I survive very high mountain altitudes, as my branches are so bendy they withstand strong

winds, so I can provide food for birds.

"We work together, the birds eat my berries and help spread my reach, hence the range of countries I can conquer.

Trees like birch and rowan are magical and wonderful trees, as close to us as any plant.

Their determination, toughness, and ability to grow in some of the harshest places, is a credit to them and us humans could learn a great deal in shaping our own life.

Older rowans perform and grow better in a community of younger rowans, it gives the older ones a greater lust for life and healthier energy through their roots.

They communicate through their roots and use fungus in the soil which, by the way humans, is the new internet and web of re-connecting - it's not all about broadband and computer technology.

Trees don't only use one method of communication. Birch and rowan are pioneers of the land and the strongest and hardiest of trees, but they need the communication and company of others like oak, pine, juniper and willow - fellow pioneers after the last Ice Age.



Together they reproduce and colonise, adapting to new situations. The more we understand trees, their habits and their ways, the more we can really understand climate change and who are the doctors and nurses of the soil and land, who will take care of it.

There is a family of 450 species of oak all over the world, Sessile and Common Oak grow predominantly in Scotland.

"I grow slowly and take my time. There is no rush for me as I am here for the long haul.

"While birch and rowan grow fast, I am happy to take my time. I am best planted amongst rowan, birch and alder, as when we are grown together it's a race for the light as I feel I am getting shaded out.

"Plant me amongst the trees

and I will put on many growths in a single season as it's me who will live the longest.



"I am the father of trees, the provider to all nature's living things. I nourish soil and am the hub of the fungi and the soil's micro-organisms; I am the motherboard of communicators and help put good fungus into the soil so the others can

communicate.

"I will live many, many years as my motto is the slower pace of life and less worries and threats, the longer I live."

Looking at trees in different ways and understanding them better, has helped me love again, love my inner self and being and find my mojo after years of not having it.

Finding trees helped my wellbeing, my mental health and being surrounded by them inspires me greatly. Planting them too, in the north of Scotland and also in Glasgow parks, fills me with great pride and feeling

of self-worth as I learn more and spread information to others who have yet to experience trees.

Thank you Trees for changing my life, loving me back and nourishing me with your vibrant energy.



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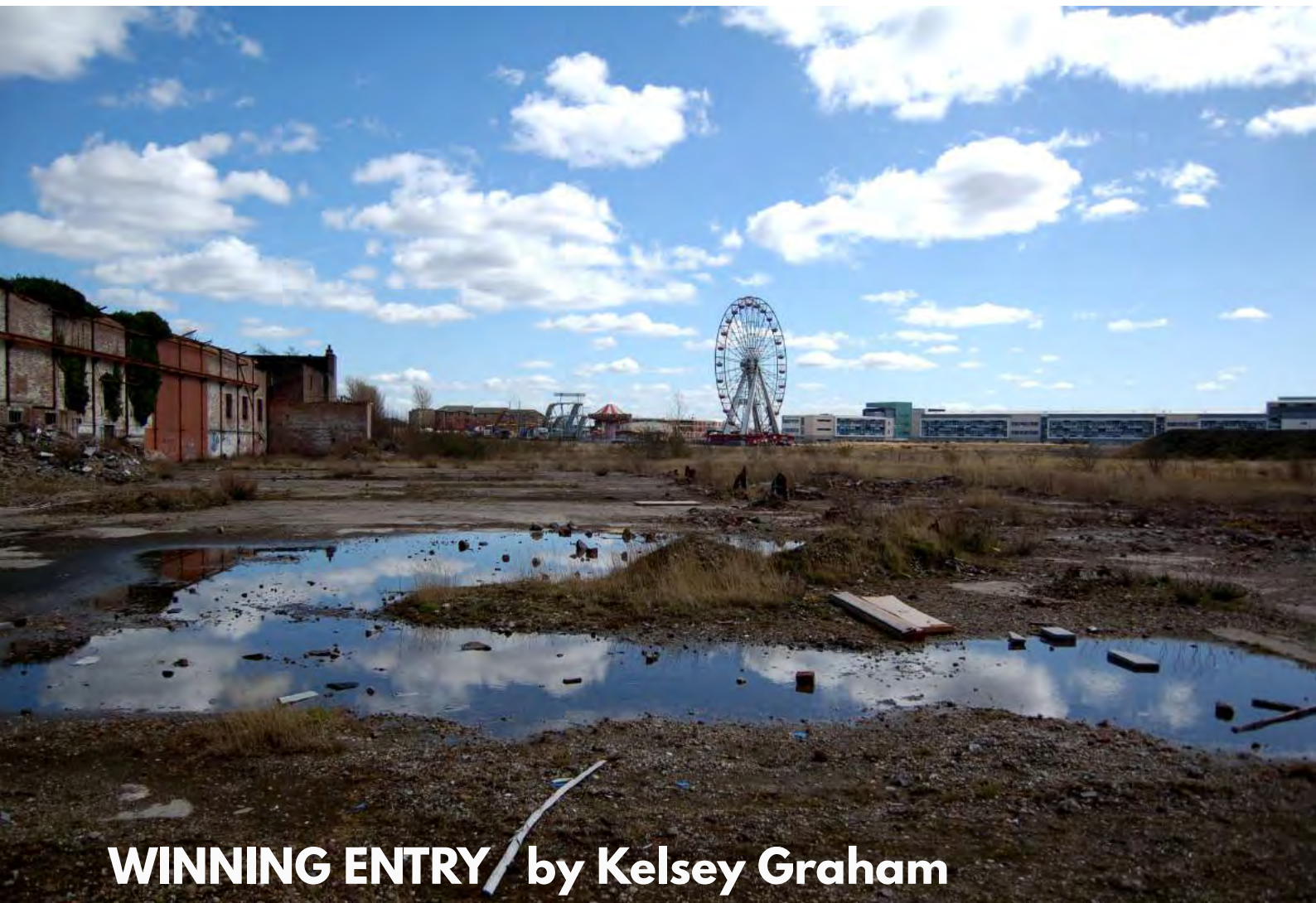
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Photo Competition - Environment



WINNING ENTRY by Kelsey Graham

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Runner up by Marie Murphy



Runner up by Peter Jarvis



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SANITARY SUSTAINABILITY

by Jacqueline Bruce

The last week of November 2020 will forever be a monumental week in human rights history. It was the week Scotland became the first country in the world to end period poverty.

When free sanitary products first started being distributed through schools, colleges and universities in August 2018, I was doing litter pick beach cleans with Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore. I remember we were all quite repelled by the plastic tampon holders being washed up on our shores.

Even though those free period products were unlikely to be the more expensive, plastic applicator products, seeing those washed up 'beach whistles' got me thinking, *"should free period products also be sustainable?"*

In the short time since the initiative was launched, it's a question I don't have to consider for the local area.

As West Dunbartonshire Council teamed up with social enterprise Hey Girls, to provide plastic-free and reusable period products to anyone who needs them.

As well as the toxic plastic found decorating our shorelines and confusing the fish, plastic is found in all mass-produced tampons, pads and liners. With Hey Girls products, it isn't the case. You won't find any nasties across any of their range.

For those able to take the



plunge and switch to a menstrual cup or reusable pads or pants, there's the added bonus of never having to worry about running out of products.

The Council is offering the best products for people and planet. It's a win-win.

Whilst putting an end to period poverty here and all over the world is far more important than making sure it's done sustainably, it doesn't mean we can't or shouldn't be talking about both.

There are huge benefits to having the sustainability message as part of ending period poverty. And it's wonderful West Dunbartonshire Council along with other local authorities in Scotland are doing just that.

It's not only a question of protecting the planet. It's about human rights, the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3 – ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. It's about dignity and choice.

That means everyone who menstruates should have the best options available for them and their health. Which just happens to be the plastic free, non-toxic, sustainable choices. Who'd have thought it!

To order a three month supply of plastic-free period products complete the online form <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/Z7RZLRY> Supplies are also available from West Dunbartonshire Foodshare and Food For Thought.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

HERBERT PROTOCOL

People who care for a loved one with dementia can now help speed up the search for them should they go missing.

Carers WD have been working with Police Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland to roll out the new Herbert Protocol in West Dunbartonshire.

The initiative is designed to protect vulnerable people who may wander off and saves time in the search process.

For more information:
<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/missing-persons/the-herbert-protocol/>
or contact Carers WD for an emergency pack with Herbert Protocol information and forms.
Contact
jenni@carerswd.org

CHECK YOUR DRINKS

Free wristbands to test if your drink has been spiked are available from a local emergency food charity in Dumbarton.

You can test up to two drinks with each wristband by simply dabbing a drop of your drink on it – if it has been spiked it will turn blue.

Collect your band from Food for Thought at Unit 15 Artizan Shopping Centre, Dumbarton G82 1LL.

Value in Volunteering



Dominique Di Santo, 30, is a swimming teacher from Dumbarton. He started volunteering with Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore during lockdown and is a regular on their local litter picks.

"I was doing litter picks by myself and putting photos up on Facebook to show how much I was collecting, and Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore contacted me to ask if I would like to get involved in their litter picks.

"I do it because of the plastic in the water plus it's my local area and I don't like to see all the litter and waste lying around. It is an ongoing battle though – you clear it away one week and it's back again the next, so the more people who can get involved the easier it is.

"Working as part of a group is good, it inspires me because there are more of us going out to clean up our community.

"We usually meet as a big group and then go our own ways. I just listen to my music, give myself a goal to clear a certain area and then get stuck into it.

"You find a lot of paracetamols and pill packets and my biggest headache is the cotton buds."

To find out about local litter picks in Dumbarton contact Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore via Facebook.

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Taking Climate Action

by Emily Fraser



Looking around me in the lead up to the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26), watching and listening to everything, was making my head spin.

I wanted to write about the more subtle forms of climate activism happening locally - in contrast with direct action - more on that later.

Climate change seems to have become such a complex, emotionally charged, overwhelming conversation that I'm scared to start one. So, it's totally understandable if sometimes we all feel the need to keep our heads down and get on with day-to-day life (challenge enough) rather than spend too much time unravelling this mess and end up feeling unravelled ourselves.

Maybe it's not as complicated as I think.

I really admire the people who just go out and show their love for Earth within their local community, without overthinking it. Maybe they are secretly overthinking it, but they don't let that stop them. In my opinion, showing any kind of loving care for nature should be considered important activism.

The guy who goes around planting trees and plants everywhere, mainly because he just loves trees and plants, is not only growing more carbon dioxide-hungry friends, but he's also growing other people's courage and potential by showing them what's possible, despite the challenges.



And the herbal healer who gives so freely of herself, to help you learn to forage edible plants on your doorstep; she creates positive change every time somebody makes her nettle soup recipe at home, rather than buy more vegetables (possibly flown here, wrapped in single-use plastic) from a supermarket chain.





I feel them making ripples of resistance against the rising tides, just by being their amazing selves.

Folks who keep the Clyde shore clean with regular volunteer litter picks, are protecting a whole host of wildlife from bees and butterflies to sea birds and mammals. They are also letting their neighbours see how lovely the area looks without the rubbish and how the activity keeps them healthier and happier, inspiring others into action by their example.

Maybe we can take matters into our own hands, more than we think.



And this is already happening in West Dunbartonshire. Locals are creating a more regenerative culture through zero waste shops and makers' hubs, organic veg farming, local restaurants adopting sustainable takeaway solutions, charity e-bike rental, salvaged/upcycled furniture shops, community gardening and arts activities, to name but a few. All managed from the ground up.

Folk have their own different reasons for wanting to do these things. What I've noticed is they're all incredibly kind, thoughtful, creative souls, but also determined and a wee bit brave. Individuals who love people as much as they love the planet, which to them is not an abstract concept, but the ground beneath their own feet.

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Maybe it's as simple as that, just taking more ownership of our own environment, wherever humanly possible and the reality is we can't do everything perfectly, but we can hopefully do something, which will help.

If you're thinking, "why does it matter what I do in the Vale, or Dumbarton, or Clydebank, will it make a difference to climate change?" I would say, "will it make a positive difference to your community's environment? Then it matters".

Individuals are capable of learning by example, so anything climate positive you can do sets an example to others, whether it's your own kids, your neighbours or your colleagues.

And that brings us back to direct action, the disruptive, inconvenient stuff.

Not everybody can do this, but, in my opinion, it does need to be done, because it still feels like the overwhelming majority of those in 'power' don't learn by example, experience, or scientific evidence. Instead, they choose to be led by the

bottom line, and we're being led by the nose right into extinction.

The 'powers that be' have always had to be inconvenienced, shamed and forced into making better decisions about everything: women's rights, LGBTQ rights, Black Lives Matter, workers rights, international human rights. Were any of the rights we have today ever willingly given? The days of Red Clydeside for example, must have been unspeakably painful, but would we question the morals or the point of those actions?

From my experience, the people doing the painful, inconvenient things in the name of the planet are not the 'irresponsible crusties' the PM would have us believe. They're not the stereotypical 'tree-huggers' portrayed by the mainstream media. Although to be honest, when did it stop being a good idea to hug trees?

Having been involved with Extinction Rebellion (XR) Glasgow (and then, not involved, mostly because I've a habit of taking on too much and





not considering what I can actually cope with), playing a part in some actions in the city - non-arrestable roles like trained legal observer, musical morale booster, 'Climate Café mental health peer facilitator' - I've come to realise I have more in common with climate activists than with those in 'power'.

Midwives, ex-oil rig workers, architects, dog groomers, social workers, gardeners, doctors, academics, shop workers, mums and dads, grandparents, musicians, artists, students, all there for their own reasons but who've each concluded they have no choice but to do something now.

They're all human, all get scared at times and worry about whether they are doing the right thing in the right way. But they're also determined, kind, thoughtful, creative and a wee bit brave.

Perfect? Nope. Do they always get things right? No. Are they making a difference? Yes. Because we're talking about it and world leaders are feeling the pressure at COP26 - as they should.



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GOING GREEN IN WD

by Zoe Weir

From gardening groups to litter pick meet-ups, recycle rooms to action teams, there have never been more opportunities to get involved in caring for our local environment – take your pick!

LITTER PICK GROUPS

- **Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore** (Clyde shore litter-picks) shorethingG82@gmail.com
- **Friends of Leven River Valley** (Leven litter-picks) TheLevenLitterPickers@outlook.com
- **Friends of Bellsmyre & Barr Wood** (woodland litter-picks near Lang Craigs, on Facebook)

COMMUNITY GARDENS

- **Lomond Community Gardens and Allotments:**
Contact Mary Sweetland - mary.anderson@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
Location - Lomond Parish Church, 1 Lomond Rd, Balloch, G83 8RJ
- **Bonhill Community Garden:**
Contact Cath Howard CathHoward56@gmail.com *Location - Braehead Bonhill*
- **West Bridgend Community Garden:** Contact Mylene Colquhoun - colquhounm1@gmail.com *Location - West Bridgend, Dumbarton, G82 4AH*
- **Knowetop:**
Contact knowetop@alternativeswd.org 01389 732734 *Location - Castlehill Road, Castlehill, Dumbarton, G82 5AT*
- **Bellsmyre Community Garden:**
Contact Martin Love Martinbgardens@icloud.com *Location - Whiteford Avenue, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton G82 3JN*
- **Bowling Community Garden:**
Contact John Keenan - www.facebook.com/groups/449934915437736 *Location - Scott Avenue, Bowling, G60 5BA*
- **Faifley Community Allotments Society:**
Contact Tony Ercoli Antonyercoli1984@outlook.com *Location - Skypoint, Lennox Drive, Faifley, Clydebank, G81 5JY*
- **Growing Beardmore:**
Contact Rose Dorman - dormanrose@gmail.com *Location - 89 Beardmore Place, Clydebank, G81 4HU*
- **Renton Community Garden:**
Contact robert.harold@caledoniaha.co.uk *Location - Glen View, Renton, Dumbarton G82 4DB*

ONLINE

Join Growing WD or My Learn and Grow FB groups; visit www.mylearnandgrow.com or email info@theleamyfoundation.com for updates from local and national environmental organisations.

NATURE/WILDLIFE VOLUNTEERING

- **Volunteer with Greenspace WD** email: countrysideranger@west-dunbarton.gov.uk for planting/outdoor sessions at local public parks
- **Friends of Havoc Meadows** (pending Nature Reserve near Dalreoch), on Facebook
- **The Saltings** (Nature Reserve in Old Kilpatrick), on Facebook

ONLINE WEBINARS AND RESOURCES

- **Plantlife** - www.plantlife.org.uk
- **Buglife** - www.buglife.org.uk
- **More than Weeds** - morethanweeds.co.uk
- **Don't Mow, Let It Grow** - dontmowletitgrow.com
- **Net Zero Heroes** - www.thenetzeroheroes.co.uk
- **Walkabout WD** - www.wdwalkabout.com

REUSE/REDUCE/RECYCLE FOOD MILES/PLASTIC

- **Isaro Community Initiative**, Centre 81 2/16 Braes Avenue G81 1DP – furniture recycling, environmental awareness workshops, sewing classes and more
- **The Recycle Room**, Unit 7 Clyde Street Business Centre, Clydebank G81 1PF – pre-loved clothes, furniture and household goods -www.facebook.com/therecycleroom1
- **Made Guid**, 4 Park St, Dumbarton G82 1RF – veg boxes, cleaning product refills, weigh & pay foods plus handcrafted gifts by local artists and makers
- **Suds & Spuds**, Nu-Scope Business Centre, Station Rd, Old Kilpatrick G60 5LP – fresh fruit & veg boxes delivered direct or purchase from their base in OKFP, plus seasonal plants
- **Jackie & The Beanstalk**, Carman Stables, Cardross Road, Renton – organic veg grower

LOCAL COMMUNITY ACTION

- **Community Councils** have a statutory right to be consulted on planning applications. Find out when/where your Community Council meets and how to get involved at www.west-dunbarton.gov.uk/council/community-councils
- **Action Old Kilpatrick** - www.facebook.com/actionoldkilpatrick - promotes the environment, heritage and horticulture in Old Kilpatrick
- **Linnvale Community group** – supports a range of initiatives including litter picks and community transport -www.linnvale.co.uk



Canal Life

by Chris McCaughey

The Forth & Clyde Canal starts (or ends) its 35 mile journey across Scotland in the village of Bowling, running alongside it is Sustrans Route 754 towpath, which continues on to Loch Lomond.

They are outside spaces once used for commerce, now re-designed to encourage active travel and a closeness with nature.

In this photo story Clydesider volunteer photographer Chris McCaughey, shares some of the many ways the canal and nearby public parks are enjoyed by both locals and visitors.



Time For Reflection



The Last Mile



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Bowline Bikes

LEAVES & LITTER

ALEXANDRIA GOES GREEN

Community groups in Alexandria are on a mission to create a green heritage corridor through Alexandria.

The initiative will see a community orchard, raised beds, flowers and soft fruit areas planted to create a green space from the Fountain to the tow path.

There are also plans for a parklet and play area to encourage families to enjoy the outdoor space and Black's Yard will be cleared up and turned into a landscaped community hub.

Mylene Colquhoun, Leamy Foundation Co-ordinator, said: "This work is ongoing, we hope to make Alexandria the centre of green activities in West Dunbartonshire.

"There'll be lots of free activities for people to get involved with, from litter picking to bulb planting, to making raised beds."

The Leamy Foundation is working alongside Central Alexandria Tenants and Residents Association (CATRA), West Dunbartonshire Greenspace and Alexandria Community Action Network to green the area.

They are also conducting a survey to find out what training local residents would find useful.

Mylene added: "We're keen to offer practical training, it could be anything from CV-writing to how to wire a plug.

"We want this to be a community hub where people can come, get involved and learn new skills."

To get involved with Alexandria's green corridor email info@theleamyfoundation.com or pop into the CATRA office for a chat.



LINNVALE LITTER PICKERS

Linnvale residents are calling time on litter bugs and turning their community into a haven for wildlife.

A spring litter pick as the country eased out of lockdown saw 30 residents collect waste along Strauss Avenue and beside the canal.

The group has since cleared the Linnvale roundabout and teamed up with Drumchapel and Clydebank Kayak Club who gathered litter in the canal.

West Dunbartonshire Greenspace, Scottish Canals and Sustrans have supplied PPE and litter-picking equipment, including long reach picks.

Stuart Gray, who helped set up Linnvale Community Greenspace group (LCG), said the waste collected includes plastic and glass bottles, aluminium cans, polystyrene food shells and plastic cutlery.

He added: "This is depressing because bio-degradable alternatives are available. The largest item recovered has been a complete trampoline pulled out of the canal. Chairs, microwave oven, tumble driers and a large garage hydraulic press, are some of the more unusual items recovered."

And Elaine Molden, a member of the LCG, helped organise the roundabout clean-up. She said: "A small group got involved and together we cleared a good part of the roundabout.

"We want to create an attractive space for residents, visitors and wildlife to enjoy."

To get involved with a group or start up your own litter pick group, contact WDC Greenspace at wdc.greenspace@west-dunbarton.gov.uk



BUMPER CROPS FOR BALLOCH GARDENERS

Tucked behind the safe haven of Lomond Parish Church, Lomond Community Gardens & Allotments is a gardener's delight.

Established in 2013 when the Church was awarded the Bronze Eco Congregation Award, the first plots were offered to those on the Alexandria Allotments' waiting list.

Eight years on and Loch Lomond Gardens has an extensive waiting list of their own and it's easy to understand why. Rounding the corner of the site you would think you had walked into a working, professional garden - not one grown by green-fingered volunteers.

"We have members from all over and of all ages," said committee member Mary.

"Funding from Awards for All helped us buy sheds, polytunnels, timber for the plot beds and beehives. We recently received Landfill Funding to reskin the polytunnel and build more raised beds."

The gardeners enjoyed bumper crops this year. Courgettes in particular thrived in the summer sun and have inspired great creativity with the gardeners as to how to cook them.

"I'm running out of things to do with them. I've had so many this year and they just keep coming." says Cathy showing me her raised bed produce.

With the seasons changing, flashes of vibrant orange pumpkins peek out between the greenery, a sure sign winter is on the way.

A plot is just £28 per year with £5 donated to a developing nation charity. The port-a-loo in the allotments is even twinned with one in Burkina Faso, West Africa. Who knew port-a-loo twinning was a thing!

Future plans include all season outdoor events, building more greenhouses and a patio outside their gardener's hut, aptly named The Weeders Rest, plus helping the bees settle back into their hive.

To find out more about the allotments contact lomondallotments@gmail.com but remember they do have a long waiting list. Or join their Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1806542969565366> for garden updates.



GROW YOUR OWN IN RENTON

The Renton Community Gardens is a fabulous space for people in the local community who want to grow their own fruit and veg or learn other new skills.

The green space provides an area where a range of activities take place including gardening and horticultural workshops.

Although the garden is still at the early stage of development, neighbours and local schools are taking advantage of the opportunities to grow their own food.

Youngsters from Renton Primary school have harvested the last of the crops they planted this year. They took the carrots and cabbages into the school to make soup and some of the vegetables home for dinner.

Nearby neighbours are also growing their own produce and are free to come in and pick their own veg as they need it.

To find out more about getting involved with Renton Community Gardens contact Robert Harold on: robert.harold@caledoniaha.co.uk or 07730648787.





Gardening Through Covid

by Andy Devine

The Bellsmyre Community Garden team adapted to the pandemic challenges and continued to thrive under the guidance of Martin Love and Pat Lally.

They were just about to launch their spring plant sale in March 2020 as the first lockdown started and moved this to an online click and collect system so the public could still purchase plants from the community garden.

The system was a success and this year the group sold over £800 of plants on their first day.

By adapting working hours and the number of people on site to follow the Covid 19 restrictions, the Bellsmyre team grew a substantial harvest of fruit and vegetables to share with the local community.

Martin even found time to make a movie about beekeeping for the Growing West Dunbartonshire Virtual Growfest event.

New local residents got involved during lockdown

with several joining to help tackle isolation or health conditions. This increased the team's skillbase, allowing them to take on major improvements to the site.

This included creating a new walled storage area for soil and compost, building four new raised beds and a new workshop and turning old barrels into raised beds for community groups.

They also demolished an old pergola to make way for a new polytunnel donated by WDC Greenspace.

Not ones to rest on their laurels, the group also worked with WDC Greenspace to support Bellsmyre After School Club, Bellsmyre Nursery and the Cutty Sark Centre to create their own growing spaces where younger residents can grow their own food.

Another success was the refurbishment of the storage container on site where a local graffiti artist helped the group decorate the container, brightening up the site entrance.



Martin, Pat, Jim and Stevie completing the poly tunnel framework

The group are also lending a helping hand to other community gardens in Dalmuir and Clydebank.

Martin said: "This has been a challenging time for everyone and the garden has meant the team has a space providing exercise and camaraderie for our members.

"The size of the site meant we could work in small socially distanced groups spread across the garden.

"The ability of members to adapt and support local residents who joined the group and socially isolated members of the local community means we now have a waiting list for individuals to take on beds."

There are several community gardens across West Dunbartonshire, to get involved contact WDC Greenspace. Email: wdc.greenspace@west-dunbarton.gov.uk Telephone: 01389 608413



Jim and Davie working on the repurposed barrel raised bed.

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS DINNER

A community Christmas dinner will be served to anyone who is on their own or struggling on Christmas Day.

Community Soup and Food for Thought will be at St Augustine's Church in Dumbarton to welcome people with open arms and provide a hot meal and company.

Ghislaine Kennedy helps organise the meal, she said: "Anybody can come here, it doesn't matter who you are, you are welcome.

"We will have the whole place set up after the service on Christmas Day. The church is transformed and becomes the eating place, giving people a chance to come together, have a warm meal and share their time."

If you would like to donate your time or a Christmas gift or treat to ensure a day full of warmth and love, please contact Ghislaine Kennedy on 07776796037 or Food for Thought on 01389 743908.

WINTER WELLBEING

A local charity will deliver Christmas Eve Wellbeing boxes to anyone struggling financially, mentally or emotionally.

The boxes, put together by Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels, contain pamper items and sweet treats. The idea is to provide a gift which allows people to give themselves some self-care.

Volunteer Fiona Allan said: "Anyone can apply for a box or nominate someone.

"We had a lady who nominated her daughter who is bringing up three small children on her own, one of whom is autistic and has ADHD.

"She felt bad she couldn't see them as she is housebound. So, I thought she's the very type of person who would also benefit from a well-being box."

There are a limited number of wellbeing boxes, if you or someone you know would benefit contact OKFP.

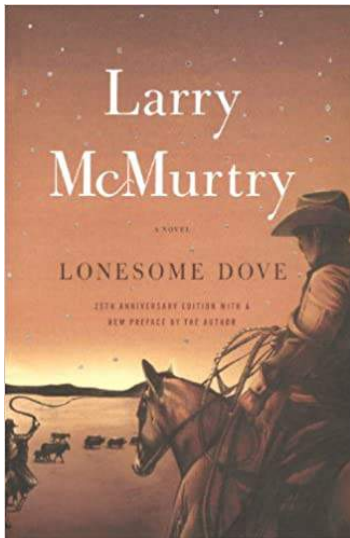
The charity also needs donations plus volunteers to help with wrapping, packing and delivery in the week before Christmas. To help or nominate call OKFP on 07368 496836 or email oldkilpatrickfoodparcels@gmail.com



READER RECOMMENDATIONS

LONESOME DOVE BOOK REVIEW

BY GARY CAMERON



I would like to recommend to other local readers the most enjoyable and utterly captivating novel I have ever read.

It is called Lonesome Dove and is written by Larry McMurtry.

It is a western, based in the late 1800's and has a stellar cast of diverse characters, but the two main men are Augustus Macrae and Captain Woodrow F. Call - two

retired Texas rangers who now run a rundown stable and livery business in the small town of Lonesome Dove with a small crew of men.

However, a former compadre of theirs from their rangering days rides in one morning and before you know it the crew are gathering cattle and planning on running them on a massive journey to the virgin prairies of Montana.

This is a lengthy novel and on face value a western doesn't sound as if it would be very interesting considering we live in Scotland, but rest assured... this book is one of the most engrossing books you will ever have the pleasure of reading.

Every single soul I recommended it to has thanked me for it and I re-read the book every few years for my own enjoyment.

From page one you are completely taken into this strange world from the not too distant past...and it is as an authentic portrayal of the wild west as is possible, I imagine.

It won Larry McMurtry the Pulitzer Prize upon release in the 1980's and there was also a TV series based on the book.

I have not seen the series and don't think I ever shall...it would be impossible to accurately portray these incredibly interesting characters on film.

Lonesome Dove...it is a pure pleasure to read.

4 COUNTRY & FOLK SONGS REVIEW

BY MARY IRVINE

I've just finished listening - again - to an EP of four new songs from accomplished singer/songwriter and 'Bankie', Jim Byrne. Four very different tracks.

Most people will relate to the theme of loss and remembrances in 'The Yellow Clock', the theme of true love and temptation in 'This Heart of Mine is a Blind, Blind Fool' - I found shades of Robbie Robertson in this track.

'Tell the Devil I've Stole His Crown of Pain', a so-called 'murder ballad', put me in mind of Ry Cooder and a possible Western soundtrack. The final track is 'The Holy Ghost'. I know what it means to me, decide for yourself what it means to you!

Whenever I have seen Jim perform live or listened to his music it is obvious he engages with other good musicians and singers. Choosing such to complement his own voice and deliver the lyrics, reflects someone who cares about producing a polished result.

If you're a country and folk fan this is for you. If you're not a fan but appreciate good all-round musicianship then it's for you too.

Issued by Foxstar Records, '4 Country & Folk Songs' is available from <https://jimbyrne.bandcamp.com/>



Would you like to share your
Reader Recommendations or
write a review for Clydesider?
If so we'd love to hear
from you, please email
theclydesider@gmail.com

WHERE'S GOOD FOR FOOD?

BY JENNY WATSON



Walking into ChariTea, you are met with a fresh, vibrant vibe and the smells wafting your way will make your stomach grumble, if it wasn't already.

Local organisation Food for Thought opened up 'ChariTea' in September of this year and it has been welcomed with open arms and hungry tummies by the local community. Located in Dumbarton's Artizan Shopping Centre makes it accessible to all.

The Clydesider team popped in during Issue 17 distribution for a refuel, thinking we would grab a quick roll. Instead three beautiful plates of scrumptious food were placed in front of us.

"It was not what I expected. As a vegetarian I struggle to find small cafes that cater for my dietary needs, so this place definitely has thumbs up from me," Angela said as she tucked into her Vegan Caprese panini.



Also ordered was a flavoursome Tuna Melt panini and the biggest portion of the most delicious looking French toast with bacon Amanda had ever been served: "It's so light and fluffy. I'm not sure I will be able to finish it though." (Plot twist...it was so good, she did!)

The café has a Pay It Forward service which allows you to make a donation to cover the cost of a hot drink or meal for someone else.

CLYDESIDER MEMBERSHIP



ko-fi.com/clydesider/

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- » Invite to all our events
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View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

"Peach
Demon"



SPOTLIGHT ON CREATIVITY - SUSAN LAWS

Interview by Jenny Watson



Susan is a multi-talented artist who also illustrates under the pen name Zuzia Nova.

Q. How did you get into art?

A. When I was wee, I was always drawing. I started sketch booking at an early age after being inspired by the art books I would see in bookstores. There was a small cupboard in our house where I would go to draw. That was my wee space. I was always creative. My dad is a graphic designer and he's done all sorts of arty things. My parents were very supportive and encouraged me to do whatever I wanted. I studied at Cardonald College for a year and then Glasgow School of Art.

Q. Do you have a favourite medium?

A. Graphite pencils - It's the most central medium to all my work. I like the looseness of them. Even when working digitally I still use the pencil option to begin. It helps me continue to get better and build my experience.

Q. How did you get involved in community development?

A. I used to work in the commercial art world and really struggled with that environment of sales and lack of variety in my days. After I left the galleries, I worked with various projects across Greater Glasgow and East Renfrewshire. I currently work with Impact Arts. I became involved with them around 2014 through their artist mentoring programme and felt I had found my place in the 'Art World'. I loved it was an environment to raise people up and encourage them to do what they enjoy. Nobody should be restricted from having aspirations to do something creative. Everyone should be able to do what they want. Nobody should ever be held back by their circumstance or society. Everyone has potential.

Q. What are your future aspirations?

A. I would like to illustrate children's books. I have a lot to learn about the industry and have been applying for mentorship programmes. I would like to create zines and think I will self-publish, they will be part of my portfolio for publishing houses.

Q. If you could have a masterclass with anyone, who would it be and why?

A. Helen Kellock (@helenkellock). She's a children's book illustrator working in Glasgow. I've seen her talk at events before and found her so lovely and really sharp with advice. The reason I wanted to select her is for her mastery of watercolour and her seemingly effortless ability to apply light with minimal marks. It can be difficult not to overwork a painting and she seems to have it down to a fine art, conveying what she wants in a really fresh way. I think I would benefit massively from learning to edit the marks I make by someone like Helen. I also really enjoy that she uses an unusual palette to depict nature and it all just works. Her work is gorgeous.

View Susan's artwork on Facebook and Instagram www.facebook.com/SusanLawsArt www.instagram.com/susanlawsartwork/ and her Zuzia Nova work at www.instagram.com/zuzianova/ and www.facebook.com/zuzianova

Frequently Asked Questions

– WD Citizens Advice Bureau



In this new Clydesider information section we ask local organisations to share some of the most common concerns they receive, along with their answers.

Q. I AM ON UNIVERSAL CREDIT AND STRUGGLING WITH LIVING COSTS. WHAT CAN I DO?

A. Whether you are struggling with living costs due to the temporary increase of Universal Credit (UC) ending or are finding it difficult to stick to a budget on UC, we can check you are getting your full Universal Credit entitlement plus carry out a benefit check to ensure your income is being maximised. For example, if you have young dependent children, we would want to look at Social Security Scotland benefits such as the Scottish Child Payment or the Best Start Grant. If you have a health condition or disability, you may be entitled to a disability benefit. We can also provide advice if you need to replace one-off items or if you have difficulty managing your fuel costs.

Q. I THINK I'M ABOUT TO LOSE MY JOB - HOW SOON SHOULD I CLAIM UNIVERSAL CREDIT (UC) AFTER MY EMPLOYMENT ENDS?

A. UC is calculated during one month "assessment periods", your circumstances that month are taken into account when calculating your benefit payment. In order to maximise your first UC payment, we advise you do not submit your claim until the day after you receive your final wages.

Q. WILL I STILL GET PAID IF I NEED TO SELF-ISOLATE?

A. You might be able to get a payment of £500 if you're employed or self-employed and you've lost income because you can't work from home. To get the grant you must have been told to self-isolate by the NHS. If you need to stop working to self-isolate, you might be able to get Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) if you can't get SSP.

Q. MY GAS AND ELECTRICITY BILLS SEEM HIGH. SHOULD I SWITCH SUPPLIER?

A. This winter, with so many energy suppliers failing, our advice is to resist the idea of switching. Where an energy supplier goes into administration, customers' credit balances are safe and consumers are protected by the price cap regardless of what happens. Anyone thinking of switching will struggle to get a better deal elsewhere. If your bills seem high, check your readings - if estimate (E) then give supplier real readings... DON'T rely on them coming out to do this, you need to be proactive. Anyone with a pre-payment meter who is struggling to top up and is at risk of running out of credit should phone WDCAB.

For issues on benefits, debt, employment, housing, utilities, etc. WDCAB advisers are on hand to offer advice and assistance. Call 0800 484 0136 or visit www.wdcab.co.uk/contact-us

RELIABLE RESOURCES

Local helpline numbers and information sources

Food For Thought - 01389 743908
emergency food aid referral line.

West Dunbartonshire Community

Foodshare 01389 764135 - free phone
08003457050 emergency food aid delivery

Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels -
07368496836

Dumbarton District Women's Aid -
01389 751036

WDC 'No Homes for Domestic Abuse' -
01389 738510

Clydebank Women's Aid - 0141 952 8118

Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol
(DACA) - 01389 731456 or 0141 952 0881

WD Citizens Advice Bureau - information
on benefits, welfare rights, employment
rights and general well-being
Freephone - 0800 4840136

Independent Resource Centre - benefits
advice 0141 951 4040

Clydebank Community Addiction Team -
0141 562 2311

WD Housing & Homeless -

01389 738282

or Freephone 0800 197 1004 (option 5)

Dumbarton Joint Hospital -

01389 812018

Overdose Response Team - Dumbarton

Joint Hospital 7 days a week – 10am to
10pm. Anyone can make a referral on
FREEPHONE 08088 00811

Stepping Stones - 0141 941 2929 -
mental health charity providing telephone
support

Big Disability Group - 0141 237 4560
thebigdisabilitygroup@gmail.com and on
Facebook - support and information to
people living with disabilities

WDC Additional Support - text 'help' to
07800 002582 or visit

[www.westdunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/
additional-support](http://www.westdunbarton.gov.uk/coronavirus/additional-support)

CLYDESIDER PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

THEME: NEW GROWTH

PRIZE: £25

DEADLINE: FEB 14 2022

EMAIL ENTRIES:
CLYDESIDERCOMP@GMAIL.COM

CLYDESIDER POETRY COMPETITION

THEME: CHANGE

PRIZE: £25

DEADLINE: FEB 14 2022

EMAIL ENTRIES:
CLYDESIDERCOMP@GMAIL.COM

Rules: One entry per person for each competition, entrants must live, work or be part of a group in West Dunbartonshire; all entries must be your own, by entering you give Clydesider permission to publish your work in print or online - this in no way infringes your copyright.

Clyde's Christmas Cheer

By Steven Hastings



**Clyde's decorating his Christmas Tree, what a Cracker!
Hope you all have a lovely Christmas
and a good New Year.**

Thank You by Laura Giannini

This summer for the first time in my life I had some trouble with the law and found out how terrifying it can be to be embroiled in the machinations of a system where rules are applied and a single cog can feel really lost.

I was devastated. Terrified. I suffer badly from anxiety and depression and was barely able to function during this black period.

I come now to the Thank You.

The police officers involved, Officers Baker and Sloan, were extremely kind and supportive. They did all they could to keep me informed and to give me courage.

They also went above and beyond in another way. They fought my case with the authorities. They visited all the neighbours, checked the facts, past behaviour and gathered opinions. In time, thanks to those officers, the Prosecutor dropped my case.

I want everyone to know what officers Baker and Sloan did for me. I feel sure they saved my sanity.

Laura suggested we include a Thank You section in Clydesider which we think is a fantastic idea. So if there is an individual or organisation you would like to thank, please send us the details – theclydesider@gmail.com

WHAT'S ON IN WD

KNOWETOP EXPLORERS

Knowetop Explorers is an Outdoor Nature Club for 6 to 12 year olds running from December 6 - 11 between 10am -12 noon. After New Year it will run every second Saturday in January. Booking required call 07898 593629 or email Knowetop@alternativeswd.org

LETTER FROM SANTA

Preloved toys, decorations, outfits, plus Free Santa post boxes are going up in Clydebank. Children can write a letter to Santa and the Recycle Room will send back a personalised reply written on special paper in an envelope filled with magic dust and delivered by the postman. Email therecycleroom1@gmail.com for details.

COMMUNITY TOY BANK

Food for Thought's Toy Bank will open this Christmas for drop-in sessions from December 13-24. It is based in their central office in the Artizan Centre, Dumbarton. Please message Food For Thought or call to put your name on the list – 01389 743908.

FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY

Free family Christmas dinner and party on December 12 at Awestruck Art Gallery. Put your name on the list at Awestruck Art Gallery, 36 Sylvania Way South, Clydebank. Numbers are limited. Also free soup and sandwiches every day throughout Christmas holidays, closed Christmas Day, open Boxing Day, all welcome. All day play for creche and Youthclub - £1 - 0141 435 7116 or email awestruck-art@outlook.com

CLYDEBANK WRITERS

A local writing group will have its second anthology out just in time for Christmas. The aptly named 'Poetry, Prose and Progress' priced at £7 makes a perfect gift and will be available from the Clydebank Writers Group on their Facebook page.

TOY BANK & FOOD PARCELS

West Dunbartonshire Foodshare is running a Christmas Toy Bank over the festive period. If you need help or food parcels contact them on 01389 764135 or freephone 0800 345 7050 between 10am - 4pm Tuesday or Thursday.

CHRISTMAS NATIVITY

Join FireCloud for their traditional Christmas Nativity on Sunday December 19 at 7pm (doors open 6.40pm) in St Margaret's Church, book your tickets by emailing enquires@fire-cloud.org

XMAS DINNER

Community Soup and Food for Thought will serve a free Christmas dinner in St Augustine's Church, Dumbarton after the Christmas service. Contact Ghislaine on 07776 796037 or Food For Thought on 01389 743908 to reserve your space.

BLETHER SESSIONS

Join the Leamy Foundation for a bletcher and a biscuit over the Christmas period on Mondays & Fridays 10am - 12 noon from Monday December 20th to Friday December 31st at CATRA Hall, 5 Alexander Street, Alexandria G83. 0PG. All welcome.

CONTACT CLYDESIDER

Phone: 01389 381110 (we're not in the office as often as usual so please try our mobiles or email if you can't get us on this number)

Editorial: Call Amanda on 07913029234 or email amanda@clydesider.org

Advertising: call Charlie on 07502460273 or email charlie@clydesider.org

Competitions: Email clydesidercomp@gmail.com

Address: 48a Erskine View, Old Kilpatrick G60 5JG

Website: www.clydesider.org



SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

Clydesider Creative Ltd is a not-for-profit community media organisation based in West Dunbartonshire.

The Clydesider community magazine, website and social media promote the positives our area has to offer and showcase the creative talents, ideas, and experiences of local people.

FOR OUR COMMUNITY, BY OUR COMMUNITY

WAYS YOU CAN HELP



Membership

From just £3 per month receive Clydesider magazine posted direct to your door plus some Clydesider goodies and a Clydesider VOTE.

Visit <https://ko-fi.com/clydesider> to sign up or complete the coupon on pg 41

Volunteer

Volunteer your time and skills with Clydesider and become a Volunteer Member. Find out more about our volunteering at www.clydesider.org/volunteer or email jenny@clydesider.org



Advertise

Local businesses and organisations reach the whole of West Dunbartonshire with an advert in the magazine or on our social media. Reduced rates for non-profits.

Contact Charlie@clydesider.org for details or call 07502 460273

Use Our Services

Let our team of creative and media experts share your organisation's story with the people who matter to you. Our communication services and creative training are tailored to meet the ethos, needs and pockets of small charities and social enterprises.

Contact Amanda@clydesider.org for details or call 07913029234



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