



CLYDESIDER

OUR COMMUNITY'S POSITIVE PRESS

ISSUE 20 Summer 2022

FREE



LEGGING IT IN LEVENGROVE

INSIDE: CYCLE OF LIFE....WILD ABOUT SWIMMING...PHOTO TREASURE HUNT

POETRY COMPETITION WINNER

Staring into the Sun

By Scott Walker

Watching all the jewels
Fall in the sea
But for you
Not for me

I want to feel water
Coat my skin
I ask the trees
Where do I begin

Clearing all the stars
From round my eyes,
You wonder me
I wonder why

Piling all the rocks
Up to the horizon
A perfect balance
To keep my mind from

Staring into the sun
It's only just begun

Staring into the sun
Only just begun

Flying all my kites
Into the trees
Then comes along
A summer breeze

I look up to the sky
With wings unfurled
Everywhere
Is my world

Stamping all the smiles
Into the dust
They shine again
And turn to rust

And spinning in the glow
I hit the ground
Everything I want
Can be found

Staring into the sun
Only just begun

Staring into the sun
I've only just begun.

WELCOME

I'm hoping that by the time you read this we will have seen some change in the weather, after such a damp and dreary May we all need some summer sunshine.

This issue continues our focus on 'change' and, with the help of our volunteer contributors (and in the hope of better weather), we have packed the magazine full of interesting and inspiring 'outdoor' stories.

From walking, running, cycling, litter picking, gardening and even wild swimming, there is something for everyone.

And the beauty of most of these activities is, you don't have to be super-fit to give them a go.

Runners from 4 to 84 take part in the weekly parkrun in Levensgrove Park, while the Vale Trust's Active Travel Hub has a collection of ebikes and guided cycles to enjoy.

If nature is more your thing, check out our Walk This Way feature for a wildlife walk through the Saltings or try your hand at our Photo Treasure Hunt.

And if you're looking for some inspiration to encourage you outdoors, have a read of Marie Murphy's story and discover how she is tackling diabetes with her personal cycle-a-day challenge.

For me being outdoors, listening to birds singing or the whisper of the wind through the trees, helps me deal with life's challenges and changes. If this issue inspires you to try a new outdoor venture, please let us know.

Enjoy!
Amanda Eleftheriades-Sherry

Clydesider Editor



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. If you would like to get involved and contribute to Clydesider please email theclydesider@gmail.com

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.

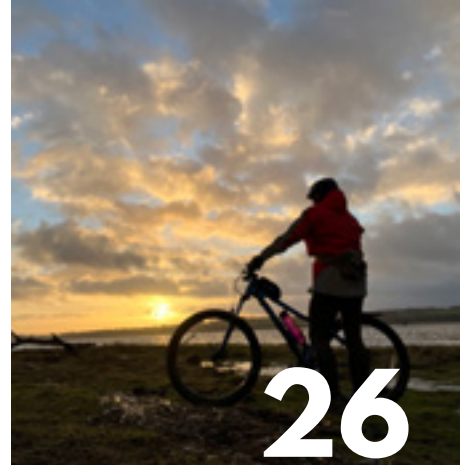
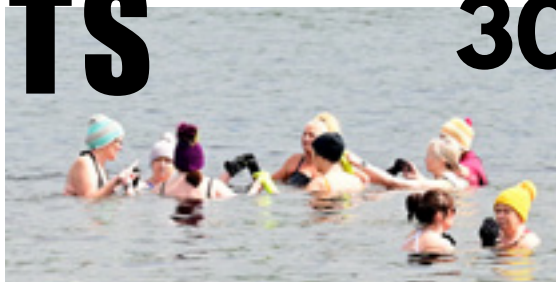
CLYDESIDER CREDITS

A big thank you to our fantastic team of volunteers 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.



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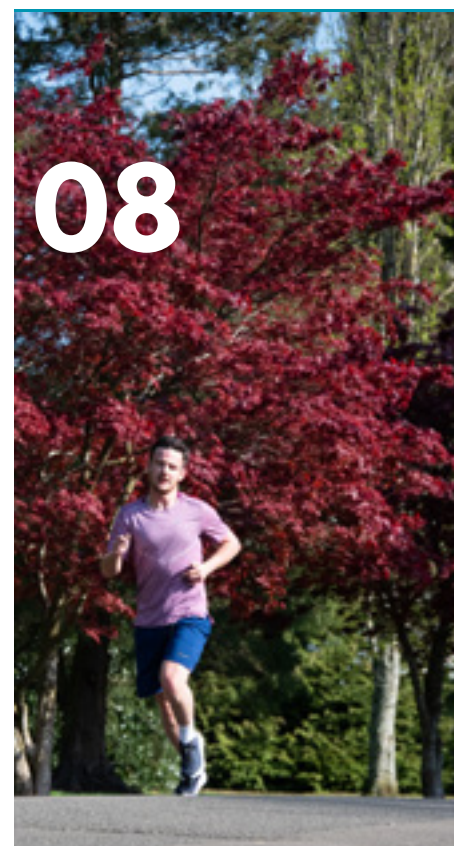
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COMMUNITY NEWS ROUND UP

UPSTREAM BATTLE

Local environmental activists joined forces to learn more about how to improve the quality of the River Clyde and its local waterways.

Members of Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore, Friends of Leven River Valley and Plastic Free Helensburgh took part in the workshop hosted by Keep Scotland Beautiful and Scottish Water as part of the Upstream Battle campaign.



The groups discussed litter survey data and how to improve local waterways. Scottish Water also shared details of their Nature Calls campaign that calls for a ban on wipes containing plastic.

Upstream Battle calls for all individuals, communities and businesses along the River Clyde to commit to helping improve the quality of our marine environment.

As well as collecting citizen science data and taking action to clean up litter, the campaign seeks to raise awareness that 80% of all marine litter is due to actions carried out on land.

TALKING NEWSPAPER

Bankie Talk is looking for more volunteers to help with their talking newspaper service.

The community group has been bringing local news to people who are visually impaired for 30 years and are keen to recruit more helpers. They are looking for volunteers to help with the recordings, general admin and support and also Board members.

If you can offer 3 – 4 hours a week or once a fortnight please call 0141 9412414 or email bankietalk@btconnect.com. You can also contact them if you live in the Clydebank area and would like to receive a Bankie Talk recording.

FREE TRAVEL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people in West Dunbartonshire are being urged to sign up for their free Bus Travel Card.

All young people and children aged 5 - 21 can apply for a card to access the Young Persons' (Under 22s) Free Bus Travel Scheme which began on January 31 2022.

To enjoy the free bus travel you need to apply for a new or replacement National Entitlement Card or a Young Scot National Entitlement Card before hopping on board. Previously issued cards will not allow access to the scheme. Or 16 - 21 year olds can download the free bus travel on to an existing card using the Transport Scot Pass Collect app. Asylum seekers and refugees aged between 5 and 21 can also access the scheme.

To apply for an NEC visit <https://nec.scot/>

RAISED BEDS AVAILABLE

If you live in Renton and fancy trying your hand at growing your own fruit and veg, there are raised beds available in Renton Community Garden.

To find out more or arrange a visit contact Mylene Colquhoun, Leamy Foundation Co-ordinator, on 07981 733 791 or email mylene@theleamyfoundation.com



COMMUNITY SOUP'S YOUNG WINNERS

Young people scooped the top prizes at the recent Dumbarton West Community Soup.

The event, held in the Phoenix Centre in Castlehill, was an opportunity for people to pitch ideas to benefit the local community. There was entertainment and soup before votes were cast on the nine ideas submitted.

First prize of £500 went to Tabitha Weir for her creatively named project Duck Duck Dragon. The funds will be used to create a community role-play games library for local young people.

Tabitha's idea aims to encourage young people to "get creative through collaborative storytelling as well as encouraging their creative writing and character art."

She said: "I felt very proud that people liked my pitch and excited for what we can do.

"We plan to buy all the necessary resources for role-playing games so that our group, as well as people in the wider community, have access to them."

The second prize also went to a project for young people with Karen Wells and Felicity Kelly winning the door entry money for a Junior parkun in Levensgrove Park.



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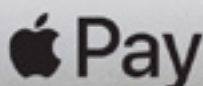
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COME RAIN OR SHINE

By Annie Jordan

Photos by Chris McCaughey

Rendezvous: Levensgrove Park, Saturday 9.30am sharp

It's a dreich Saturday morning but the parkrunners are out in force, and so are the army of volunteers in their fluorescent pink high-vis waistcoats.

My Dad used to famously say: "It's not the winning, it's the taking part that matters," and the parkrunners embody this spirit.

Come rain or shine, they are ready to go.

It's not about being the best, it's about being together, running alongside, rather than in front of each other.

Anna Napier, one of the run's volunteer Run Directors, explains it is very much about the team effort: "Levensgrove parkrun was started by a group of volunteers, including myself, back in 2019.

"We didn't know each other at the time but we all had a shared desire to bring parkrun to our local area, so that brought us together and we're so glad we made it happen.

"It's a massive team effort from everyone on our core team and all our awesome volunteers.

"parkrun is a global movement, entirely free for everyone, forever.

"There are volunteer-led runs all around the world every Saturday morning - 5K that anyone is welcome to walk, jog or run.



"Children are welcome and under 11s can take part as long as they are within an arm's reach of an adult, but it is 5 km, 3 miles, so it's quite long."

She shows me a map of the course: three laps of the park.

"You sign up for free online at parkrun.org.uk and then you can walk, jog, run, bring your dog or a buggy.

"You can take as long as you like or go as fast as you want. There's always a "Tail Walker" at the end.

"This week, Margaret in the orange bib is our Tail Walker. Her role is to go at the very back so nobody is ever last at parkrun!"

Right on cue, Margaret gives us a wee wave.

Anna explains they need about 20 volunteers to run the event and thankfully, their dedicated volunteers turn out Saturday after Saturday to help.

Anna's son, Sam aged 11, picks up the story: "I started to volunteer as a marshal, just because I thought it felt nice to be able to add some support.

"If you're volunteering, you realise people are feeling good because of you."

Another volunteer Run Director, Theresa McIntyre, one of the

original founding members of Levensgrove parkrun is today's Run Director.

She adds: "The fantastic feedback we get from the volunteers make it worthwhile.

"They're posting lots of things on our page or messaging us to say how happy they are with the set up in Dumbarton; how friendly the volunteers are and how well-organised it is."

Steven Fitzpatrick, a first-time visitor to Levensgrove, barely audible over the squally wind, comments: "I have never seen so many marshals. It's really well-organised!"

At Levensgrove parkrun, volunteers arrive more than an hour before the runners to do a course inspection, set up all the equipment and mark off the course.

The Run Director briefs the volunteers on their roles so everybody knows EXACTLY what they are doing. Nobody arrives without a friendly greeting and you do feel warm and included.

Even on this blustery day, a little beam of sunshine smiles up at me - at the start line, someone had chalked a love heart for the runners. A touch that didn't go unnoticed!

Levensgrove, itself, is a stunning park with the shimmering Clyde

at the foot of the hill and the impressive Dumbarton Rock presiding over proceedings.

It recently benefited from a £2.8million facelift and is well-maintained, well-used and, most importantly, well-loved.

"This run has everything," enthuses another first timer. "Castle, water, trees and up and down paths. It's more challenging than it looks!"

As the runners struggle up the very deceptive hill behind the Pavilion, cries of "well done" echo over the wild wind and stinging rain!

I spare a thought for Matt, dubbed "the hardest volunteer", on duty down at the Clyde. On a day like today he definitely lives up to his title.

Lindsay Theobald, another of today's marshals, shouts her encouragement. She is immensely proud of her runners, especially those who don't think they can do it. She loves to see their progress.

"When they cross the line and say, "oh I've beat my time from last week or I've done this..." just seeing how proud they are of their own achievements is probably the best part of it, for me."

I tell Lindsay I don't think I could manage it, but she insists: "Oh yes, you could!"





"Anybody can do it, trust me, anything is achievable in small steps! You just need to run, walk, run, walk."

Today's runners round the corner and one by one their rain-spattered faces break into a smile at the applauding marshals.



There must be around 70 folk here today, men, women and children of all different ages, stages, shapes and sizes, each with their own reasons to be here.

One face who is missing is the late Davy MacDonald who used to stand by the three bollards at the Clydeshire Road entrance.

Runners would pass Davy three times during their run and he would wave enthusiastically.

Sadly, Davy passed away in 2020, so Parkrunners are currently fundraising for a fitting memorial for "Wavy Davy's Corner".



Amongst the runners, I spot tiny Lewis Collins aged 4 whose wee legs somehow manage to carry him round alongside his dad, Kenny Collins, every week.

Anna and Sam praise him: "He's a wee superhero. An inspiration."

His dad, Kenny agrees: "He's fantastic! He's now done about 16 parkruns. I think he's one of the youngest, he does the full 5k."

"There is talk of a Junior parkrun which I'm going to be helping out with and he'll take part in that too, but he just loves all the spirit, cheers, and all the positivity that comes with the parkrun on the Saturday and he looks forward to it."

Anna confirms. "Yes, Levensgrove is about to have a Junior parkrun. It will be a separate 2K event that happens on a Sunday for children from age 4 to 14."

Clearly, the parkrun is creating a "healthier and happier planet" as it aspires in its mission statement.

Founded by Paul Sinton Hewitt CBE, it is now in its 18th year with 2,200 locations in 27 countries.

Its positive impact is indisputable: you just need to look at the parkrunners this morning to see it.

One of the more mature runners, Rose Harvie, beams widely as she crosses the line. She is a Levensgrove regular: "I love it so much; I even wrote a poem about it."

The morning at Levensgrove parkrun concludes with some parkrunners heading into the delightful Pavilion café for a post-run treat.

As I sip my hot chocolate, I realise this non-runner has really loved her morning and would happily return!





PARKRUN FACTFILE

- Began 2 October 2004 with 13 runners and 5 volunteers at Bushy Park, London
- Originally called the Bushy Park Time Trial it became parkrun in 2008
- First event outside UK was in Zimbabwe in 2007
- There are 1,103 parkruns in the UK
- There are 10,212 parkrunners over 80. Age is no barrier.
- parkrun tourism has become a 'thing' with some runners visiting parkruns around the world.

parkrun By Rose Harvie

**It's Saturday morning, so 'up
with the lark',
Then head on over to
Levensgrove Park**

**It's 9.30 sharp, whatever the
weather -
parkrun is for all of us, and we
all run together.**

**You can walk, you can jog, you
can run, you can race,
parkrun is for all of us, whatever
your pace.**

**And once in a while...why not
volunteer?
The runners all need you, to give
them a cheer!**





LET'S GROW WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

by Rose Harvie

Now June is here, time to consider what you have planted, what is successful, and what you can still start growing.

Hopefully you'll have lots of seeds started in good compost in seed trays. Now you should thin them out individually into small pots or trays, and leave to grow until big enough to plant out in beds in your garden or allotment. When planted out they may need protection from slugs. Use organic methods, such as crushed egg shells, or cover with plastic bottles cut in half.

By now, your potatoes should be growing through the earth. As they grow, 'earth them up', covering the foliage with soil from each side. Stop earthing up when flowers first form. Do the same if your spuds are in bags or tubs. In late July, scrape away some soil and carefully feel if the spuds are swelling. 'First early' potatoes may be ready about then.

It is not too late to start tender veggies like outdoor cucumbers, courgettes, pumpkins and sweetcorn. They need individual pots of good compost, one seed in a pot, and kept in a warm place such as a greenhouse or sunny windowsill until ready in late June or July to plant outside. These all need plenty of space in your plot or community garden. Outdoor tomatoes should also be ready to be planted out.

Runner and French beans should be ready to plant out, if you did not sow them directly into the ground in late

April. Runner beans need support, so invest in some 2 metre bamboo canes; a double row of beans and canes, crossed at the top with more canes. Peas need 'twiggy' branches to climb up.

Ask neighbours to keep their grass cuttings; add some farmyard manure if you can get it, and seaweed from the shore, and mix it all in your compost bins. When one bin is full, turn it into the next one, and start over. If you garden in a community garden make sure all the garden waste gets composted. It is the fertility for next year.

Keep plots weeded, but have a thought for pollinating insects. Don't destroy all the dandelions and buttercups, and make sure you also sow flowers like nasturtiums to attract bees. Sweet peas can happily grow up the runner bean frame.

Enjoy your gardening, don't forget to include picnics and barbecues and share advice, seeds or produce with other community gardeners whenever you can!

West Dunbartonshire Greenspace will happily supply wildflower seeds.
(www.greenspace@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)

Help and advice on growing veggies, composting, etc. available from
rharvie17@gmail.com

Come on West Dunbartonshire – let's get growing!

Chill Skills

by Angela Clark

A local community centre is running an innovative programme of mental wellbeing activities for young people.

The Chill Skill programme is on offer at Ben View in Dumbarton. It aims to help improve children's mental health and encourage them to develop coping skills through a range of wellbeing and creative classes.

The sessions include art therapy, yoga, Tai Chi, meditation, coping techniques, cognitive behavioural therapy and goal-setting sessions.

The variety of classes gives the children different experiences and they can choose what they prefer to meet their individual needs.

Natasha Peters who helps run the centre's youth clubs, said: "It's important to recognise that mental health does not discriminate, we shouldn't downplay the emotions of children.

"Anybody can experience mental health issues, and children can struggle. So, it is important to make sure there is something to meet the needs of kids.

"We wanted to do something they don't get in school and there wasn't a lot out there for kids, when it came to mindfulness."



The first sessions have been a huge success and demand from parents concerned about younger children's well-being has prompted the youth group to lower the age to include younger children.

Gerry Diamond teaches mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy. He said: "Mindfulness

can help any age as long as the meditations are age-appropriate.

"Learning exercises that calm your body and mind are so valuable to our young people.

"I give young people tools to help manage stress through self-regulation, coping strategies, and managing emotions by using positive thinking, breathing exercises, and mindfulness."

If you feel your child would benefit from mindfulness sessions or any other therapy classes contact Natashabenvviewcentreyouth@gmail.com or call 01389 733030

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Raising OI Awareness by Steven Hastings

"I have Osteogenesis Imperfecta (OI), also known as Brittle Bones.

I have received support over the years from the Brittle Bone Society who recently launched their OICAN May Campaign to make May official 'OI Awareness Month.'

The Brittle Bone Society is based in Dundee and was started by the late Dr Margaret Grant OBE to support individuals with Osteogenesis Imperfecta and their families.

Margaret had OI herself. She noticed when her daughter Yvonne was born in 1961 there was very little support for people with OI and not much had changed since she was a child.

In 1968 Margaret placed an article in the Sunday Post newspaper to find other families who needed support, this was the start of the Brittle Bone Society and what is thought to be the world's first support charity for people with OI.

Having OI means my bones can break very easily. I am small in stature; I cannot walk and I am a powered wheelchair user.

I have broken my bones many times, the last time was at the start of the pandemic when I broke my leg and was in bed for many weeks.

I don't get an X-ray or wear a cast as my bones are very fragile and both these things could make it worse.

I try not to let my disability stop me and when I was in bed, I started hosting Online Quizzes, when they were still very popular. I also did one to raise money for the Brittle Bone Society.

The Brittle Bone Society does great work including organising events to bring people effected by OI together and help access funds for wheelchairs and other specialist equipment.

Earlier this year the Brittle Bone Society started their OICAN May Campaign to make May Official "OI Awareness Month" in the UK.

There is already Wishbone Day on May 6. This began in Australia in 2010 and is now celebrated all over the world. On this day we wear yellow, events are organised and awareness is also raised on social media.

I think an OI Awareness Month would be a great way to make more people in the UK aware of Osteogenesis Imperfecta and the challenges we face.

It will hopefully make more medical professionals aware of OI as there are still many who have never heard of it.

I would also like to see better medical services for adults with OI similar to what most children with OI receive.

As part of the campaign I wrote to local MP Martin Docherty-Hughes asking him if he was able to sign the early day motion in support of the campaign or alternatively raise the issue in parliament or share on social media. I'm sure many others also wrote to their MPs.

Myself, along with many others, have signed the BBS Patient Charter online and shared on social media.

If successful official OI Awareness month will begin in May 2023.

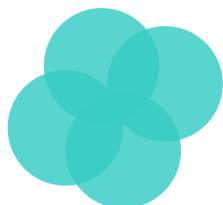
More about the society and the OICAN May Campaign can be found by searching Brittle Bone Society on Facebook or on the BBS website www.brittlebone.org where you will find the charter which can be signed by anyone."



Glasgow Social Enterprise Network

A social enterprise is run like a business, but the profits are invested back into the local area to create meaningful change

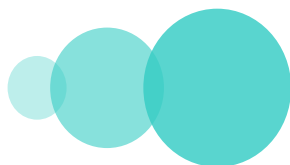
At GSENI, we're creating a space for different organisations to come together and exchange ideas, resources, and support. Our membership is growing and we're always open to new members. GSENI brings together over 150 social enterprises (our members) and organisations that support their work (associate members)



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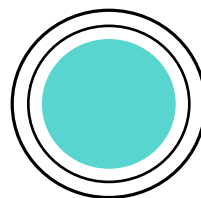
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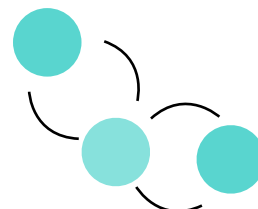
Undertaking research to influence policy and strategy development



We Promote

Providing an outlet for awareness raising of social enterprises

Engaging and consulting with social enterprises to ensure their views are represented



We Connect

Facilitating a safe space for members to share resources, ideas and experiences

Enabling opportunities for trading between members, the public sector and private sector

We're a growing movement.

The past year has shown how valuable relationships with others in our local area can be. It has never been more important that we can share our skills and create opportunities for each other.

Not a social enterprise? Don't worry, you can still be part of our network. Whether you're starting up a social enterprise, or your organisation supports them, there's a membership for you. GSENI membership is free for everyone.

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Some of our members (from bottom to top, left to right): Jeely Piece Club, African Challenge Scotland, GalGael, Locavore, Urban Roots, People's Pantry (Govanhill Baths)



@glasgow_social_enterprise

info@gsen.org.uk



ON YER BIKE

BY ANNIE JORDAN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VALE OF LEVEN TRUST

“On your bike!” has taken on a whole new meaning for me after seeing what’s on offer at the Vale of Leven Trust Active Travel Hub.

Bobby Dorrian, Development Manager of the Hub, explains the Trust was set up in 2017 with the core aims of improving the physical environment and economy of Alexandria, increasing footfall in the town centre and improving lives of local residents.

From these values, the Active Travel Hub was born.

“We’re right in the heart of the community on Mitchell Way,” Bobby says. “We want folk to come in and see us, find out what we’re about and what they can do.”

Bobby is new to the project, as are the cycle leaders, Caitlin Watson and Gordon Dick.

He shows me their 22 shiny, new ebikes, all lined up and waiting for me. I would love to have a go...

“Come and try them out! There are three led cycles per week, to various places depending on the cyclist’s competency.

“The routes are all risk-assessed. We supply the bikes, high-viz jackets and helmets,

with a tea or coffee at the end.”

There is no charge for individual activities at present but participants are asked to become a member of the Trust at the cost of £5 per year.

Caitlin and Gordon accompany the cyclists. Routes vary across the Vale, favourites include the Leven towpath, over to Levensgrove, the Cruin and even ‘the Horseshoe.’

Caitlin tells me: “Cycle Skills sessions are one hour before led cycles on Tuesdays and Sundays and there is also a skills session on Thursdays at 6pm.

“These are real confidence-building sessions for new cyclists or those who’ve not been on a bike in years. They say ‘I love this! I remember I loved this when I was a child.”

If anyone is unsure after their first skills session, they can do another. No-one has to do the ride until they are ready. The hub also offers more basic tuition to anyone who needs it. So, no excuse!

I enquire about the ebikes, curious to know how an experienced cyclist finds them.

“They are very enjoyable. Feels like someone giving you a

gentle push.

“We show people the gears and then when we show them the power they go, ‘woohoo!’

“Ebikes make activities more accessible: you can enjoy routes you may not normally manage.”

I’m “all in but my feet,” as my Mum would say.

Bobby adds: “People who use it just love it!

“We want to promote the wellbeing of the people of Alexandria...get people out, get them active, get them fitter so we also organise Social Walks.

“Last night the rain was coming down in sheets but there were still four of us. We hope to increase the walking and start a jogging group. We have keen volunteers who can offer that.”

The Trust is also looking for more volunteers, at the moment they have five regulars.

“If anyone is interested in walking or cycling and can spare a couple of hours a week, please get in touch,” he says.

The Hub’s latest activity is their ‘Sunday Social,’ designed to curb social isolation.

"It's free, although donations are welcome: it's line dancing, a cuppa and a blether right in the middle of town."

So, it's not just 'on your bike,' you can walk, jog or boogie.

Whatever you want to do, call in at the Vale of Leven Trust Active Travel Hub, you will be made more than welcome, although they do recommend you book to guarantee an ebike as they come in different sizes.

- > **Cycles: Tues and Thurs 2pm & Sun 1pm (Skills session one hour before)**
- > **Skills session: Tuesday at 1pm, Thurs at 6pm and Sunday at 12pm**
- > **Social Walk: Tues at 6pm**
- > **Sunday Social: 1pm first Sun of month, Alexandria Masonic Hall**

For more information call 01389 752629 or email info@valeofleventrust.com or pop into the Vale of Leven Trust Active Travel Hub at 9 Mitchell Way, Alexandria



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CLAIM WHAT'S YOURS – CLYDESIDER CAMPAIGN

SEEKING SUPPORT

LEEANNE SHARES HER UNIVERSAL CREDIT JOURNEY WITH ANGELA CLARK

"I would advise anyone who is applying for Universal Credit to get a welfare rights advisor, it is a gruelling process even with that support."

Peer support worker Leeanne is used to helping others deal with life challenges faced by people living in areas with high levels of poverty.

But when she suddenly had to apply for Universal Credit for herself, she discovered the process overwhelming.

Leeanne explained: "I was working two jobs just before Covid hit and the reason I had to get Universal Credit was because I had to leave one of my jobs.

"I still wanted to work but as I was working sessional, for every pound I earned Universal Credit was taking back 64 pence.

"In the very early days before I was in the Support Category, I wasn't getting enough to pay my rent or to live on. If I didn't have family to support me, I would have needed to go to foodbanks to survive."

Leeanne initially got help from a welfare rights advisor but then was passed on to a Job Centre Work Coach which she found very difficult.

"You have to go down and pour out your whole life. I hated that; I was so ashamed.

"So, I ended up trying to do the process myself, I didn't want to tell anyone I was struggling - as a professional you're supposed to have it all together.

"I turned myself away from that

initial support and ended up fighting the whole process on my own, it was probably the worst thing I ever did.

"I would advise others to take all the help they can get."

Leeanne was also receiving help with her Council Tax and rent but as her wages changed from one month to the next, she found herself in arrears.

"They say it is paid in real time but it's not. Council Tax is a month behind what UC is doing, so I ended up owing hundreds of pounds.

"So, I'm always advising people when they go on to Universal Credit if they are working make sure you earn the same every week otherwise you are going to end up in more trouble than you were before you started on Universal Credit."

As well as dealing with her own UC claim, Leeanne is also supporting family members.

She explained you need an email address to apply for Universal Credit and described the process as "a minefield" for anyone who isn't digitally literate, as you must sign into your journal online every other day.

Here you find a To Do list which if not completed can result in sanctioning and loss of benefits.

She added: "For a lot of my family they can't read or write at all.

"I see them getting really upset because they hear that ping and know what the email means. They start freaking

out thinking they're going to get their money cut. It's really horrible."

Leeanne is currently helping her uncle who is a cancer patient, go through the Universal Credit application process.

Being in receipt of UC he is also entitled to housing benefit to cover his rent but, she explains, as he has a spare room £50 is automatically deducted and he needs to apply for Discretionary Housing Benefit to cover the shortfall.

Leeanne explained: "He wants to work, he's been in this wee job for years but can only do three hours now.

"There is this misconception that people on Universal Credit don't want to work but it's just not true.

"Once you put in a four week sick line you are automatically sent a UC50.

"This is a form which is 23 pages long with 18 questions, asking about mobility, standing, sitting; it's a lot even for someone who is comfortable with their writing skills.

"I find it depresses people just having to go through the form and say they can't do this and they can't do that, it's really disempowering.

"My uncle just got his payment for the month and they gave him £173 plus the money for his rent but that's £50 down so it needs to come out of his UC.

"How are you meant to live on £123 a month?"

BENEFIT SPOTLIGHT

Universal Credit (UC)

BY AMANDA ELEFThERIADES

Who is it for?



Universal Credit is for people on low income or who need help with their living costs. You could be working (including self-employed or part time) or be out of work.

You are entitled to UC if you are 18 or over but under State Pension age, live in the UK and have £16,000 or less in money, savings and investments. If you live with a partner their income/savings will effect how much you can claim and you will have to make a joint claim, even if your partner isn't eligible.

EU, EEA or Swiss citizens may also be eligible but may need settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

How much is it?



This will depend on your personal circumstances and if you are working. The standard single person allowance is £334.91 per month for people 25+. If you have children, have a disability or health condition or need help to pay the rent there are additional allowances.

If you're employed, how much Universal Credit you get depends on your earnings. For every £1 you earn your payment reduces by 55p. If you are responsible for a child or have a disability or health condition you are entitled to a 'work allowance' which means you can earn a certain amount before the UC payment is reduced.

Anything else I should know?



When you apply for Universal Credit you will be asked to sign a 'Claimant Commitment' in which you will agree to complete certain tasks such as write a CV, apply for an agreed number of jobs and attend training courses. You will be expected to attend regular appointments with a work coach. If these commitments are not met you will be sanctioned and the money will cut or stopped.

Universal Credit replaces: Housing Benefit; income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA); Child Tax Credit; Working Tax Credit; and Income Support.

How do I make a claim?



There are several stages involved in claiming Universal Credit, and usually it must be claimed online but it is advisable to seek support.

Citizens Advice Scotland provide a free Help to Claim Helpline available Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm on 0800 023 2581 or contact WD Citizens Advice Bureau on 0800 484 0136 or visit www.wdcab.co.uk/contact-us

If you live with a partner, you both need to create accounts. You cannot claim by yourself.

BENEFITS SUPPORT

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - Freephone 0800 484 0136 (Mon-Thu 8:30am - 4:30pm, Fri 8:30am-3pm)
www.wdcab.co.uk

WORKING4U MONEY - West Dunbartonshire Council's money advice service providing support with benefits, debt and money issues. Call 01389 776929 or email wrmass@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

HOME ENERGY SCOTLAND - help, advice and financial support to reduce heating bills
0808 8082282
www.homeenergyscotland.org

CHILD POVERTY ACTION GROUP - information about benefits in Scotland:
www.cpag.org.uk/scotland/welfare-rights/scottish-benefits

ENTITLED TO - free online benefits calculator blog: www.entitledto.co.uk plus www.entitledto.co.uk/help/coronavirus_help (benefits and coronavirus)

MONEY & DEBT ADVICE

ADVICE DIRECT SCOTLAND - provide free, independent advice via phone, SMS, web chat, email, online and through social media www.advisedirect.scot

CHRISTIANS AGAINST POVERTY - provide free debt help. Locally work in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Debt Centre to offer a home visiting service for people experiencing unmanageable debt.

The service is free and available to people of any faith or none. Martin Lewis of the Money Show is one of CAP's patrons.

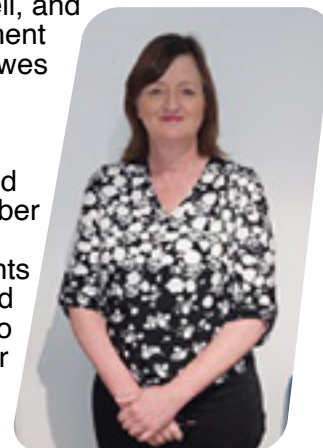
To access support call their Helpline on 0800 328 0006 (Mon-Thu 9:30am-5pm, Fri 9:30am-3:30pm) or visit www.capuk.org

NATIONAL DEBT LINE - charity giving free and independent debt advice over the phone and online. Call free on 0808 808 4000, Monday to Friday 9am - 8pm and Saturday 9:30 am - 1pm or to Webchat with an advisor visit www.nationaldebtline.org

STEPCHANGE - a debt charity providing free, confidential and expert debt advice and money guidance. They also campaign to reduce the risk of problem debt. To find out more visit www.stepchange.org

Tenancy Sustainment Support

My name is Fiona Campbell, and I am the Tenancy Sustainment Officer for Clydebank, Knowes and Dalmuir Park Housing Associations.



The project, which is funded until approximately December 2023, aims to identify vulnerable or in need tenants and their families who could be at risk of being unable to sustain their tenancy, either now or in the future.

This also helps tackle child poverty as many children benefit from the help.

I currently link in with 29 different partner agencies and can provide help on homeless prevention, food parcels and food support, fuel vouchers when available, the supply of white goods, secondhand furniture, employment opportunities, addiction issues, mental health support, support for people suffering or who have suffered domestic abuse, help people to access benefits, social isolation, and digital inclusion.

Last financial year 2021/22, 636 tenants were referred to the project. This provided financial support or the equivalent of over £40,000 to the tenants helped through the project.

Any tenant of Clydebank, Knowes or Dalmuir Park Housing Association can access the support I provide. You can contact me by email at fiona.campbell@clydebank-ha.org.uk or by calling 07494170426.

Check My Council Tax

Could you be paying too much Council Tax?

There are lots of reasons why you might be entitled to a discount or even fully exempt from paying Council Tax.

These include living alone, being a student, being disabled, being mentally impaired or in receipt of certain other benefits.

Also if your property is short-term unoccupied or unfurnished you could be entitled to a short-term discount.

Citizens Advice Scotland have an easy-to-follow online tool to check if you could be entitled to a discount or even exempt from Council Tax payments altogether.

Last year the service saved people an average of £380 on their annual bill.

Check if you could be entitled to a discount or exemption by visiting www.checkmycounciltax.scot/home

COMMUNITY IN CONTROL

BY ANGELA CLARK & PHOTO BY HARVEY SMART

It is time for change and that's what's happening in Alexandria as residents and traders set up their first Community Council in 25 years to make sure their voices are heard when it comes to making choices about their town.

Kevin Mason, project development manager for the Leamy Foundation, has helped facilitate the movement and hopes as many local people as possible will get involved as they play a crucial part in decisions and changes that are made.

He said: "We are trying to ensure people in Rosshead or anywhere else are aware that they matter and they have a voice.

"And if they are not happy with a lack of services in any area, not only can they voice their displeasure and suggest improvements, that can bring investment through funding from the community fund and others to put these services in place."

Local residents and traders are determined to improve services and have shown their interest by

attending and getting involved in the meetings that have been held so far.

Contact has also been made with local schools and teachers to encourage young people to get involved ensuring everyone has their say.

Resident Angela Caldwell who is also the Chairperson of Centre of Alexandria Tenants and Residents Association (CATRA), said: "I think this has been a long time coming.

"I think about the things that have been happening in the last couple of years. The community isn't getting to find out about things until it's too late. That needs to change.

"I think the only way we can change is if we set up a Community Council that will be listened to, that does have a voice, a proper voice that can stop these wrong things happening".



If you want to get involved and help create positive change in the area contact Alexandria Community Council alexandriacommunitycouncil@gmail.com or call 07950 615740.



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Jackie Baillie MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Dumbarton Constituency

Constituent Advice Surgeries:

Friday, August 19th:

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

Constituents can also contact me at any time by email to jackie.baillie.msp@parliament.scot or call 01389 734214.



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



THIS WOMAN'S WORK

BY CLARE SWEENEY

PHOTOS BY CHRIS MCCAUGHEY

In my house International Women's day is something we look forward to, we think about what we will do to raise awareness and share stories about the important and inspirational women in our lives.

Life as women can be tough and thanks to the pandemic the past two years have made it even tougher with women juggling home schooling, caring responsibilities and their own jobs.

Women have been almost twice as likely to lose their jobs during the pandemic, with many more women having to reduce hours or leave their role because of caring responsibilities.

The covid lockdowns also led to a huge increase in domestic violence against women.

I'm not naïve enough to think gender inequality can be cured overnight or even in 365 nights. I know so much work needs to be done to educate and challenge gender stereotyping.

I understand that will take years, but I don't think I'm asking too much to expect basic changes which make us feel safer.

My local authority – West

Dunbartonshire has the second worst rate of domestic abuse in Scotland, the area has also seen sexual assaults rise by almost 25% in the last year.



Women are scared and rightly so.

Despite two recent sexual assaults at my local train station it remains unmanned, the path leading down remains poorly lit and uneven.

Myself and many others have had to buy super-powered outside security lights to help light the way to our front door

because our new, not fit for purpose, energy [cough] money-saving, street lights don't do the job.

We heard countless times how Sarah Everard and many other woman shouldn't have been walking late at night, but with a local bus service barely existing after 6pm and taxi waits in excess of an hour the norm, what else can we do?

I'll say to you all what I said to my daughter, we don't accept it.

We make our voices heard, we share our stories, we teach ourselves and each other that we deserve better, and we don't stop until we get what we need to make us feel valued and safe and equal.

I'm part of Dumbarton West Community Events Group and before the pandemic we used to organise family days.

Last year we decided to try something different and applied to the Dumbarton West Community Grants for funding to run a women's self-defense workshop in our community.

We invited two local councillors who are passionate feminists to take part in the session. They both agreed there wasn't enough being done to keep

women safe and want to help change this.

The workshop was great, it gave us confidence. We realised you don't need to be a karate expert to protect yourself.

Robert and Barbara, from SKMS Krav Maga, gave us survival techniques - not avoidance tips - because we should all be able to be active participants in our lives without fear.

They also reinforced we all have the right to walk down the street, day or night, dressed how we want and being attacked is never your fault.

It was an intense day which was rounded off with a meditation and we all received a safety pack, funded by a donation from Unite's West Dunbartonshire branch.



But we also came away with something more. We had a desire to make this the start of something bigger for all the women and children in our

community.

We live in an area badly affected by poverty and disability, at the very least we should be entitled to reliable public transport and decent street lighting.

Because a woman's safety shouldn't come down to a good funding application.

If you would like to get involved with the Dumbarton West Events Group email Clare at rodregor@hotmail.com

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WINNING ENTRY
by Gerard Kane



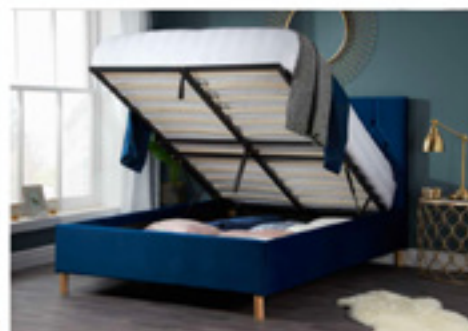
RUNNER UP by Peter Jarvis



RUNNER UP by Claire Love



COMPETITION ENTRY
by Yvonne Gallacher



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CYCLE FOR LIFE

By Amanda Eleftheriades

Photos by Marie Murphy

"The fear of imminent death motivated me to change."

Marie Murphy arrives at our office clad in tight-fitting cycling shorts and top, looking the very picture of health.

But her athletic physique hides a daily battle to control blood sugar levels which have the potential to kill her if not kept in check.

At the age of 23 Marie, then a journalist, now a psychologist from Dumbarton, was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes.

"Basically my pancreas is gubbed," she explains.

This vital organ produces insulin, needed to process the sugars we all have in our blood.

Today Marie receives her insulin via small pump inserts on her belly and arm. The higher her sugar intake, the more insulin she needs.

At the start of the pandemic diabetics were classed as high risk, with a significantly increased risk of dying from the virus.

Marie locked down to protect herself.

"The first year we didn't do anything or go anywhere, I was so scared I would die. I sat in, baked, ate and drank too much and put on weight," she remembers.

"The heavier you are the more insulin you need and the greater the risk of heart attack, high blood pressure, kidney problems and other health complications.

"Covid made me feel fragile and weak and that isn't who I am.

"People talk about 'diabetic heroes' but that isn't who we are either – we just have to maintain our health or we die, it's not heroic."

So, in January 2021 Marie decided to take control of her weight and her health, signing up to Diabetes UK's walking and cycling challenges.

In April she did the 500 mile Cycle Challenge, then walked 1million steps over the summer before completing a second Cycle Challenge in September.

And at the end of the year she decided to push herself a little further setting herself a personal challenge to cycle every day of 2022.

"People keep saying 'you are so lucky you managed to lose weight,' but I'm not lucky,

I had to make myself and it wasn't easy."

Doing the Walking and Cycling Challenges in 2021 Marie realised holding herself publicly accountable for her fitness regime made her stick to it.

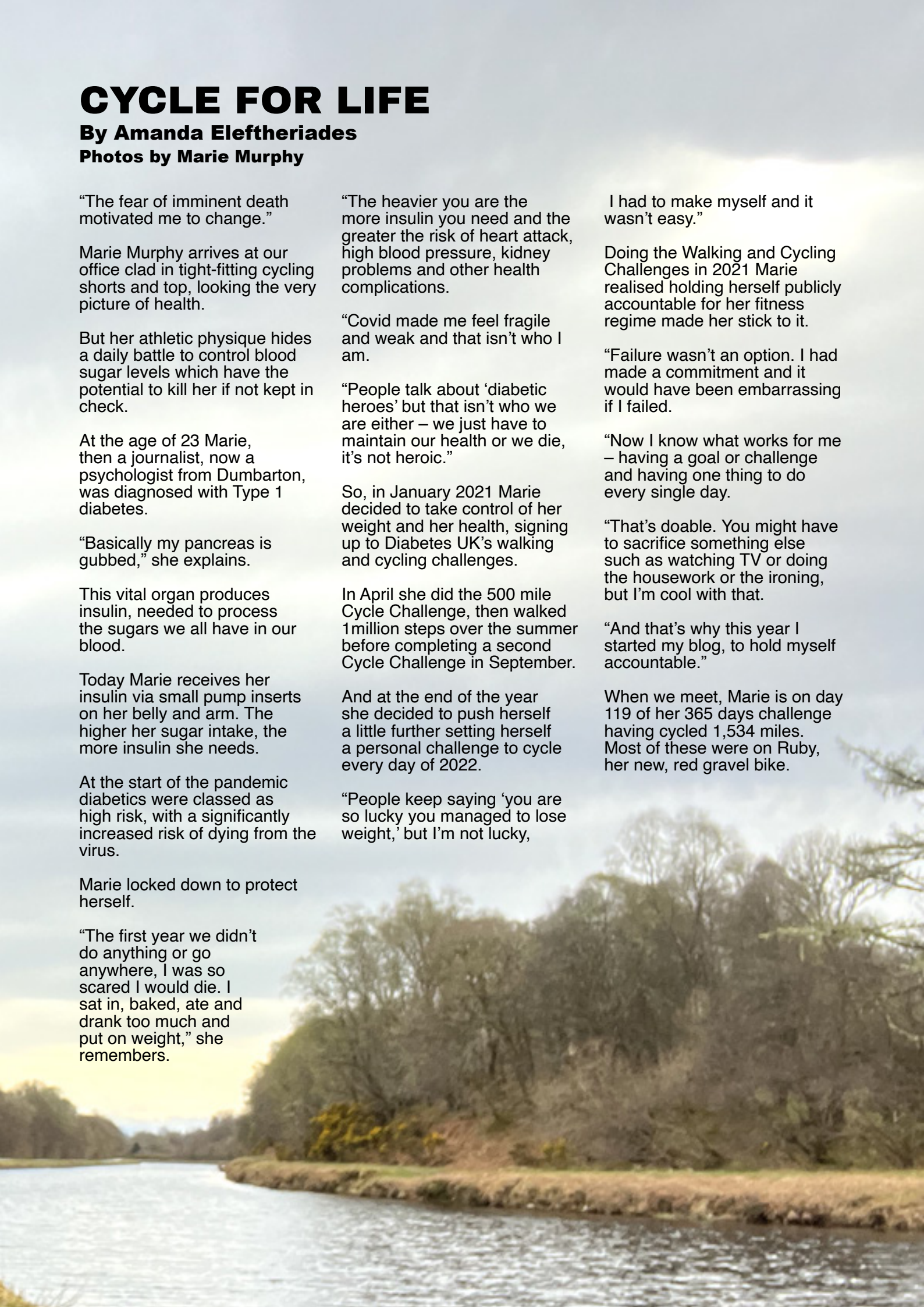
"Failure wasn't an option. I had made a commitment and it would have been embarrassing if I failed.

"Now I know what works for me – having a goal or challenge and having one thing to do every single day.

"That's doable. You might have to sacrifice something else such as watching TV or doing the housework or the ironing, but I'm cool with that.

"And that's why this year I started my blog, to hold myself accountable."

When we meet, Marie is on day 119 of her 365 days challenge having cycled 1,534 miles. Most of these were on Ruby, her new, red gravel bike.



In April she completed Diabetes UK's 500 miles Cycle Challenge for the second year.

And as well as losing weight she is enjoying dramatic changes in her health.

"In the past year I have reduced my insulin requirements by two thirds, had better blood sugar control, my resting heart rate is down, my blood pressure is down – all of these are risk factors for Type 1 diabetics.

"It has also been so good for my mental health.

"There's something really exhilarating about being off road and connected with nature – a real sense of freedom. It helps me get out of my head, this is what works for me.



"I'm feeling the benefits and the diabetic clinic was very happy with me."

Most of Marie's daily rides are along the local cycle path to Balloch or Bowling but she has also done a section of the John Muir Way in Helensburgh, cycled the Ayrshire coast from Largs to Irvine and completed part of the Great Glen Way.

To keep to her daily challenge she also takes Ruby with her to work, or hires a bike when she is further afield.

And as her job involves delivering suicide prevention training across the country, she has already explored cycle paths and hill tracks in Shetland and Oban.

With a camping trip to Gigha on the cards and plans for a return to the Great Glen, Marie hopes to clock up 5,000 miles before the year is out.

But she agrees it's not always plain sailing.

In April she completed 100km in a day with a return trip to the Falkirk Wheel but after a tumble just outside Falkirk, courtesy of an extendable dog lead, she found the journey home hard going.

In her blog she compares the long-distance cycle to her daily battle with diabetes.

"The mental challenge of doing a big ride is helped by chunking it out – only thinking about one section at a time. It's the same with diabetes. It's a long haul ride and there's no getting off, you just have to keep going."

And she says: "On bad days I'm still glad I did it, I'm not traumatised by them, it is just another day out cycling."

As well as looking after her own health, Marie is also motivated to complete the challenges to raise awareness of diabetes and highlight the support available from Diabetes UK.

"Lots of people don't understand the difference between Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes. Type 1 isn't caused by being overweight, it's caused by a crap pancreas.

"But whatever form of diabetes you have it's not as simple as just losing weight.

"I've been Type 1 diabetic for 26 years. No-one else can

manage my diabetes but you get given a lot of information and left to figure it out on your own, what works for you and your life.

"Doctors have a list of things that should be helpful but it's not easy, it's a constant battle in your head as well as in your body.

"You rarely get to forget you have diabetes and I don't think health professionals understand what that feels like. They just see the condition and know what should help, but it's a bit more complex than that."

Marie believes making small daily changes is the route to success.

"If you set yourself a massive goal you won't do it. Set yourself a tiny daily change that fits in with who you are.

"It's not easy. There will be days when you don't feel like it but that's how you change – on those days."

And the joy she gets on the good days more than makes up for the times she and Ruby head out into driving rain and blustery gales.

She adds: "The bike feels like a weapon against diabetes.

"I play little games with it – I know if I go at a certain speed it effects my blood sugar levels.

"I've had some happy, fast miles on Ruby. She takes me away and makes me feel free and a little bit invincible, which is cool."

Follow Marie's adventures on her blog - www.type1cyclogist.wordpress.com/



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contact us on 0141 941 3308 or info@ysortit.com

Wild About Swimming

Words and Photo by Jim Duncan

It's May and early morning sees a hardy bunch of souls gathering to get ready to go open water swimming aka 'wild swimming' or 'cold water therapy' (we used to just call it swimming) at Duck Bay in our National Park.

Swimming is a great form of exercise for all ages.

Suspension in water helps to alleviate stress put on bones and muscles during other forms of exercise and is an excellent full body work out.

And it seems that swimming and being outdoors is not just beneficial for your physical health, but it may also be beneficial for your mental wellbeing.

Annette and Gail visit Loch Lomond regularly and enjoy swimming in all seasons.

"Entering the water slowly, allowing your body to get used to the cold is exhilarating," said Annette. "It gives my mood a huge

boost the water soothes and calms me.'

Gail, who started wild swimming just over a year ago, added, "the time I spend in the water has a calming effect on me, listening to the waves lapping around me, or feeling their gentle movement as I float, enables me to relax fully.

"This reconnection with nature is invaluable."

Annette emphasises the importance of staying safe when wild swimming. "Don't swim alone," she said. "A friend will maximise your safety when wild swimming, and as a bonus it'll make your swim more enjoyable.

"If swimming with a friend isn't possible then trail a bright tow float behind you on a cord and wear a colourful swim hat – red is the most visible.

"Although they're not designed as buoyancy aids

and should never be relied on as such, tow floats also give you something to hang on to for a second if you need a rest.

"Some have waterproof pockets to put valuables in, or storage for water and snacks."

And she explained that what you do when you get out the water is just as important as what you do when you're in there.

"Listen to your body and don't stay in for too long. You will be at your coldest 10 minutes after you get out.

"The best way to see yourself through the 'afterdrop', when blood returns to the skin and cools you down, is to change immediately.

"Dry yourself off (pat, don't rub). Add lots of warm layers, and have a warm drink. Don't drive until you've warmed up.

Above all, stay safe & enjoy!"





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CULA AND THE GANG

BY ANDY DEVINE



The hard work of litter pickers Cula Murphy and members of the Friends of Leven River Valley has been recognised by Sustrans Scotland with a national award.

Inspired by an 'Adopt a Road' scheme in Ireland, Cula contacted West Dunbartonshire Council's Greenspace team to suggest setting up an 'Adopt a Mile' group along the River Leven.

While on her travels along the cycle path, Cula got to know several solo pickers and formed the Friends of Leven River Valley.

The group now has around 15 members who work in pairs or larger groups in more remote areas along the six miles of the River Leven cycle path between Dalreoch Station and Balloch Slipway.

They have been particularly helpful identifying locations where building waste and tyres are fly-tipped along the cycle path by unscrupulous individuals.

Cula was presented with a Celebrating Inspirational Volunteering Award by Hannah Taylor, Network Engagement officer with Sustrans.

Hannah said: "Sustrans are delighted to recognise Cula and the Friends of Leven River Valley for their inspirational volunteering.

"The group make an enormous, visible difference to their local paths, keeping them safe and beautiful for everyone to enjoy.



"It has been a pleasure to see the equipment the group received through our Love Your Network grant put to brilliant use.

"Thank you again to all of the group for the time they give, which in turn encourages more people to walk, wheel and cycle on clean and enjoyable local routes."

Cula said she was very humbled to be getting all this attention, pointing out the group do most of the 'heavy lifting'.

She said: "I walk a lot for enjoyment so seeing litter scattered about was so annoying - you just have to do something.

"When you see a large load of rubbish which a group of people have removed from the river, the banks, and the woods it does make you feel a bit more positive.

"You know litter will gather again which is such a shame, but there are so many people passionate about removing it and helping us to remove it.

"One group puts you in touch with another group and it all builds together - it just works!

"It does become compulsive though so leaving the litter pick at home is necessary sometimes, but you clock the bad spots anyway. Talking to the group I think we all feel the same".



The group is always looking for new methods of removing items from more remote stretches of the river and in recent months have trialled extra-long litter picks, four wheelbarrows, grappling hooks and a bicycle trailer.

They also support the Friends of Dumbarton Foreshore Litter Group, Loch Lomond Angling Improvement Association and Loch Lomond Fisheries Trust with events throughout the year.

These included a two-day event along the Leven with teams from the Friends groups, Fisheries Trust and Angling Club sited at regular intervals along the river to clear rubbish. Large items were brought ashore on boats by the Angling Club then transported to skips provided by WDC waste services.

Andy Devine, WDC Community Greenspace Officer, commented: "As individuals the group members have achieved a lot in their own right, I feel that having someone like Cula to link it all together and develop partnerships at a local and national level has made a bigger difference in their local area than they would have achieved if working on their own."

If you are interested in supporting these events or want to find out more about volunteering in the West Dumbarton area please contact 01389 608413 or email wdc.greenspace@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

WASTE OPPORTUNITIES

By Angela Clark



Recycling has become a big part of everyday life.

We are more aware of the harm discarded rubbish causes to the environment, our well-being and wildlife.

People are always looking for ways to help the battle against pollution. Sometimes it takes just one idea to set the ball rolling, for a ripple effect.

That's exactly what happened to Old Kilpatrick resident Alison Silvester who began recycling when her daughter was a baby.

She was inspired by an initiative run by West Dunbartonshire Council, which provided vouchers for free cloth nappy packs.

Alison said: "I thought I'll just get the pack from the Council. Then I ended up using reusable wipes and then started looking at shampoo bars instead of plastic bottles and stuff like that.

"It's been like a wee knock-on effect from there.

"When I heard about TerraCycle, who run a number of recycling schemes, I thought that's brilliant, it would be good to recycle crisp packets because we eat so many crisps and there wasn't anywhere doing that."

Alison initially set up recycle boxes in the local libraries. However, when they closed during lockdown the recycling came to a halt.

So, she contacted Old Kilpatrick Food Parcels and they agreed to set up boxes outside their Community Hub with 24-hour access.

She said: "If I send eight kilos of crisp, popcorn, nuts, and pretzel packets, I earn points to donate to my chosen charity.

"It doesn't make a lot of money and I'm not going to change the world by recycling a few crisp packets. But it's a few less going into landfill and it's a few less blown around the Saltings or the parks."

Alison has now added recycling bins for biscuit, cracker and cake wrappers; Pringles tubes and even coffee bags and sachets. She hopes to encourage others to recycle and has contacted local schools to get the kids involved.

She said: "My children are really sensitive to environmental issues because they hear it from me.

"I'm a vet and the number of dogs we treat with cut pads because someone chucked their bottle into the river instead of putting it in the bin is infuriating.

"So, if they see a bit of rubbish they'll say, 'that's not good, what if a swan eats it or a fox gets its legs stuck in it'.

"I'd rather they think like that, than think it's alright to chuck rubbish over their shoulder. If everybody just did that tiny thing, it may just help."



**TO HELP RID YOUR AREA OF SNACK PACKETS CONTACT
TERRACYCLE DALMUIR AND OLD KILPATRICK ON FACEBOOK
OR FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.TERRACYCLE.COM**

Photo Treasure Hunt

By Harvey Smart

Take a picture of a tree

TIP - Think about the perspective you're shooting from. Use a low angle to get an interesting view of the tree and fill the frame with the shape of its sprawling branches.



Take a picture of an insect

TIP - get as close as your camera allows to capture the tiny details of your subject. Many phones these days have multiple lenses, sometimes one of which is a close up or "macro" lens.

Take a picture of an old building

TIP - Think about the symmetry in your subject. Use the lines in the architecture to produce a visually pleasing composition.



Take a picture of a flower

This time of year, many plants are blooming. Follow the bees and you might just get two items on this list in one!

TIP - think about how you use colour to really make your image stand out.

Take a photo at sunset

TIP - Photographers crave the short period before sunset when the sun is low in the sky for the beautifully soft, warm light quality it produces. It's known as 'the golden hour'.





Take a picture of a bridge

TIP - Make use of leading lines to help draw the viewer into your image.

Take a landscape image of a hill

TIP - Use foreground. Think about what you include in your picture. When shooting something big like a mountain, having something in the foreground helps illustrate scale.



Take a picture of a loch

There's no shortage of lochs in the area, you can even try to catch a shot of some of the wildlife that call the water their home.

TIP - Think about the rule of thirds. Often, you don't want your horizon line directly in the centre of your frame. Instead, try composing the shot with it either a 1/3 or 2/3 up the frame.

Take a picture of a farm animal

We're lucky enough here in West Dunbartonshire to be near many farms.

TIP - Be careful when shooting in situations like this! Having a camera between you and your subject can often create a false sense of separation from it and potential danger. But a large grumpy animal won't see the difference!



Take a picture of a waterfall

TIP - Often as photographers we forget to take in our surroundings.

Put the camera down for a minute and appreciate the moment!





Creative R 'n' R

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY JENNY WATSON

The Vale of Leven Mature Art group has run since the 1980s. They currently meet in the new Dalmonach Community Centre in Bonhill.

Tutors Ivor Jackson and Dennis Day take a relaxed approach to guiding local novice artists, encouraging them to try new styles and develop existing skills.



Q: When did the group begin?

Ivor: "I don't know exactly, I saw an advert in the newspaper around 1982. They were looking for an art tutor for the group as the previous tutor died. It was based in the Chest, Heart & Stroke club in Renton then. I've been painting since the 1960s after my wife bought me oil paints and I enrolled in night school at Vale of Leven Academy. I am not a trained tutor, all I am passing on is what I have learned myself. I didn't think I would still be here today."



Q: What do you love most about the group?

John: "People are helpful and very friendly. You get good help and tuition here so I am very proud of my work. We've been on a few trips too over the years which is great."

Cuthbert: "The group provide the materials which meant I could try a few different styles until I found one I liked. It gets you out meeting other people interested in art. There's companionship and a bit of bantering with other members. Ivor and Dennis are great tutors, I've learned a lot."





Q: Tell me about the sessions.

Sandra: "We meet in the community centre every Friday from 10am – 2pm. Our members work on their paintings or get advice from Dennis or Ivor if they want. We have acrylic, watercolour, water-based oil paints and pastels. There's a great atmosphere here. Everybody helps everybody out. There's no competition or anything. It gets people together, gets them out the house, especially if they are living on their own or isolated. There's always a cup of tea and someone to talk to."



Q: Who can join the group?

Dennis: "Everyone in the group is over 50 years old, this creates a relaxed environment as everyone is here for a little R'n'R and to have some time away from their everyday lives. Anyone with an interest in art and a desire to learn is welcome to come along and give it a try."

The group currently have a few spaces for new members. To find out more call Dalmonach Community Centre on 01389 758208



**Your MP, working for
West Dunbartonshire**

Here to help...

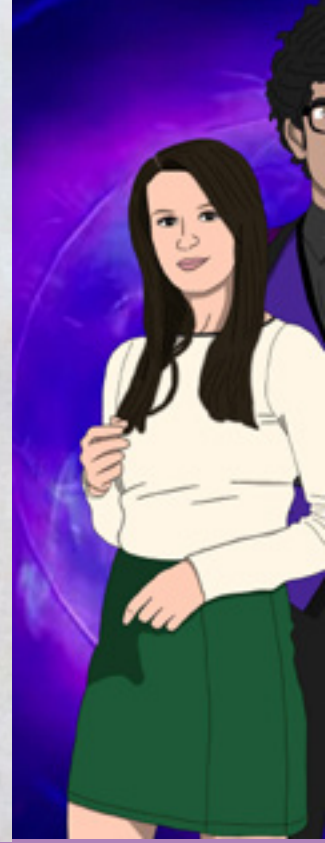
Across Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale, I have provided advice & support to more than 1,000 residents in the past year.

If you'd like an appointment at my next in-person or weekly virtual advice surgery, please get in touch. I can be contacted by email to martin.docherty.mp@parliament.uk, or call my local constituency office on 0141 952 2988.

Thanks, Martin



**Martin Docherty-Hughes
MP for West Dunbartonshire**



Creative Superpowers

Words by Angela Clark,
photos and artwork by Louise Kane

Louise Kane is a young woman who refuses to let anything stand in her way.

She faced many struggles throughout her teenage years because she is on the autism spectrum, which affects her speech and ability to communicate easily.

Louise explained: "People looked at me as if I'm weird no matter what I do or say. They would laugh at me just for the way I talked."

It was when she changed schools and started at Kilpatrick School that her creative superpowers were uncovered.

"Kilpatrick School was so different and helpful to me," she said.

"The support I received in the school encouraged me to join a crafting group run

externally by teachers. That's how I got into jewellery-making.

"It was tricky at first. But I managed it with some help to begin with and then it became easier and I just did it on my own."

Louise now sells her jewellery and art on her Facebook page called Louise's Imaginations and is a regular at local craft fairs.

Her mum always encourages her daughter to keep doing what she loves and helps source materials for her creations.

She has never stopped believing in her daughter or trying to get the right support for her.

Maria Kane said: "Before Louise went to Kilpatrick I was looking for high schools

that would give her as normal a life as possible. I chose one based on the outreach and auxiliary support they could provide.

"Unknown to me they removed that support after a year and a half and it went downhill for her after that.

"So I decided to move Louise to Kilpatrick School. In hindsight I wish she'd gone there sooner.

"As a mum you try your best, I just wanted her to fit in, going there was the best decision for her."

Having her creativity recognised helped Louise's confidence grow, her speech improved and she went on to further education and studied art at college for three years.

Although she faced



more bullying there, she completed her course and kept doing what she loved.

She said: “Making jewellery for people helps me cope with my autism better. When I am making things I feel like myself.

“It’s the same with art. I just love drawing, especially characters from my favourite movies or TV series. And also I’m a gear designer. I love design ideas for web work.”

Louise and her mum believe her success is down to the support from the National Autistic Society, Kilpatrick School and her Crafting Together group which she still attends at the Titan Crane.

Her mum said: “We are so proud of her and how far she has come. I often wonder

what her life would be like today without all this support.

“There is more awareness now about Aspergers than years ago. I would say to anyone who has a child with a disability, fight for them because if you don’t stick up for your child, they’ll just get forgotten about.”

If you are interested in buying Louise’s jewellery or commissioning artwork you can message her Facebook page Louise’s Imaginations.

She also has a Youtube channel and has made a video for anyone who is being bullied on how to get help <https://youtu.be/RjXDOro9MNw>

About Asperger syndrome

People with Asperger syndrome see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. If you have Asperger syndrome, you have it for life – it is not an illness or disease and cannot be ‘cured’. Often people feel Asperger syndrome is a fundamental aspect of their identity.

There are around 700,000 autistic people in the UK – more than 1 in 100. They come from all nationalities and cultural, religious and social backgrounds.



Tommy Crocket

When I started planning Clydesider magazine I knew if it was to be a success I needed the help of people in West Dunbartonshire who were as passionate about the local community as I am.

Tommy Crocket was one such person.

I had the privilege and pleasure of knowing Tommy for some time and when I went to see what he thought of the idea of a positive news magazine for WD he offered not just words of encouragement but also a list of potential helpers and the offer to contribute content for the publication.

He was one of our very first volunteers, writing articles before the magazine was even published and when we did get that first issue out in September 2016 he was there with his film camera rolling, capturing our launch night for posterity.

And it wasn't just Tommy who had our back all the way. His wife Elspeth was one of our first Board members, only resigning last year so she had more time to care for Tommy as his health worsened.

There are insufficient words to describe what a loss Tommy Crocket is to the community, for Clydesider was just one of the many local organisations he devoted his time and energy to.

As an active member of the Dumbarton Cine and Video Club he was responsible for establishing, collecting and capturing an extensive film archive of the area, leaving behind a lasting legacy of communal memories for us all.

He was also an active member of the Lennox Heritage Society and had previously been involved with Haldane Film Society, Renton Craigandro and Renton youth football teams and the Strathleven Artizans.

Although not a Son of the Rock, being born in Glasgow's east end, his passion for the area seemed limitless and he was an inspiration to so many.

It was unsurprising therefore that there was barely standing room at his service in Cardross Crematorium on May 5 where Elspeth and his children Donald and Jennifer paid heartfelt tribute to this giant of the community.

RIP Tommy.

Amanda Eleftheriades, Editor



Reflections on Change

by Mary Irvine

A word that has many differing meanings, depending on context and situation.

My first thought when thinking about 'change' was the oft repeated question in shops in the olden days, before cards when actual money was used: 'Have you anything smaller?'

Long forgotten coins, the farthing with its wren (NOT the smallest bird in Britain – that's the goldcrest), the ship ha'penny, the large and heavy penny, the brass, many sided thre'pence, the silver coloured tanner, the shilling, florin, half-a crown. Crowns are now usually minted for commemorative occasions but are still legal tender.

Then we had paper money - notes – a red ten shilling one, a green pound one, a fiver, a brown tenner. There were also higher denominations but these never entered my world.

I do remember the black/white £5 notes that were only printed on one side. It had to be folded into four to fit Dad's wallet. These fivers are now valued at about £100 each, depending on condition.

The only time I remember Dad winning on the football pools was on the three draws. He received a fiver. I was in primary school and was very pleased with the blue blazer which that fiver bought.

Now people can spend up to £100 with the tap of a plastic card. We can now pay bills online, move money 'around'. Gone are the days of queuing to pay the various utilities. Real money is rarely used. Jars, tins, bottles, charity boxes are used to dispose of unwanted small change.

Other definitions came flooding in.

We change gear in a car, change clothes, traffic lights change colour – so do we at times, outlooks change, opinions change, we change trains, seats, love the 'change' of bells, the list goes on, all reflecting the richness of the English language.

Change

**Certainty in uncertainty
Create ripples and waves
The unseen shifts
Come into view**

**Small choices
Creating noises
From whispers to roars
Collective voices**

**From lone wolves
To local groups
Partnerships, friendships
So many different
unfolding relationships**

**Everything counts
In all amounts
Positivity over passivity
As we rise, stand and sway**

**Do not be silent
Do not be lost
Do not be deflated
Do not be off**

**We can be bold
We can be strong
We can be calm
We can be still**

**Marching to the sound of
beating hearts
We find our own sweet way
To spin the wheels of
change
Keep us moving forward
fluidly**

By Jacqueline Bruce



Helping out at Old Kilpatrick Community Hub gave John Spence a much greater reward than he could ever imagine.

The community space made such an impact on him when he first got involved that he wanted to do something to help.

So the talented young musician offered to share his musical skills and started running a weekly guitar class in the Hub. He also donated some of the money he earned from the lessons back to OKFP.

John said: "This community place has brought so many of us together.

"Last Christmas we did a panto and my cousin and I got to spend more time together. That all started because of the Hub.

"This one place has influenced my life and so many others', you feel you just have to give something back."

As well as teaching guitar, using his skills to make an impact on the lives of adults and children, John gives up any other spare time he has between studies to help at events and activities that take place in the Hub.

He added: "Now and then there's an 80s night or something on and I'll come along to help out and socialise.

"It's very therapeutic and helps me get a break from my studies and it's good mentally as well."

Guitar lessons take place on a Thursday and Friday in OKFP Community Hub. For more information contact OKFP on 07368496836.



WALK THIS WAY

The Saltings

Words & Photos by Jim Duncan

During Covid lockdown over the past two years I visited West Dunbartonshire's only Local Nature Reserve at Old Kilpatrick, The Saltings.

A 19 hectares reserve of regenerated woodland and meadow with a well constructed path network and interpretation panels giving the history of the area as well as the wildlife you might see.

Nature has been shown to support our mental health and wellbeing through improving mood, reducing stress, grounding us in the present, engaging with our senses and feeling positive, a good walk can do wonders for your mental health.

The two main routes are way-marked, the willow route and the swan route and the marshy grassland is home to hundreds of wild orchids with butterflies like the peacock and orange tip; also common blue damselflies, four-spotted chaser dragonflies, and bird species like the grey heron, cormorant, oystercatcher and reed bunting.

On the many benches sit-a-while and listen to the bird calls and songs filling the air, enjoy the views down the River Clyde. Dumbarton Rock can be seen in the distance.





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ko-fi.com/clydesider/

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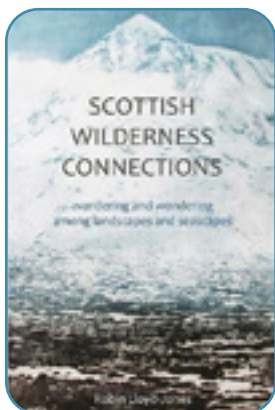
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READER RECOMMENDATIONS

'SCOTTISH WILDERNESS CONNECTIONS' BY ROBIN LLOYD-JONES

BOOK REVIEW BY MARY IRVINE



Helensburgh-based author Robin Lloyd-Jones has written novels for adults and children, short stories, non-fiction, radio dramas and scripts for short films, as well as a great number of articles for the media.

His list of awards is impressive and includes two Booker nominations for 'Lord of the Dance', which also won the BBC Bookshelf First Novel Award, and 'The Dreamhouse'.

His comprehensive, and much acclaimed, biography of W.H. Murray, 'The Sunlit Summit' won the Saltire Society Research Book of the Year and his book 'Autumn Voices', celebrating creativity in later life, led to the successful website of the same name. (www.autumnvoices.co.uk)

In his latest book, 'Scottish Wilderness Connections: Wandering and Wondering Among Landscapes and Seascapes', the author takes us to the wondrous beauty and diversity of Scotland, to places most of us can only dream of visiting.

He draws from a wealth of lifetime experience and adventure. Through his ability to use language emotively, in prose, in different forms of poetry, he displays and conveys an acute awareness of the natural world, on both land and sea.

From 'A Sense of Place', to 'Magical Sea Caves and Minotaurs' Lairs' there is so much to praise but, if you love Scotland, you will enjoy all the pieces in it. Please do not ignore the introduction. It is the author speaking to us all.

'Scottish Wilderness Connections' is available from <https://www.amazon.co.uk> or <https://www.lomondbooks.com>

WHERE'S GOOD FOR FOOD?

WORDS & PHOTOS

BY OWEN & HELEN MCGUIGAN



Helen and I visited the Dalmuir Barclay Church café today.

We received a very friendly welcome from Liz, Adrienne and Catherine and they directed us to the café room, where we were served by Sarah McGrory, a peripatetic pastor who helps in the café.

Visitors can enjoy coffee, tea and various cakes and scones which are all free (contributions welcome).

We tucked into tea, coffee, doughnuts and cakes and had a great chat with Sarah.

The café is open on a Wednesday and a Friday from 11am till 2pm and everyone is welcome. There was a steady flow of people popping in, and we sat and chatted with them.

The Barclay Church also has 'The Pantry', run by volunteers where people can buy 10 items for £2. The volunteers help with the selection process, explaining everything.

There is a great selection of groceries, toiletries, cleaning products, pet food, nappies and baby food to choose from.



There is also a freezer and fridge to select items from.

In the main hall, they also have a free Baby Bank run by Gillian, where anyone can come and pick up baby and child clothes with volunteers to help them select.

Both The Pantry and Baby Bank are open on a Wednesday and Friday from 11am – 2pm.

There is also a quiet Contemplation Room where anyone can sit with their thoughts, light a candle and relax.



All in all, it was a great visit and Helen and I will be visiting again. It was great to see so many people doing wonderful things for the local community, it gladdens the heart.

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

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)

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THEME: SYMMETRY

PRIZE: £25

CLOSING DATE: AUGUST 7

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CLYDESIDER POETRY COMPETITION

THEME: LOCAL HISTORY

PRIZE: £25

CLOSING DATE: AUGUST 7

EMAIL ENTRIES TO:

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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.

MAGIC CLYDE

BY STEVEN HASTINGS

Clyde has been learning a few magic tricks but his wee dog is not very impressed!



CLYDESIDER'S JUST FOR FUN QUIZ

- 1 Which Scottish group headlined a concert in Balloch Park on June 22 1991?
- 2 Built by local runner Lachie Stewart, the model of which paddle steamer can be seen in the foyer of Frasers/Sports Direct at Loch Lomond Shores?
- 3 In what year was Clydebank Town Hall opened?
- 4 Where on the banks of Loch Lomond is the statue of the late climber, author & broadcaster Tom Weir, who was originally from Glasgow but lived in Gartocharn for many years?
- 5 How many kilometres is the Levensgrove parkrun?
- 6 What was the building, which is now the Vale Masonic Hall, originally built as?
- 7 What height in feet is the Titan Crane?
- 8 In what year was the Carman Fort discovered in aerial photographs by Dr K A Steer?

*Answers on opposite page

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WHAT'S ON IN WD

THE VILLAGE STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

Hear local poet Raymond Wilson chat lyrics on leaves and love when he premieres his storytelling show 'I Hope Your Flowers Bloom' at the CCA in Glasgow on July 9 as part of the Village Storytelling Festival. His story of ancient plants and modern relationships explores self-worth, healthy masculinity and working class access to nature.

To book your ticket visit
www.villagestorytelling.org.uk/festival

MAID OF THE LOCH CHARIOTS OF STEAM EXHIBITION

Model ships made by Lachie Stewart - exhibition runs from May 21 to November 6. Or why not see the restoration work being carried out on the Maid firsthand with a one hour hard hat tour of the vessel.

For more information and to book a tour visit
www.maidoftheloch.org

GROWING WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

Guest speaker Gillian Neil, WDC's Bio Diversity Officer, will be giving a question and answer session about Pollinator Corridors and the possibility of one in West Dunbartonshire at the next Growing WD meeting.

To find out more come along to the meeting on August 17 from 7 - 8pm in CATRA Hall, 5 Alexander Street, Alexandria G83 0PG.

Questions can be sent in advance to Mylene Colquhoun at mylene@theleamyfoundation.com or asked on the night.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE EPILEPSY SUPPORT GROUP

Meet on the first Monday of every month. The next meeting will be Monday June 13 between 10-12 at the offices on Kilbowie Road, at the top of Clydebank Shopping Centre next to the taxi rank.

C A M E O

Come And Meet Each Other for a coffee afternoon on the 2nd Monday of the month, 2-3.30pm at the Tower Centre, Melfort Avenue in Clydebank. Everyone is welcome to come along enjoy home baking, tea and coffee and a friendly chat. It is run by local volunteers to serve the community and costs £3.

OLD KILPATRICK COMMUNITY HUB

Pantry drop in every Monday - Friday from 12 - 4pm where you can help yourself to food items, enjoy a selection of homemade soup, sandwiches, homebaking and a natter in the Chatty Cafe. The foodbank is also open, these services are free or donation if you wish.

There is also a free Kids Club from 3.30pm - 4.30pm every week day with a range of arts, crafts and baking activities on offer. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

HEARTFELT THERAPIES

are running a series of free well-being workshops at Clyde Shopmobility in Clydebank Shopping Centre. The monthly sessions run by professional therapists are designed to help overcome anxiety, stress, isolation and loneliness. Future dates are June 17, July 15 and August 12 from 10.30am - 12.30pm and a light lunch is available after each session.

To book a place call 07515 962066 or 07967 152675 or pop into Clyde Shopmobility at 30 Sylvania Way, Clydebank Shopping Centre.

PAGE 46 QUIZ ANSWERS
1. Running
2. The Maid of the Loch
3. 1901
4. Balmoyle
5. 5K
6. A girl's boarding school
7. 150ft
8. 1951

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)

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