

FEBRUARY 2023

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

North Ayrshire Community Benefit News



Happy New Year and welcome to the February edition of the Community Benefits Newsletter!

2022 was another busy year in community benefits world at North Ayrshire Council, and we're looking forward to the opportunities we've got to continue to make a positive change for local people and businesses in 2023.

As ever, if you would like to get in touch with us to discuss your community benefits commitments, please contact Community Benefits Officer Karen Hayburn on khayburn@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

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Community Benefits and Cost of Living

You will all be aware of the impact of the rapidly rising cost of living on your own budgets, both at work and home. The cost of living crisis has had a significant impact on North Ayrshire's communities who have already seen things become more challenging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several community projects who work with those at the sharp end of the cost of living crisis have received support from contractors over the last few months, and we'd like to kick off this issue by thanking them for their support.

GMC Corsehill donated £250 each to two of our community food larders; Cranberry's Community Larder in Kilwinning and The Village Larder in West Kilbride. Offering a dignified alternative to the foodbank, the larders are run by volunteers and offer their members access to £12-£15 of food for £4 per visit, helping to stretch budgets further and top up the weekly shop.

Whitewall Marketing donated a number of new school uniforms to the Uniform Swap Shop run by Garnock Valley Youth Forum. The swap shop is run by and for young people in Beith, Kilbirnie and Dalry and offers good quality pre-loved school uniforms for free to help ease the cost of the school day.

EKOS and **Clyde Design** both came forward to support our Christmas ask for support, with donations of funding being distributed to 3 groups across the local authority to support their Christmas campaigns. Promoting Kilwinning received £200 from Clyde Design and £50 from EKOS; and EKOS also made a £50 donation each to Saltcoats Community Action Group and Irvine Neighbourhood Youth Forum. These donations enabled the provision of gifts and selection boxes for children at the groups' Christmas events.



Getting work experience back on track

Giving our young people the best possible start in the world of work makes a significant difference to their future opportunities. After several years of interrupted school work placements due to COVID-19, we have more students than ever keen to take part in work experience placements in a variety of sectors. This includes senior pupils who missed out on their opportunity to undertake a placement during S3 or S4 and are looking for support ahead of university applications.

If you have unfulfilled offers of placements as part of your community benefits commitments, or are unsure how you could support young people in North Ayrshire, please get in touch with us to talk through your options by emailing khayburn@north-ayrshire.gov.uk

Irvine-based construction contractor **McLaughlin** donated 40 selection boxes to the Equal Supported Employment Programme (you may remember them from a previous edition of the newsletter!), and shared out with their learners as a festive treat.

Spotlight on: Saica Natur



Saica Natur are an international waste management business part of the Saica Group a paper, packaging and recycling and waste management business. Saica Natur collect North Ayrshire Council's paper/card recycling from the Irvine depot for onward sorting and reprocessing at their Paper Mill in Manchester.

Saica's processing site is located outside Ayrshire in Croy, North Lanarkshire so it can be challenging to deliver community benefits like work placements, apprenticeships or job creation for North Ayrshire residents due to the need for transportation to the site. This has pushed Clare Tolland, Commercial Director, to take a different approach to delivering Saica Natur's community benefit commitments, working closely with the Community Benefits Officer and other staff at the Council to identify opportunities to support.

A particularly impactful and ongoing project has been the partnership developed with MCR Pathways, a SCIO who work with care experienced young people in schools, matching them with an adult mentor who is there to support them to find, grow and use their talents. While MCR Pathways are a charity, they are also delivering their programme in secondary schools in North Ayrshire as a contractor, and therefore in the unique position of being able to contribute towards and benefit from community benefits!

Clare has been volunteering as a mentor for an S3 pupil at Irvine Royal Academy since September 2022, following completion of her training and completing the relevant background checks and vetting. Meeting weekly, Clare hopes to "continue to support the young person throughout the remainder of their school career." Alan Wade, Operations Director at MCR Pathways said "it is fantastic to have the support of Clare who is already making a difference to her young person. We are looking forward to seeing their relationship grow over the coming months and hopefully years. The community benefits portal has proven to be a valuable source of support for MCR and many other organisations that have registered a wish."

However, that's not where it stops for Clare and the Saica Natur staff!



Further wishes from the list are currently in the pipeline for delivery in early 2023, including support from one of Saica Natur's engineers to repair a section of damaged fencing for Skelmorlie's Secret Bunker; and a donation of IBCs (water storage containers) was delivered to Garnock Valley Allotment Association in December, solving an ongoing issue of water supply to the site, and enabling the growers to make better use of Ayrshire's bountiful supplies of rainwater! Finally, Clare is engaging directly with our STEM Co-ordinator to develop a resource pack for primary and secondary science pupils, which is hoped to be piloted for a launch in the new school year. Stay tuned for updates!

If you're in a similar position to Saica Natur and struggling to deliver 'traditional' community benefits due to geography, we hope these examples have given you some inspiration! We are always happy to discuss your business' expertise and work with you to find ways to invest that in local projects, so please get in touch for a chat on communitybenefits@north-ayrshire.gov.uk!"

Community Benefits Wishlist: New Year, New Wishes

We're kicking off the second year of our wish list with a bang and lots more opportunities for you to select from to support our fantastic community and voluntary organisations in North Ayrshire.



We know that the cost of living crisis is impacting the business sector and you may have additional pressures to contend with when it comes to delivering against your community benefits commitments. We are available to discuss your current capacity to deliver community benefits and find opportunities that meet your needs as well as those of our groups. If you would like to discuss any of the wishes below (or any of the others on the list!), please get in touch on communitybenefits@north-ayrshire.gov.uk.

- **Hayocks Tenants and Residents Association:** looking for support to clear the grounds around the community centre and transform it into a community garden, or donations of wood to create planters for growing produce for their popular community cafe
- **Garnock Valley Allotment Association:** looking for a noticeboard for their site, ideally 6ftx3ft made of wood with opening glass windows
- **Eglinton Community Gardens (TACT Garden):** looking for a range of materials to be donated, including tarps/plastic lining, gravel and 100 2x2 slabs to enable the creation of a tool store
- **Castlepark Primary Parent Council:** run a variety of initiatives to reduce the cost of the school day. They are seeking the donation of a storage unit (e.g. IKEA Kallax) for their uniform swap shop and looking for financial support for their breakfast club
- **Ardrossan Winton Rovers 2014s Football Team:** looking for financial support for the team to participate in the Blackpool Football Tournament in April, or donations of raffle prizes to support their fundraising efforts
- **St Palladius Primary Parent Council:** 22 iPads were recently received to support after school and outdoor learning, and the parent council are looking for donations of cases to protect them when they're used by children outside and during a range of activities.
- **Arran Squash Club:** a new club on the island who are getting busier, the squash club are looking for donations of (or the funding for) some racquets, racquet bags and some balls for new players to use while they learn
- **Irvine Neighbourhood Youth Forum:** seeking donations of funding to support their afterschool Chit Chat and Chill and mocktail bar projects, which offer young people a safe place to go in the evenings with free food provision. They're also looking for donations of materials to put up shelving in their Legacy Youth Centre in Irvine's Bridgegate to help organise the space and their resources.
- **Eglinton Growers Allotments:** a community run allotment site, the Growers are looking for a new battery for their defibrillator (a Cardiac Science model, Powerheart G5); any financial donations towards their community Easter Egg Hunt to ensure it's free for the local children; or any support to help with the cost of dealing with an issue of flooding on site. They are happy to discuss any combination of a man and digger, drainage materials, Type 1 or road planeings with an appropriate contractor.

