SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

UPDATE

south AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CREATING A VIBRANT, DYNAMIC AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY JULY 2007

Pic by Susan Jones

SOUTH Ayrshire Council's new Leader, Councillor Hugh Hunter, Conservative Party (middle) is pictured with SNP Leader Councillor Nan McFarlane and Labour Leader Councillor Douglas Campbell... working together for the benefit of the people of South Ayrshire.

Working together

FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL

THE Council elections of 3 May 2007 may be a distant memory, but the results have changed the way South Ayrshire Council looks and how we do business.

No longer are there only two parties - now there are three, Conservative, Labour, and the Scottish National Party, and there is one Independent councillor.

We still have 30 councillors and they can be seen on page 5. You will notice many new faces among those elected.

The Conservative Party leads the Council but all councillors have agreed they will work together for the benefit of all South Ayrshire residents.

To do this, they agreed that the way the Council does business should change and you can read more about this on pages 4 and 5.

AT A GLANCE: ELECTIONS 2007

Conservative 12
Labour 9
SNP 8
Independent 1

The Leaders of the Labour and SNP Parties and the Independent councillor issued a joint statement welcoming the new structure. They said: "We are delighted the new system is in place and we fully support the decision making structure. We are all committed to working within the new framework and we're pleased that the new set up allows for much clearer examination of the decisions being made. It's certainly going to be an exciting and challenging time."

Councillor Hugh Hunter, South Ayrshire Council's new Leader commented: "There is no doubt there are interesting times ahead. I am delighted the councillors have made such a positive statement on working together in co-operation for the benefit of all South Ayrshire residents. I am pleased to be playing such a significant part in this."

In this issue of UPDATE we will explain some of those changes and we will also introduce you to your local councillors. As in previous years, we also set out how your Council performed during the last year, featuring areas of service matching those in our 2007 calendar.

Turn to page 4 to learn more about how the new look Council is working.

Reporting to YOU

THIS issue of UPDATE is part of South Ayrshire Council's arrangements for reporting on our performance. It also brings you up to speed on the new Council structure following the May elections.

In 2007, our calendar set out an overview of some of the services we provide and how we have performed delivering these.

This newsletter gives more detailed information about these services and lets you know where to find out more information. Our aim in delivering these services is to be vibrant, dynamic and sustainable – and this is reflected in the way we have presented this issue of UPDATE.

Our 2008 calendar is due out at the start of December and, like last year, it will be available from a range of locations, including Council offices.

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Get in the swing in South Ayrshire

THE Council aims to give every nine-year-old the chance to experience golf by 2009 through a primary school coaching programme.

THE Council owns and operates eight golf courses in South Ayrshire. They are maintained to a high standard and are well used by local people and visitors to the area.

Almost 175,000 rounds of golf took place on our courses last year. A range of charges, including season tickets and passes has been designed to meet the requirements of all golfers. There is a juvenile golf season ticket to make playing on the Council courses accessible to young players.

Keen to continually improve the way in which the courses operate, we have introduced an electronic booking system. Simply log onto the Council's website at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/golf bring up the electronic booking form, select your course and send your form in.

South Ayrshire Council in partnership with 'clubgolf' has made a strong commitment to junior golf development in South Ayrshire through the introduction of the South Ayrshire Junior Golf Action Plan.

The Council aims to give every nine year old child the chance to experience golf by 2009 through a coaching programme in all primary schools, called 'firstclubgolf'.

This is a specially adapted form of golf with smaller clubs for young people.

In 2006 staff from all primary schools in Carrick were trained to deliver 'firstclubgolf' and 98 pupils from P5 were given the chance to experience golf within school time. After six weeks of 'firstclubgolf' the children were invited to Maybole Golf Club to receive tuition outdoors throughout the summer months from five volunteer members. In total 62 pupils took part and 39 who regularly attended have been invited back for tuition from the club over the next year.

A total of 450 P5 pupils took part in golf in the Carrick, Girvan, Marr and Prestwick school areas. Every week volunteers from Girvan Golf Club coach 28 pupils, volunteers from Ayr Dalmilling ladies and gents clubs and Ayr Belleisle gents work with over 30 young people at the former Craigie Park site in Ayr and 25 young people from the Marr area are receiving tuition at Fullarton Wood.

We hope to take 'firstclubgolf' into secondary schools in the 2007/2008 academic year.

Information on our full range of summer activities can be obtained by logging on to www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/leisure by picking up a leaflet from a leisure facility, or by telephoning staff on 0845 601 2020.

Helping youngsters to be fit and healthy

NATIONALLY there are increasing numbers of young people who are overweight and reluctant to take part in exercise. The Council's Active Schools programme helps young people to get up and get active.

The Active Schools team has nine Active School Co-ordinators who work full time in our primary schools and eight Active School Co-ordinators who work one day a week in each of our secondary schools. The Council receives funding of £338,000 a year from Sportscotland.

The programme is open to all school children and activities have been designed so that all children can fully participate. With lunchtime and after school activities, breakfast clubs, healthy eating advice, holiday programmes, outdoor adventures and lots more, there is something to interest every child.

The top ten activities have been: Tennis 48%; Playground Games 22%; Football 11%; Netball 3%; Dance and Movement 3%; Rugby 3%; Badminton 2%; Multisport 2% and Activity Clubs 2%.

In term one 2006, the Active School team organised 1,164 activities across primary schools in South Ayrshire, amounting to 46,410 participants - 24,350 were boys and 22,060 were girls.

During term times further details of Active School activities are available from your child's school or by telephoning the Active Schools base at Kincaidston Primary School on telephone number 01292 294191.

Carrick pitch for all the community

AN all weather sports pitch at Carrick Academy that was created using £482,209 of Big Lottery funding has had a positive impact on pupils in the school and the local community.

The flood lit, all-weather, synthetic pitch means the physical education timetable is not dependant on the weather. A wide range of physical activities now takes place outdoors, not just football.

Carrick Academy staff have noticed a reduction in exclusions, for example in S3 there was a reduction from 167 days of pupils being excluded to just six days. The behaviour of a number of pupils has improved and there has been an increase in the uptake of extra curricular activities, participation in interschool sports events and pupils exercising during their lunch break. Pupils who previously only watched are now making a positive decision to get onto the pitch and take part in activities.

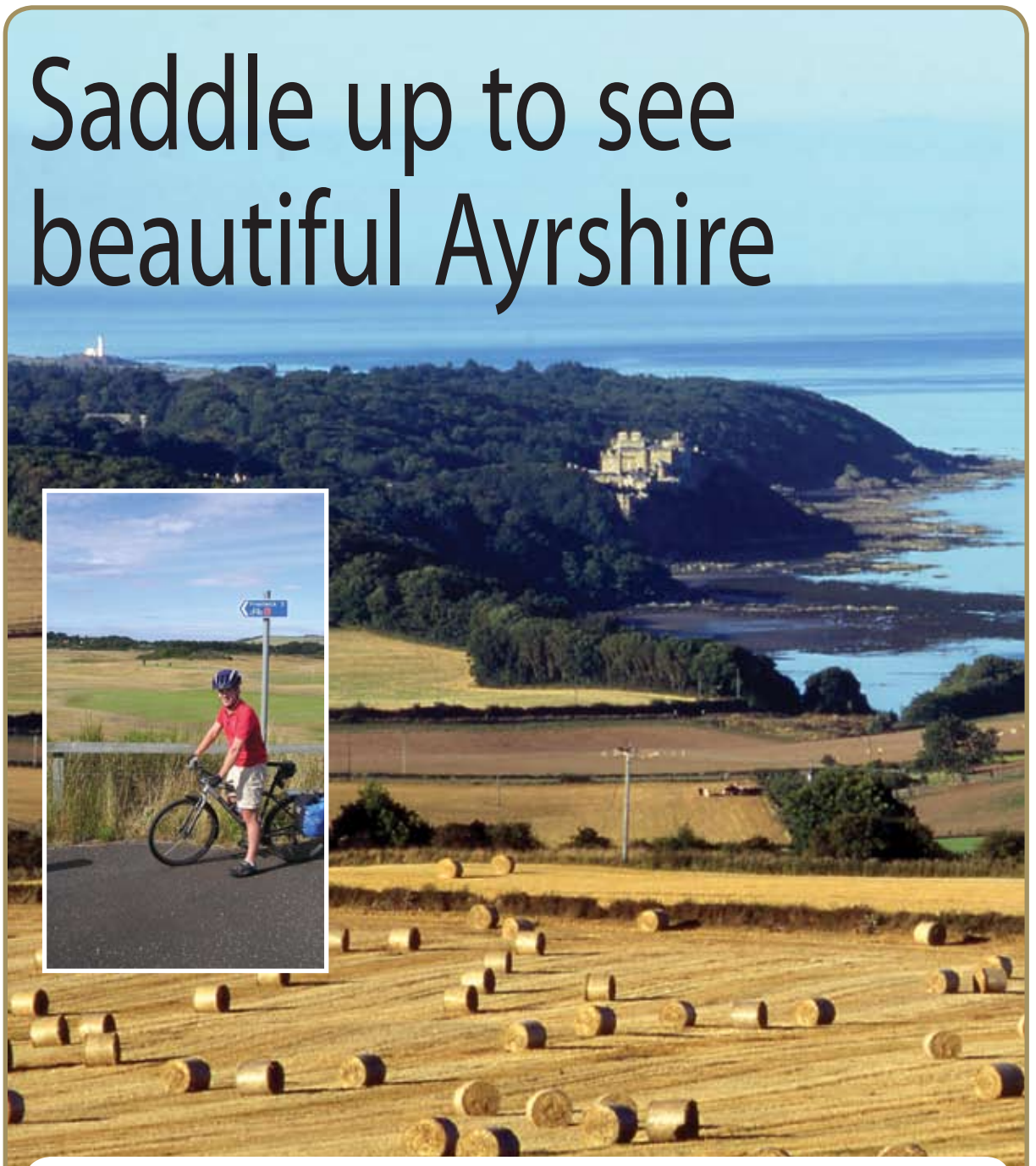
Visiting partner agencies also use the pitch, such as the Scottish Rugby Union, who give their expertise to reinforce school values, teamwork and personal responsibility, and give advice on a healthy lifestyle.

A number of people from the local community are also involved in operating the pitch. On average outside of school hours, 435 people from the local community benefit from using the pitch each week. 68% are children and 23% are adults. The pitch is being booked 78% of the time and in its first year of operation, the pitch has returned a small profit.

By taking part in physical activities and improving their fitness, these young people are using their leisure time constructively, socialising, and taking a positive, active role in their local community.

FOOTBALL, archery and climbing were some of the most popular activities.

Saddle up to see beautiful Ayrshire



IN South Ayrshire, there are a number of safe and convenient footpaths and cycleways. The routes vary in length and include cycle routes from Ayr to Auchincruive, Troon to Ayr and Crosshill to the Galloway Forest.

The Ayrshire Paths network and the National Cycle Routes provide well sign posted routes for people of different levels of fitness who want to walk or cycle.

Increasing numbers of people choose to cycle or walk to work instead of travelling by car. South Ayrshire has a range of cycle routes, which are part of the National Cycle Network, that pedestrians also use. Cycling is an efficient way to travel, a great form of exercise and very convenient.

Funding for cycle routes has come from Transport Scotland, a condition of the funding is that it can only be used for cycle routes. Around South Ayrshire there are National Cycle Network signs to guide cyclists and they indicate the mileage of the route.

Cyclists who want to tackle routes a long distance from their home sometimes make use of the facilities on some buses where they can put their cycle on the bus and get off at their chosen destination. Alternatively travel to your destination by bicycle and get a bus back.

More information on cycle routes in South Ayrshire and links to other cycling websites can be found by logging on to the Council's website www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/leisure/cycling.htm

The website has a lot of information about various walks and cycle routes and also has a photo gallery so that people can look at part of the route.

THE Girvan Food Co-operative is proving popular.

Healthy lifestyles in Girvan

A GIRVAN and District Food Co-operative is operating in Glendoune, Dailly, Girvan Travellers Site, Boyle Court Sheltered Housing Complex and Girvan Health Centre. This is local people working together to do things for themselves and people living in their area.

The Co-operative buys food items and then sells them to local people, so residents have a chance to eat good quality healthy foods, including fresh fruit and vegetables.

People who are already part of the Co-operative are enthusiastic and keen to tell others.

Recently some members went to the Glendoune Spring Fayre and told others of the benefits of the scheme and five people joined the scheme there and then.

Former mining villages blossom

IN the past many people earned their living from mining in South Ayrshire and lived in mining communities. Since the decline of coalfields in this area, steps have been taken to regenerate and improve the areas.

With the enthusiastic support of local people in places such as Tarbolton, Annbank and Mossblown and members of local tenants and residents groups, things are changing in the villages. Residents are working with the Council to improve their environment with projects such as designing low maintenance planting and landscaping.

There was a 32% cut in funding from the Scottish Executive for these projects in 2007/08. However we will look for other funding that can be used to improve the quality of life for people of all ages in South Ayrshire.

THE Council is working hard to improve life in the former coalfield communities with a variety of projects which include developing countryside walkways.

Pic by Gerry McCann

YOUNG people from Lochside are pictured with Provost Winifred Sloan at the screening of their film which charts the changes in and around the area in which they live.

Lochside People and Place initiative

Major housing development work has started in Lochside in Ayr. At the same time an initiative called Lochside 'People and Place' was launched, with a range of activities to keep local people involved in the changes.

A community arts project, which involved young people in making a film of the area, has provided a record of the changes and it has been publicly screened.

In 2007 the young people of Lochside worked with local organisation Ayrshire Initiatives and also Fablevision film artists. They made a film about their area, as it is now, as it was in the past, and what it may be like in the future.

A recording project was also started at the same time, to photograph the 'before and after' changes in the area as the demolition and rebuilding programmes unfold.

Two streets in Lochside were undergoing a major changes - houses were scheduled to be demolished and new ones built. Using this as a focus, the young people explored what it meant to live in Lochside. They interviewed local residents to find out what the issues were in the community and how they could be addressed.

The project was an opportunity for the people of Lochside to voice their views and the young people a chance to present them in a constructive and creative way.

Fresh approach from your new council

GONE ARE THE OLD COMMITTEES... ... IN COME NEW LEADERSHIP PANEL AND FIVE SCRUTINY PANELS

ONE of the first decisions the new Council took was to introduce a fresh way of working. The councillors agreed that the old committee system was no longer fit for purpose. In its place they decided to create a new 'cabinet style' Leadership Panel, supported by five Scrutiny Panels.

The Leadership Panel is responsible for taking the main decisions of behalf of the Council. It is made up of five Conservative councillors whose party has overall control of the Council.

They each take responsibility for an area of the Council's business. This means when officers present reports to them, they can take informed decisions on the recommendations that they contain.

Meeting as a Panel they agree the main priorities for their responsibilities, consider how they can best be tackled, and then review how well they are delivered.

Matching the responsibilities of the five Leadership councillors are the five Scrutiny Panels. These have the role of making sure that every decision taken is in the best interests of the people of South Ayrshire.

Each Scrutiny Panel is chaired by a councillor from one of the other three parties within the Council, and each has three other councillors serving on them. They can challenge decisions when felt necessary, and will review how well the Council is working.

COUNCIL Leader Hugh Hunter... 'great news for residents'.

There are other panels and we will look at these in the next issue. Whether they sit on the Learning Panel, Scrutiny Panel or one of the other panels all thirty councillors have an important job to do within the Council. To help them in this, they have taken part in series of training sessions and workshops to equip them to deliver their responsibilities.

Councillor Hugh Hunter, the new Leader of South Ayrshire Council commented: "This new system of Leadership Panel decisions being so openly examined is welcome and involves all councillors from each of the wards. It really does mean that we are all working together for the benefit of all."

He continued: "I am very pleased that the new and dynamic structure has the support of the full Council. Without doubt, it changes the way that the Council will operate in the future and I believe this is to the advantage of all residents in South Ayrshire."

The work of the Scrutiny Panels, as they question decisions and undertake a programme of the reviews, will be reported back each year. Future editions of UPDATE will cover how the new system has worked, and what changes have been made.

Winifred re-elected Provost

COUNCILLOR Winifred Sloan (left) has been re-elected Provost for South Ayrshire, with Councillor Mary Kilpatrick being elected as her Depute.

Provost Sloan said: "I am really looking forward to once again fulfilling the many civic duties which form part of the role of Provost.

"From my previous experience as Provost, I am aware of the vast range of responsibilities and activities with which I will be involved. I will undertake them all with dignity and pride. It is my wholehearted intention to work hard on further developing Civic Pride in the villages and towns throughout South Ayrshire, and particularly in the town of Ayr."

THE LEADERSHIP AND SCRUTINY PANELS EXPLAINED

IN the new system, the business of the Council is divided into five main areas.

Each area is looked after by one of the councillors on the Leadership Panel, together with the councillors who serve on the matching Scrutiny Panels. Each of the 'portfolio carriers' on the Leadership Panel and the 'chairs' of the Scrutiny Panels are shown here, with a description of their specialist area.

Between them, they will make sure that the right decisions are taken for the people of South Ayrshire and that those decisions actually achieve what was intended.

The Leadership and Scrutiny Panels meet every four weeks. Members of the public are welcome to attend these meetings, to see their Council at work and to hear particular issues being discussed. If you would like details about the dates and times of these meetings, or if you want to see the papers or minutes for them, please check the Council's website www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/committees Telephone 01292 612478, or ask at the reception at the County Buildings in Ayr.

CORPORATE STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING

This takes responsibility for the development and delivery of the main plans of the Council, to make sure everyone is clear about the Council's overall direction and priorities, and Community Planning with partners.

HUGH HUNTER
PORTFOLIO CARRIER

HELEN MOONIE
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

COMMUNITY SERVICES

This involves agreeing of the priorities and policies across a group of services including social work, sport, leisure, culture and community safety, and the Council's approach to equalities issues, such as race, disability and gender.

MARGARET TONER
PORTFOLIO CARRIER

BRIAN CONNOLLY
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

Meet your councillor

SOUTH Ayrshire Council has 30 local councillors who represent eight new wards, introduced at the May 2007 elections.

Some wards have four councillors and some have three, based on the number of people in those wards. All the councillors are pictured opposite and you can approach any one of them in your ward if there are matters you would like to discuss or bring to their attention.

Each councillor holds a regular surgery and you can find details by logging onto www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/council/wards/surgeries.htm alternatively call Council staff on 01292 612484 or 01292 612679.

COLOUR CODE TO THE COUNCILLORS:

C Conservative
L Labour
S SNP
I Independent

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

This brings together decisions about how we protect and regulate the area, in terms of licensing, building standards, environmental health, and trading standards; with consideration of how we plan and manage the environment, in areas such as planning, roads, refuse collection, and waste management.

PETER CONVERY
PORTFOLIO CARRIER

JOHN MCDOWALL
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

LEARNING AND PROSPERITY

This covers a range of services to children and young people, including education, care and youth justice; adult and continuing education; and also economic development, regeneration and tourism.

HYWEL DAVIES
PORTFOLIO CARRIER

IAN DOUGLAS
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE

This is about reviewing how the Council is actually delivering on its priorities and commitments, accounting for how the money, people, buildings and other resources are used and making sure that our services are delivered to the highest standards, and meet the requirements of best value.

BILL MACINTOSH
PORTFOLIO CARRIER

DOUGLAS CAMPBELL
CHAIR OF THE SCRUTINY PANEL

TROON

Peter Convery C

Nan McFarlane S

Bill McIntosh C

Phillip Saxton L

AYR WEST

Bill Grant C

Elaine Little L

Mike Peddie S

Robin Reid C

PRESTWICK

Stan Fisher S

Hugh Hunter C

Helen Moonie L

Margaret Toner C

MAYBOLE, NORTH CARRICK AND COYLTON

Brian Connolly I

Ann Galbraith C

Sandra Goldie L

Mairi Low S

AYR NORTH

Douglas Campbell L

Ian Cavana L

John Hampton C

Tom Slider S

AYR EAST

Eddie Bulik L

Ian Douglas S

Mary Kilpatrick C

Winifred Sloan C

KYLE

John Allan S

Andy Campbell L

Hywel Davies C

GIRVAN AND SOUTH CARRICK

Iain Fitzsimmons C

John McDowall L

Alex Oattes S

If you are not sure which ward you are in, please call Council staff on 01292 612484 or 01292 612679.

A safer South Ayrshire

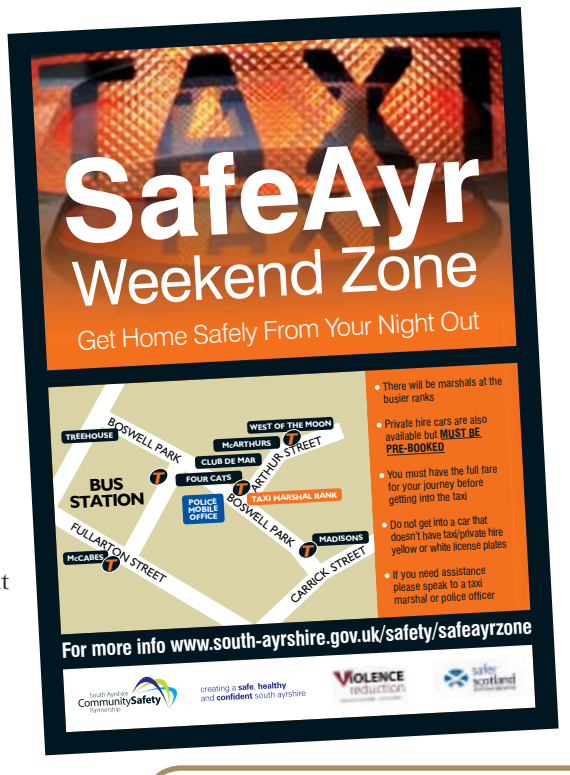
SOUTH Ayrshire Council is working with Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Fire and Rescue, NHS Ayrshire and Arran and others as the South Ayrshire Community Safety Partnership, to create a safe, healthy and confident South Ayrshire.

We provide a range of projects aimed at achieving this including:

SafeAyr Weekend Zone

THIS is about making Ayr town centre a safer place for evening entertainment at the weekend. Taxi Marshals assist with queuing and help ensure the town centre is cleared more quickly after the pubs and clubs have closed. Taxi drivers have reported a change in the behaviour of people entering their taxis during the initiative, with 77% stating it had improved. Passengers were less aggressive and a lot more respectful to taxi drivers and to each other. An increased number of taxi drivers are now operating in the town centre due to the changes and this contributes to shorter waiting times.

For the duration of the project a mobile police office, staffed by two police officers, is situated in the car park behind the Gaiety theatre on Friday and Saturday nights. With other police officers also operating in the area this helps detect crime and helps make people feel safer when they are out at night time.



Young people caring for their community

THE Junior Support Team is a group of young people working with the Community Support Officers, in Wallacetown/ Ayr North and parts of Girvan and Maybole, to make their communities safer places to live. One Junior Support Officer said: "I've really enjoyed this programme and I'd love to get involved in more community work".

Pictured above are some young people who, along with school pupils from Ayr Academy have worked with Community Support Officers to help clean up Wallacetown, Lochside, Dalmilling and Whitletts. Organising local activities for young people in targeted hotspot areas, including all the areas covered by the Community Support Schemes is also an important way of providing something meaningful for young people to do. Over 400 young people take part in organised community safety activities on a weekly basis, and over 30 projects have been developed.

Antisocial behaviour

OUR Antisocial Behaviour Team has been working hard to help people who are experiencing antisocial behaviour. Over 1,000 cases were reported last year, 76% of which were resolved. For 26 of the cases a mediation service was used with a 53% success rate.

Other measures include:

- Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) where involved parties make a voluntary pledge to stop antisocial behaviour.
- Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) where involved parties are required by the Court to stop antisocial behaviour. If an ASBO is breached it becomes a criminal offence.

Last year 12 ABC contracts were agreed, and eight ASBOs were served in South Ayrshire.

AN Antisocial Behaviour Advice line, which can be accessed 24 hours a day, makes advice and information available to people when they need it. The telephone number for the Antisocial Behaviour Advice Line is 0845 850 2825.

Saving lives on the road

WE are keen to reduce the number of people injured on roads and have an ongoing programme of road safety initiatives.

The Council was set United Kingdom road casualty reduction targets, to be achieved by 2010.

They were to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured by 40%, children killed or seriously injured by 50% and people slightly injured by 10%.

In 2006 all three targets were achieved. Set against the 2010 targets, our figures show a 48% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured, a 78% reduction in children killed or seriously injured and a 13% reduction in people suffering slight injuries.

The actual figures for 2006 were: 10 people killed; 51 people seriously injured and 298 people slightly injured. In 2005, five people were killed, 61 people seriously injured and 334 people suffered slight injuries.

Much of this success has been achieved through a mixture of education, publicity and enforcement. By working closely with other organisations such as Road Safety Scotland, The West of Scotland Road Safety Forum, South Ayrshire Community Safety Partnership and Strathclyde Safety Camera Partnership road safety has been improved.

Further information on road safety can be accessed by logging on to www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/roads/safety.htm or www.A77safetygroup.com

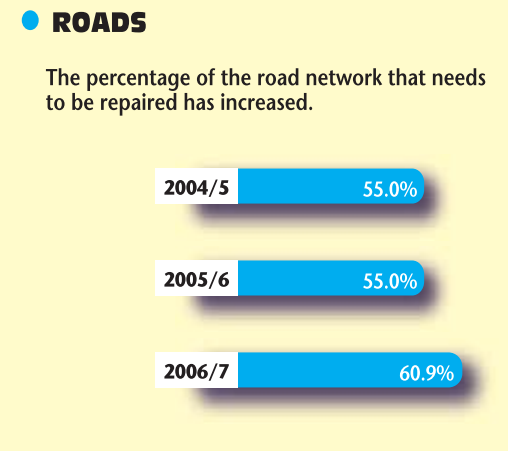
Working miles harder to improve the roads

MAINTAINING our roads is a massive task. The Council has responsibility for maintaining all public roads, bridges, footways, verges, streetlights and traffic lights in South Ayrshire. Amey Highways, on behalf of the Scottish Executive, maintain the A77 and A78 trunk roads.

Did you know that we have to:

- Inspect around 1750 km (1,087 miles) of public roads and footways and maintain them.
- Inspect and maintain around 240 road bridges, 20 footbridges and 65 other Council bridges.
- Keep our roads and pavements as safe as possible during periods of snow and ice.
- Stock and distribute 6,000 tonnes of salt by 15 gritters providing a 24 hour service from October to May.
- Maintain around 18,500 streetlights and aim to carry out repairs within seven days of faults being reported.

In 2005/06 figures showed that the percentage of our roads needing repair gave us the second poorest performance across Scotland. The figures were based on a random sample of roads in South Ayrshire and this method of testing can produce quite large fluctuations from year to year.



It is estimated that £30 million would be needed to bring all the roads up to scratch.

In 2005/06 the council was able to invest £2.02 million funding for roads maintenance works compared with £2.45 million on 2004/05.

The Scottish Executive, recognising the poor condition or roads, has provided additional funding for roads maintenance for 2007/08, and South Ayrshire's share is £1.04 million for each of the two years. In 2006/07 £285,000 was invested in signs, lighting and other facilities. The Council has just agreed to an extra £500,000 being spent in 2007/08.

A review of the Council's Roads Maintenance Service has been carried out that looked at ways to increase efficiency and reduce costs. This will be implemented over the coming year. You can find out more by visiting our website at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/roads

BEFORE AND AFTER... What a transformation for these Maisonette flats in Rowan Road, Girvan thanks to major improvement work as part of our ongoing commitment to housing investment.

Building better lives

HOW REGENERATION AND HOUSING INITIATIVES ARE HELPING ALL OVER SOUTH AYRSHIRE

Working with local people

THERE are some new and exciting projects going on in Ayr North and Wallacetown and Newton.

Improving peoples' income

WE are working with people to make the most of their income, including welfare rights advice, debt counselling, grant assistance. credit union, and community transport.

Over 2,000 residents have benefited from these services in the last year, with £693,000 generated for individual residents and £108,000 for local community groups. The funding came from money raised through debt advice from previously unclaimed benefits and from grant assistance.

Getting people into work

DURING the last year, 134 people, including single parents and people on incapacity benefit, went into full time employment with the help of training provided by the Access to Employment scheme. 772 people have been taking part in sports related schemes including a passport to health scheme, positive lifestyle evaluations and outdoor and indoor sport coaching classes. Drug and alcohol misuse workers provide a range of services to children and young people.

Raising educational attainment

COMMUNITY based 'Learning Champions' worked with around 400 adults who took part in a range of certificated and non-certificated classes. Of these people, 140 moved on to further and higher education and 10 gained further qualifications.

Council housing

THERE were 8,633 Council houses in Council ownership at 31 March 2007, with only 626 houses becoming available to let in the year. Demand from the waiting list remains high with over 4,000 applicants registered on our waiting list at any given time.

Homelessness

PREVENTING and dealing with homelessness remains a key priority for the Council, with 967 people approaching us for assistance between April 2006 and March 2007. To help with this we have been working to improve the levels of housing advice and information we provide to people at risk of homelessness and succeeded in preventing 118 people from becoming homeless during the last year. We are also continuing to work with other organisations to provide support and accommodation for homeless people in our efforts to make sure that they receive the best possible advice.

Rent management

WE are continuing to make improvements in the way in which we deal with rent arrears. Our most recent performance information shows that a total of 95.1% of rent due to the Council was collected in 2006/07, compared to 94.7% in 2005/06, and 93.7% in 2004/05. We have improved the service by making sure that we respond promptly to missed payments and that we maintain close contact with people who are having difficulty paying their rent.

The Council has also recently introduced a new Telephone Touchtone Payment facility, which provides a 24 hour secure and safe method of payment for a number of bills including Housing Rents, Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates. To pay your rent using the Telephone Payment Service, please call 0845 604 0433 and have your reference number to hand.

Housing investment

LAST year the Council invested £7.8 million in improving its housing stock, and intends to invest £8.5 million this financial year.

In the last year, 224 houses were completely rewired, had a new kitchen installed, an upgraded or replacement central heating system and bathroom modernised.

196 houses had new kitchen and upgraded heating systems, 85 houses had new bathrooms and 116 had new central heating systems.

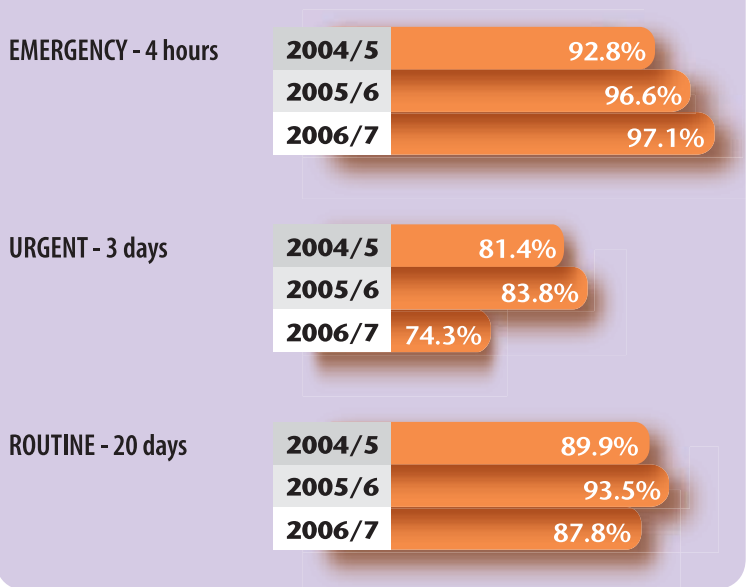
In addition to the above work, we have carried out work such as:

- Re-roofing.
- Elimination of dampness.
- Energy efficiency schemes.
- Door entry systems.
- Improvements to the outside of houses.

Work has recently been completed on the maisonette blocks at Rowan Road and Birch Terrace in Girvan to upgrade the communal areas and renew the external fabric of the buildings.

HOUSING REPAIRS

The percentage of repairs completed within the target time improved for emergency repairs, but fell across urgent and routine repairs.



Repair service now offers appointments

AS part of our repairs service for tenants we now offer appointments for routine joinery, plumbing and electrical repairs. This system has been brought in to make things easier for tenants who may have to take time off work. Appointments can be made by contacting your local housing office. Call 01292 616000 for more information.

A tenant's feedback survey on the repairs service is undertaken on behalf of the Council each month. The most recent survey showed that 85% of the 755 people surveyed were "happy with the completed repair". Overall 25% of the tenants surveyed rated the repairs service as "excellent" and 63% rated it as "good".

Going green!

PEOPLE IN SOUTH AYRSHIRE ARE RECYCLING MORE

IN South Ayrshire, people are listening to the important message that everyone needs to 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'. Great co-operation and support from the public is helping the Council to keep down the cost of disposing of waste and together we are helping to protect the environment.

The European Union has given all local councils targets to meet when disposing of waste. We all must now limit the waste we send to landfill sites.

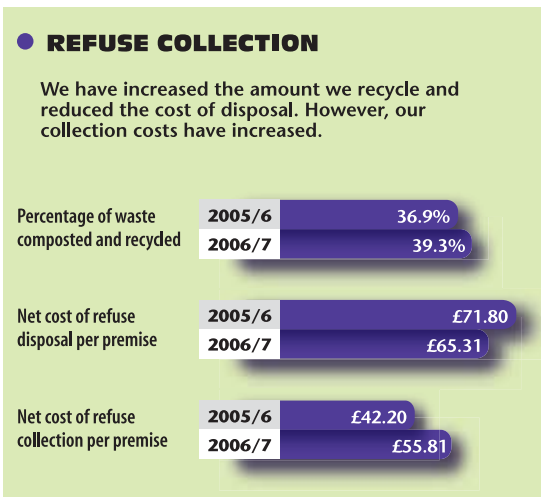
In 2006/07 people in South Ayrshire recycled 39.3% of waste, the second highest rate in Scotland. The Council has to meet recycling targets of 38% by 2008 and 40% by 2010. Looking further ahead, the Council also has to achieve a 52% recycling and composting target by 2020. In addition to these recycling targets, the Council must reduce biodegradable waste going to landfill to 75% of 1995 levels by 2010, 50% by 2013, and 35% by 2020.

Community recycling centres at Troon, Prestwick, Maybole and Girvan have proved very popular. In partnership with Barr Environmental Ltd. the Council has opened a new Waste Transfer Station and Community Recycling Centre at Heathfield in Ayr. It is a purpose built centre for householders to dispose of waste and offers a commercial waste and recycling service for local businesses in the Ayr and Prestwick district.

Most waste collected in South Ayrshire was previously transported to a landfill site at Garlaff, Cumnock but now Council waste collection vehicles dispose of all waste within South Ayrshire. We have reduced transport costs as a result of being able to dispose of waste close to where it comes from and this will also help to protect the environment.

The new recycling centre has been designed to recycle and separate out more items that can be recycled. We are working towards recycling at least 50% of bulky waste collections from households.

RECENTLY school pupils visited the new recycling centre in Ayr to learn more about recycling.



Sometimes people make genuine mistakes when they are recycling household waste and do not sort it correctly. If this happens you may find a sticker on your bin stating that it could not be emptied.

To help with this we now have Recycling Advisors working across South Ayrshire, offering advice about recycling.

They will be working closely with people in South Ayrshire - looking at bins and offering support and further guidance.

For more information call the Recycling Helpline on 0845 601 2020 or log onto www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/wastemanagement

GETTING the parking message.

Are there any parking spaces?

THE first phase of the Variable Message Sign (VMS) parking system in Ayr has been completed and the second stage is due for completion later this year. The system has been funded by the Council with a contribution from the developers at the Ayr Central shopping centre.

There are now electronic signs in John Street, Station Road and Charlotte Street, that give information about car parks in Riverside Place, Mill Brae, Ayr Central, Charlotte Street and Cromwell Road in Ayr. The signs let drivers know if there are any spaces available and if there are not, direct them to another car park. Motorists can then make an informed choice about where to park without having to go in and out of car parks to see if there are any spaces.

The system is helping to ease congestion in the town centre by guiding people directly to a car park, rather than them having to drive around town looking for one. This is reducing motorists' mileage and benefiting the environment.

We hope the information will be useful for all motorists and particularly for visitors to the town who do not have the same knowledge of available parking as local people.

The second phase of the system will be completed later this year and will bring the remaining town centre car parks into the scheme.

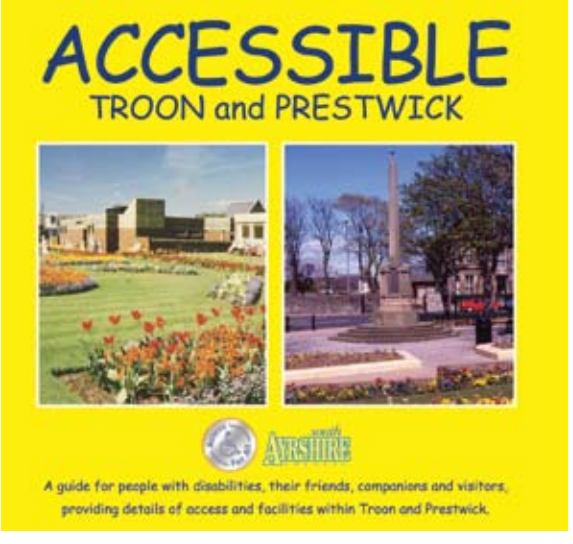
More disabled access guides published

IN 2006 the first Accessible Guide to Ayr was put together by members of the South Ayrshire Access Panel. This year, two new Accessible Guides have also been produced for Troon /Prestwick and Maybole/Girvan.

The Panel is made up of people who give up their own time to campaign for access improvements. The guide contains symbols to indicate various aspects of accessibility for each location. Disabled volunteers took the time and effort to check out each of the premises.

The guides are free and available from a number of places including doctors surgeries, libraries, Council offices and the Tourist Information Centre in Ayr.

For further information on the South Ayrshire Access Panel log on to www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/community/accesspanel.htm or www.south-ayrshire-access-panel.org.uk



HOW TO CONTACT THE COUNCIL

CONTACT details can be found throughout this newsletter with fuller information contained in the Council's calendar and on our website at www.south-ayrshire.gov.uk

General enquiries can be made by calling 01292 612000 or by contacting the Customer Services Team on 0845 601 2020.

Your local councillor can be contacted in writing at County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR or in person at regular surgeries, details of which are published in the local press, and on the Council's website.

A text only version of this publication is available in Urdu and in Chinese. A larger print version or audio cassette version is also available. For further information please contact : 0845 601 2020.

本出版物還有純文字中文版。
有關更多資訊，請聯絡： 0845 601 2020

اس اشاعت کے نسخہ کا صرف متن اردو زبان میں دستیاب ہے۔
مزید جانکاری کے لیے براہ کرم درج ذیل پر رابطہ قائم کریں:

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