

# Bulletin

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## Every child deserves the right to play



West Lothian Council has upgraded a number of local play areas with the aim of increasing the amount of facilities, play equipment and access routes that can be used by children with disabilities. Huge progress has been made in recent years and this work is still ongoing, with more and more inclusive play equipment and infrastructure being installed each year. Watson Park, Armadale is one of several projects that has recently been completed. Councillor Tom Conn joined Wiktorina Cook and the Armadale Community Learning and Development Youth Services Group who helped design the park signage and also create the sensory path. Turn to page 5 for more details.

Work to start on new East Calder Primary School



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# Howden Park Centre



**West Lothian Council has agreed to support Howden Park Centre with temporary funding until the end of March 2024.**

West Lothian Leisure (WLL) has requested the council's consent to close four facilities that they currently operate.

They are:

- Broxburn Swimming Pool
- Xcite Armadale
- Xcite Livingston (Bubbles)
- Howden Park Centre, Livingston.

A report recently confirmed that all four facilities currently make a significant monthly financial loss and, if the facilities do not close, WLL faces the risk of insolvency, which would risk the closure of all Xcite facilities.

The four facilities also require significant and immediate sums of capital funding to bring them up to standard. The council's core capital grant has been reduced significantly by the Scottish Government.

As Bulletin went to print, work is underway to explore alternative commercial and community options for running Howden Park Centre, and a number of swimming pools, with other interested parties including key community user groups.

The council has also agreed to provide £20,000 each month until the end of March 2024 to ensure Howden Park Centre remains open, and is able to honour existing bookings. The funding is intended to help ensure a smooth transition to an alternative potential operator.

Leader of West Lothian Council Lawrence Fitzpatrick said: "The council has agreed that one off funding of £20,000 per month from the start of September will be available until the end of March 2024 to support the

operation of the centre for the remainder of the financial year.

"This is due to the unique nature of Howden Park in requiring a future programme of events, which had been arranged in advance of WLL's announcement on 3 May that they seek to close Howden Park.

"This will ensure that a full programme of events is maintained and deliver a smooth transition to any potential operator approved following conclusion of the current process of exploring alternative options for running Howden Park Centre."

**Please see the next edition of Bulletin, local press and the council's social media for the latest updates.**

## West Lothian school holidays 2023/24

TERM 1	
Staff resume	Monday, 14 August 2023
Pupils Resume	Tuesday, 15 August 2023
All break	Thursday, 14 September 2023
All resume	Wednesday, 20 September 2023
All break	Friday, 6 October 2023
Staff resume	Monday, 16 October 2023
Pupils resume	Tuesday, 17 October 2023
All break	Friday, 22 December 2023
TERM 2	
All resume	Monday, 8 January 2024
All break	Friday, 9 February 2024
Staff resume	Monday, 19 February 2024
Pupils resume	Tuesday, 20 February 2024
All break	Thursday 28 March 2024
TERM 3	
All Resume	Monday, 15 April 2024
All break	Friday, 3 May 2024
Staff resume	Tuesday, 7 May 2024
Pupils resume	Wednesday, 8 May 2024
All schools except those at b) and c) below	Spring Holiday - Monday, 20 May 2024
b) Bathgate Academy and feeder primary schools plus St Mary's, Bathgate & St Columba's (excluding Blackburn and Murrayfield Primary Schools)	Bathgate Local Holiday - Monday, 3 June 2024
c) Linlithgow Academy and feeder primary schools plus St Joseph's Primary School, Linlithgow	Linlithgow Marches - Tuesday, 18 June 2024
All break	Friday, 28 June 2024

For more details, please visit [www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolholidays](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolholidays), scan the QR code to view the 2024/25 timetable:



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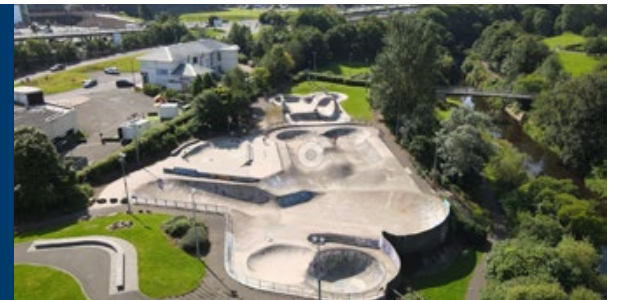


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## Next step towards Historic status for iconic skate park

Over 500 people have taken part in an online survey organised by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and Skateboard Scotland as part of the process which could see West Lothian Council's Livingston Skatepark granted historic listed status.



West Lothian Council wrote to Historic Environment Scotland asking them to consider listing the park, which was the first of its kind in the UK when opened in 1981.

The survey sought information from people who know and use the skatepark or have a view on its design, history and significance. With the survey now closed, HES will now analyse the feedback from participants to help inform their final decision on whether the park meets criteria for listed status.

This is the first time HES have been asked to list a skatepark and they have received well over 500 responses from people who know and/or use the skatepark or have a view

on its design, history and cultural significance.

If HES conclude that the skatepark meets the criteria for designation they will consult with West Lothian Council as the owners and local authority before making a decision.

Executive councillor for the environment & sustainability Tom Conn said: "Thank you to everyone who engaged in the process to date. The skatepark is a wonderful facility that has served Livingston for many years and it will continue to do so whether historic status is granted or not. The park will continue to serve the local community for generations to come."

West Lothian Council plan to carry some concrete repairs later this year at the park and will invest over £120,000.

### Parking nearby:

The council-owned car park located immediately to the north-east of the former Club Earth site has been temporarily leased to the new care home developer for the duration of the construction period. The car park will revert to public use when the construction is complete. Free public car parking is readily available at the nearby Terrace Car Park (off Almondvale Boulevard) and also at two further car parks located off Howden South Road, immediately north of the skate park.

# Young musicians on song at Spring Concert showcase

**The popular West Lothian Spring Concert Showcase has made a triumphant return.**

The highly-regarded concert, which features musical ensembles made up of students from across West Lothian, took place recently for the first time since the Covid pandemic. A packed audience of more than 300 at Inveralmond

Community High School in Livingston were treated to excellent performances from five area ensembles: The West Lothian Schools Big Band; West Lothian Schools Brass Band; West Lothian Schools Concert Band; West Lothian Schools

Wind Ensemble; and West Lothian Schools Pipe Band. A total of 138 young musicians from 24 schools across West Lothian all put on a fantastic show, which was received very positively by the crowd.



**“Thanks to everyone who helped deliver such a fantastic Spring Concert Showcase following a three-year gap. All our talented young people worked incredibly hard to get themselves to such a high standard for the show, and put in some superb performances. Special mention must also go to all the teachers and instructors from both schools and the council’s Instrumental Music Service, who helped put on such a great event, as well as all the parents/carers, family and friends who supported the young people and attended on the night to cheer them on.”**

*Executive councillor for education Andrew McGuire*

## Talented young West Lothian musicians hit the high notes



Oliver Plenderleith from St Kentigern’s Academy was awarded the top honour at the West Lothian Young Musician of the Year competition, which took place recently at Deans Community High School in Livingston.



Fellow pianist Latisha Chan from West Calder High School was named as runner up, and Linlithgow Academy vocalist Freya Nicoll coming third. All three received trophies courtesy of the Music Education Partnership Group and vouchers in recognition of their achievement.

Oliver will now go forward and represent West Lothian at the national finals at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland in Glasgow this May.

Executive councillor for education Andrew McGuire, who presented Oliver with his trophy, said: “Huge congratulations to Oliver for his superb performance to win West Lothian’s Young Musician of the Year. “He and all the other finalists shows what

an impressive array of musical talent we have in West Lothian, and what our young people can achieve through hard work and dedication”.

Other students competing in the final were: vocalists Sophie Scott-Telford from Winchburgh, Emma Paterson from St Margaret’s Academy and Abigail Neil from The James Young High School in Livingston; trombonist Zoe Dudgeon from Deans Community High School in Livingston; flugel horn player Lauren Downs from Armadale Academy; cornet player Ross Gilchrist from Whitburn Academy; and pianist James Hamilton from Inveralmond Community High School in Livingston.

## New cycle training facility for West Lothian

**Budding cyclists from across West Lothian will soon be flocking to a new cycle facility at Crofthead Community Centre.**

The new bike training facility aims to allow young people and those with disabilities to learn to ride their bikes in a safe and enclosed environment. The facility will be managed by the Bike Library who will deliver training sessions.

West Lothian Council oversaw the project on behalf of the partnership of the Community Centre Management Committee & WL Bike Library who secured funding through the Scottish Government’s Place Based Investment Programme funding.

£350,000 was awarded which funded the creation of the new bike facility, demolition of old buildings and the creation of designs for a new multi-purpose hall.

The new facility was officially opened recently with representatives from various groups in attendance. The facility was opened by

nineteen-year-old Brogan McKerrall who started using the Bike Library as a 13-year-old. Brogan, was a pupil at Cedarbank and is now studying at West Lothian College.

The new facility is perfect for adapted bikes to help assist disabled young people learn to cycle. However, anyone looking for a safe and purpose-built training facility can use it.

The facility is run by West Lothian Bike Library who provide a number of training courses and work closely with local schools, including Cedarbank and Ogilvie Schools, who are both special needs schools.

In partnership with Cycling Scotland, Cycling UK & SEStran GO eBike the Bike Library offers a range of training and services all aimed at promoting Active Travel and Inclusiveness in Cycling.



## Family tragedy inspires help for others at Crofthead



Mr Carrie's family joined the council's Property Services manager and Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick to unveil the new defibrillator at Crofthead

**The tragic and sudden death of a beloved husband, son and brother has inspired a Livingston family to ensure help is available for others.**

Steven Carrie was a long-serving and well-respected employee of Sky at Kirkton Campus, and was only 34 when he died two years ago following a cardiac arrest whilst on a family holiday in The Peak District. Not having quicker access to emergency medical support was a key factor in his passing and that has inspired his family to donate a defibrillator for community use at Crofthead Community Centre in Templar Rise, Livingston.

A defibrillator is a device that gives a high energy electric shock to the heart of someone who is in cardiac arrest. This high energy shock is called defibrillation, and it's an essential part in trying to save the life of someone who's in cardiac arrest. A defibrillator may also be called a defib.

Mr Carrie's family unveiled the new defibrillator at Crofthead.

In a poignant gesture, the defibrillator is located in sight of the family's former home in Templar Rise, where Steven lived growing up for 20 years, and can be seen from his former bedroom.

The family simply want to ensure that emergency help is on hand should somebody need it in future.

The family has worked with West Lothian Council to install the life saving device and ensure that it is easy to access should it be needed in an emergency. The council has ensured the defib is easy to access, with lighting installed above the defibrillator, the power supply to the cabinet in place and the area in front of the defib is now concreted. The council is also undertaking work to ensure all defibrillators in West Lothian are promoted via national websites, such as the British Heart Foundation.

The management committee have registered the defib at Crofthead with the appropriate body so it is registered and can be found online.

Andrew Carrie, Steven's dad, explains: "We are absolutely delighted that the defibrillator has been installed in tribute to Steven.

"Whilst it's dedicated in honour of Steven's memory, it has a very real purpose and it is there to be used by someone in need. Even if it only helps one person, it will be worth having it installed.

"I'd like to thank the council and management committee for their support in helping us make this possible. I would also like to acknowledge Steven's former employer, Sky, as they too have been amazing."

## Flood improvement works in Bathgate

**Works have taken place to reduce the risk of flooding in areas of Bathgate.**

Bathgate Cemetery was one of the areas impacted by recent floods in December 2022. The report noted that was due to a combination of both out of bank flows from the burn near the cemetery and the accumulation of surface water runoff from higher areas of ground within the cemetery.

Works are currently underway within the cemetery to mitigate the risk of flooding from the nearby burn and are due to be completed by the end of March.

Elements of the ongoing Bathgate Meadows Nature Park Project will also be looked at in relation to further reducing chances of floods taking place.

Bathgate Meadows is an on-going project which seeks to improve the amenity and environmental benefits of the watercourse and catchment. Following the recent flood in Meadow Park, issues regarding water quality, flooding and the performance of the flood lagoons will be given further consideration as the design of Bathgate Meadows Nature Park is further developed.



**"Work has taken place to try and ensure these areas of Bathgate don't succumb to flooding in the future. The Bathgate Meadows Nature Park Project aims to provide additional benefits to the local environment in addition to additional flood protection. Officers will continue to monitor the risk of flooding in the Bathgate area through routine flood risk management."**

*Executive councillor for environment and sustainability Tom Conn*

## Fender Chief donates signed guitar to hometown West Lothian museum

Councillor Sullivan joined Emma Peattie, the council's Museum's Officer and Andy Mooney



**The Chief Executive Officer of the world's leading and best-known guitar brands has given a special gift to his hometown museum.**

Fender Musical Instruments Corporation (FMIC) CEO Andy Mooney has donated a specially signed Fender® Stratocaster® guitar to Whitburn Community Museum, which is located within the recently opened £5 million Whitburn Partnership Centre.

The iconic guitar has pride of place in a special display case in the museum, along with a wide-range of fascinating items and display boards connected to the town's history.

Fender CEO Andy Mooney said: "I'm truly humbled to be featured in Whitburn Museum and owe my success to the work ethic instilled in me by my parents and the teachers who inspired me at St Joseph's and St. Mary's." Mr. Mooney's fantastic career saw him

leave Whitburn to pursue a profession in the United States of America with global sportswear giant Nike, where he rose to become their Chief Marketing Officer.

He left Nike to join Disney as chairman of their Consumer Products Worldwide division, where he conceptualized the Disney Princesses brand, which under his leadership was developed and grown into a billion-dollar enterprise. The former semi-professional musician then joined Fender in 2015 and led the development of Fender Play®, a subscription-based learning app created to support people just picking up the instrument for the first time, with the pandemic helping to deliver the company's biggest ever year of sales in

2020.

Depute Leader of West Lothian Council Kirsteen Sullivan, who met Mr. Mooney for the special guitar signing along with the council's Museums Officer Emma Peattie, said: "I would like to thank Andy for donating this amazing, signed Fender® Stratocaster® to Whitburn Community Museum.

"His hugely successful career has seen him work for some of the biggest global brands on the planet and is an inspirational for anyone in West Lothian looking for a career in business.

"It was a real pleasure to meet Andy, and know he remains true to his Whitburn roots despite many decades at the top of the business world in America."



### Three decades of caring for West Lothian recognised The huge contribution of West Lothian's unpaid carers over the last 30 years has been honoured.

A Civic Reception was held at Howden Park Centre in Livingston recently to celebrate the 30th anniversary of Carers of West Lothian (COWL).

Provost Cathy Muldoon hosted afternoon tea for COWL staff, unpaid carers and disabled people to mark the milestone, which was also attended by special guests including Depute Council Leader Kirsteen Sullivan, Depute Provost Peter Heggie and Depute Chief Executives Alison White and Elaine Cook. Provost Muldoon said: "It was a huge honour to welcome Carers of West Lothian to Howden Park Centre to mark their 30th anniversary.

"COWL carry out a fantastic job of supporting unpaid carers and disabled people across West Lothian and deserve recognition for this.

"It was fantastic to meet the staff from COWL and some of the people they help,

and hear some the inspirational stories from those involved."

COWL provides friendly and helpful information, advice and support to unpaid carers and disabled people across West Lothian. For more information on their services, please visit [www.carers-westlothian.com](http://www.carers-westlothian.com) or call 01506 448000.

Alison Wright, Chief executive of Carers of West Lothian added: "We were delighted that West Lothian Council hosted a Civic Reception marking our 30th Anniversary and invited unpaid carers and disabled people to join us at the event at the Howden Park Centre.

"We also see the event as recognition of the contribution that unpaid carers make to the West Lothian community and look forward to continuing to provide support over the next 30 years."

## New SMART bins are TRANSFORMING LITTER COLLECTION in West Lothian.

West Lothian Council introduced 72 SMART bins last year – otherwise known as solar compactor bins.



### Why?

After an initial one-off investment of £32,000 the SMART bins are set to deliver a saving of £24,000 per year due to the improved efficiency of the collection schedule and reduction in visits.

**The bins are designed to last for many years which will result in a significant cost saving overall.**

The bins hold more rubbish than standard bins and stop animals getting in and spreading litter about.

Each bin is equipped with a sensor which

provides real time updates to operatives meaning a bin is only emptied when required. Council staff do not therefore have to make unnecessary routine journeys to empty 'normal' bins that are only part full or nearly empty – this results in a significant cost saving for the council and makes sure the public purse goes further.

All SMART bins have been sighted in locations where normal litter bins were emptied daily and, on some occasions, multiple times per day. These locations will be monitored and bins can be moved if they are not being used to the best of their capacity and another location is suitable.



The bins are fitted with a solar powered compactor which compresses litter. This increases the capacity of the bin and allows up to **10 TIMES MORE LITTER TO BE STORED** compared to a standard public litter bin, before they need emptied.



**"The bins were introduced as part of trial and have been a great success to date. An example can be seen in the Linlithgow area where 21 standard bins were replaced with 8 SMART bins around Linlithgow Loch. Not only has the overall bin capacity increased around the Loch but we've reduced the number of times staff have to empty the bins. By not having to visit all bins to check if they need emptied, staff are able to concentrate on carrying out additional street cleansing duties which should bring overall improvements to the appearance of areas. By having a closed lid, the potential of litter being accessed and spread around by animals is also significantly reduced."**

*Tom Conn, Executive councillor for the environment and sustainability*

## West Lothian's push for Inclusive Play

West Lothian Council has upgraded a number of local play areas with the aim of increasing the amount of facilities, play equipment and access routes that can be used by children with disabilities.

Huge progress has been made in recent years and this work is still ongoing, with more and more inclusive play equipment and infrastructure being installed each year. Most of the council's play areas throughout West Lothian now include equipment which is inclusive.

Wiktorina Cook, Open Space Officer, West Lothian Council said: "We've been working closely with suppliers, contractors and the community to improve inclusive play value in appropriate locations. This includes educating ourselves about the conditions children face, how we can design with them and their parents and carers in mind and researching how the issue has been approached across the world. The Council hopes to maintain varied and exciting play opportunities for all children across West Lothian."

Most recently, the council has invested around £165,000 on projects to increase inclusive play in West Lothian's Open Spaces. This includes the following projects:

**Elburn Park, Livingston** – The existing wheelchair swing has been added to with an accessible trampoline, roundabout and a reactions game panel. The works were completed in March 2023. An accessible route has also been started, featuring ground graphics of wildlife that can be found in the park.

**Watson Park, Armadale** – A new wheelchair roundabout and a sensory 'hide and seek' path have been added as part of wider park improvements. The new design is inspired by the mature avenue of cherry blossoms which helps bring out the unique character of the park.

The park now boasts a more accessible car park and path network, accessible graphics games area, as well as bespoke furniture and signage.

**Polkemmet Country Park, Whitburn** – A new wheelchair accessible roundabout, inclusive swing, sensory play panels and wheelchair accessible musical equipment will be installed over June 2023. The designs will tie into the natural surroundings of the Country Park and help create a destination day out for all. Upgraded paths will help support inclusive access through the play area.

Through this recent work, the majority of the council's play areas throughout West Lothian now include equipment which is inclusive.



### The following play areas include fully wheelchair accessible equipment:

- Eastfield Park Play Area, Fauldhouse
- West Burngrange Play Area, West Calder
- Redhouse Place Green, Blackburn
- Elburn Play Area, Livingston
- Mosswood Community Centre, Livingston
- Redmill Play Area, East Whitburn
- Watson Park in Armadale
- Polkemmet Country Park

Tom Conn, Executive councillor for the Environment and Sustainability said: "We're very proud of the work and commitment that has been focussed on improving West Lothian's parks – making them more inclusive for all children. Despite the significant financial challenges that we face and the hard decisions that we've been forced to make, the council has still been able to invest and improve local facilities in West Lothian, and there are not many projects that demonstrate this better."



Pictured centre are Cllr Andrew McGuire and Natalie Don MSP with representatives from West Lothian Council, the Scottish Futures Trust, Hub South East and Morrison Construction.

## New £18.3 million West Lothian primary school underway

### Work to deliver a state-of-the-art primary school in West Lothian has started.

Construction is progressing on a superb new £18.3 million East Calder Primary School, to replace the existing school building which is not suitable for the future delivery of high-quality education.

The ambitious project is being funded through the Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP), a partnership between Scottish and Local Government

to invest in facilities for education which is managed by infrastructure body, the Scottish Futures Trust.

To mark the start of the joint project, West Lothian Council's Executive councillor for education Andrew McGuire was joined by Minister for Children and Young People Natalie Don MSP for a special sod-cutting ceremony.

Councillor McGuire said: "I'm delighted to see work starting on a fantastic new East Calder Primary School, which will be hugely welcomed by the local community.

"West Lothian already has one of the top-rated school estates in the country, and the superb new East Calder Primary will help ensure that even more of our children have the best possible platform for education."

Minister for Children and Young People Natalie Don said: "The new East Calder Primary School will feature high quality, up-to-date

facilities that parents, staff and pupils can be proud of, and I am very pleased to be here to break the first ground.

"The Scottish Government's Learning Estate Investment Programme will invest £2 billion in Scottish schools, in partnership with local authorities, ensuring many of our young people are learning in the schools of the future."

The project is being delivered on behalf of the council by Hub South East with Morrison Construction as the main contractor. This is the

same partnership that recently delivered the new multi-school Winchburgh development, West Calder High School and Calderwood Primary in East Calder.

The replacement school is being built next to the existing school in Langton Road and will be completed by August 2024. The existing school will then be demolished, with the exception of recently-built Early Years extension, which is being retained.

### West Lothian primary pupils are top of the class



Bankton Primary School in Dedridge

### Primary children in West Lothian are achieving above the national average in literacy and numeracy.

The publication of the Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) Levels for 2021/22 puts West Lothian pupils above the Scottish average in all 20 of the national measurements.

By Primary 7, 81% of pupils in West Lothian were achieving the expected level of literacy, significantly above the national average of 71%. Similarly, 83% of Primary 7 pupils in West Lothian were achieving the expected level of numeracy, compared to 76% for Scotland as a whole.

The number of West Lothian pupils achieving the expected level in Primary 1 across five key indicators was 3.4% above the national average, rising to 7.6% in Primary 4

and 8% in Primary 7.

West Lothian pupils were ranked top for achievement at primary school level amongst our comparator authorities, which are other council areas with similar demographics and levels of deprivation. They were rated as third highest for achievement for the whole of Scotland, with only primary pupils from the significantly more affluent areas of East Renfrewshire and East Dunbartonshire rated higher.

Literacy and numeracy attainments gaps for primary pupils were smaller in West Lothian than the national levels and have been continually decreasing since 2018/19.

## New home for Cedarbank brings school together



The school community at Cedarbank School in Livingston have come together to celebrate their superb new state-of-the-art £7 million home.

An official opening took place at the modern, new purpose-built facility in the same campus as the James Young High School, which brings all Cedarbank pupils together under one roof for the first time.

Cedarbank provides quality education for secondary pupils with additional learning needs from around West Lothian, and was previously spread over three locations.

Invited guests were treated to music by talented school pupils, with Executive councillor for education

Andrew McGuire unveiling a special plaque to mark the occasion.

Councillor Andrew McGuire said: "It's a huge privilege to be invited to open the amazing new Cedarbank School.

"The new £7 million Cedarbank School has been specially designed to meet the needs of the pupils, providing the perfect environment to support their learning.

"West Lothian already has one of the best school estates in Scotland, and

this investment will make a positive difference to local children for many years to come."

Cedarbank Headteacher Carol McDonald added: "It was fantastic to welcome everyone to Cedarbank to celebrate the official opening of our school.

"The school environment has a key part to play in reducing barriers for young people with additional support needs, and our new school's features such as the acoustic panelling to reduce noise, clear spacious classrooms and easy access

to the outdoors, will make a huge difference to our young people."

"At Cedarbank, we celebrate each individual's unique strengths, abilities and talents and see our key role as caring for our young people and providing them with a wide range of motivating learning opportunities. The new location of the school has already led to a number of new partnerships which have increased the variety of opportunities available for our learners."

## Two West Lothian schools to benefit from £1.7 million investment

Major improvement work is taking place at Kirkhill Primary in Broxburn and Livingston Village Primary.

A joint £1.7 million renovation and extension programme will see major works carried out at both schools.

Kirkhill Primary will see close to £1.2 million invested to refurbish part of the existing school into a new modern nursery. The work, which includes a new roof, is currently ongoing and is expected to be complete by August 2023.

Nearly £500,000 is being invested in Livingston Village Primary to deliver enhanced dining and social spaces for pupils, as well as reconfiguring a storage area to provide increased learning spaces. Work is expected to be completed in Autumn 2023.

Executive councillor for education Andrew McGuire said: "I'm delighted to see further investment of £1.7 million to improve two more West Lothian schools.

"West Lothian already has one of the best school estates in the country, and investment like this will ensure we give our children the best possible platform for learning."

Both projects are being carried out by West Lothian-based Maxi Construction following a competitive tendering process. Maxi have delivered a number of successful projects on behalf of the council in recent years, including the new Whitburn Partnership Centre and an extension to Blackridge Primary.

John Aitchison, Maxi Construction's Managing Director, added: "The award of these contracts enables us to build on our established relationship with West Lothian Council and adds to our extensive experience in the provision of upgraded and extended education facilities."

## New Beatlie school taking shape



Excellent progress is being made on delivering a superb new dedicated school for West Lothian children with severe, complex and medical support needs.

Work on the fantastic new £15 million Beatlie School Campus in Craigshill, Livingston, is ongoing, with the majority of external works complete and most internal works now well underway.

Beatlie School provides specialist education for pupils aged three to eighteen with severe and complex support and profound medical needs.

The new purpose-built facility, in its new location at Craigswood in Livingston, will be a centre of excellence for children and young people, providing cutting-edge educational facilities when it opens later this year.

Beatlie headteacher Carol Robbie said: "It's great to see our fabulous new Beatlie School Campus progressing so well.

"Everyone in the Beatlie community is looking forward to moving into the finished school, which will have a real positive impact on the level of education and care we can provide our children and young people."

The project is part of a huge investment in schools for pupils with additional support needs, which also includes a new £7.5 million Cedarbank School in and a £5.8 million redevelopment of Pinewood School in Blackburn which were completed recently.

"I'm delighted that the work to deliver the new Beatlie School Campus is progressing on track. West Lothian has one of the best school estates in Scotland and we invested heavily to ensure our pupils have the best possible platform for learning, especially those for our pupils with additional support needs."

Executive councillor for education Andrew McGuire



# Revised Recycling Centre operating hours will be introduced in Autumn 2023

To ensure customers have guaranteed access and reduced waiting times, an online booking system will also be in place for all vehicles entering the CRCs – similar to the system currently used for vans and trailers.

- All five Recycling Centres will be maintained, but they will no longer be open 7 days a week.
- At least two Recycling Centres will be open each weekday, from 10am to 6pm.
- As weekends are the most popular days to visit, all five sites will be open every Saturday and Sunday.
- 85% of all visits are made to Oakbank, Blackburn and Whitburn Recycling Centres, with just 15% choosing to visit Linlithgow and Broxburn.
- The three busier sites will be open for more days than the quieter sites when the operating hours change.
- An online booking system will operate to ensure residents can access

Executive councillor for the environment and sustainability Tom Conn said:

“West Lothian will continue to have a significant number of CRCs compared to other areas - especially given our size.

“In Falkirk, for example, a similar council to West Lothian in terms of population size, there are two CRCs and this has been the case for some time. Both are also open part time and both have moved to an online booking system.

I believe this highlights that this isn't a decision that West Lothian faces alone. All councils face extremely tough decisions in order that we can balance our budgets. We simply cannot continue to deliver the same level of service with the levels of funding available to us.

“It is not the case that councils want to cut any of our services; we have to work with the budgets we have and unless there is more funding, we are forced to make extremely tough decisions.”

## Booking a Visit From Autumn 2023

The online booking system is currently operating for vans and trailers only, if you visit a Recycling Centre in a car at the moment you do not need to make a booking.

When the operating hours change in the Autumn everyone visiting a Recycling Centre, in any vehicle, will need to book their visit in advance.

Recycling Centres are provided to dispose of household waste only, and to make a booking you will need to be resident in West Lothian.

The booking system will secure access for your visit, meaning you can spend less time queueing in traffic and waiting to unload your waste.

Before you travel to a Recycling Centre you will need to book a visit through the Council's website.

- You will be able to see which Recycling Centres have availability, and select a date and time for your visit.
- Bookings can be made on the day or up to a fortnight in advance.
- You will receive a confirmation email for your vehicle registration.
- Once you have made your booking just arrive at the Recycling Centre you've chosen, on the date and within the time slot booked.

**Look out for more information in the next edition of Bulletin which you will receive in August.**

## YOUR COUNCIL | How is the council funded?

**80%** of the council's funding comes from the **Scottish Government**

**Council Tax** only accounts for around **20%** of our total funding

In 2022/23 our revenue budget (day to day running costs) amounts to:

# £528 million

## How do we spend that budget?\*

**£10.4 million** on public transport (including school transport) including and bus subsidies for privately owned bus providers

**£18 million** on facilities management, including school meals, cleaning council buildings, janitorial staff and street crossing patrol guides



**£6.2 million** on the council's fleet of vehicles



**£34.2 million** is spent on social work services for children and families

**£39.8 million** on services for vulnerable adults



**£26.8 million** on Early Learning and Childcare



**£10 million** on footpaths, street lighting, roads, winter maintenance, structures and flood prevention



**£55.5 million** on services for older people

**£3.7 million** on culture and sports services



**£5 million** Homelessness & Community Safety services



**£19.5 million** on support for children with additional needs



**£75.9 million** on Primary School education

**£65.2 million** on Secondary School education



**£4 million** on planning, regeneration, economic development, trading standards and environmental health

**£3.2 million** on neighbourhood services, including libraries, registration services, community centres, and customer information services



**£15.7 million** on the council's property portfolio



**£5.9 million** on country parks/ open spaces, play areas, street cleaning and cemeteries



**£13.9 million** on waste management & recycling services

\*This graphic provides a selection of the main budget areas but not all areas of spend.



# Delivering 1,621 new homes

**West Lothian Council continues to work alongside Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to deliver further high quality, social housing across the area.**

It is not just the council who build new build affordable housing. RSLs are also planning to deliver over 1,000 homes in the next five years with work already underway across WEST Lothian.

Wheatley Homes East (part of Wheatley Group) is one of many RSLs working to deliver high quality, affordable housing with multiple sites across West Lothian including their recently completed development at Almondvale Court in Livingston town centre.

The development features 146 new homes for social rent, mid-market rent and supported living.

Executive councillor for Housing, George Paul, joined Interim Head of Housing, Julie Whitelaw and Housing, Strategy and Development Manager, Marjory

Mackie on a visit to the Almondvale Court development where they met with Wheatley Homes East Head of Housing, Lynsey Fotheringham and Wheatley Homes East Development Manager, Elspeth Lang

Executive councillor for housing George Paul said: "The council is committed to working alongside our valued Registered Social Landlord partners to deliver further affordable homes for the people of West Lothian."

"It was a pleasure to get an insight into the work of Wheatley Homes East and how this work fits into the wider strategy for the delivery of high-quality social housing in West Lothian."

Wheatley Homes East Managing Director Laura Henderson said: "We were delighted to host the delegation from West Lothian



Chris joined Interim head of housing, customer and building services Julie Whitelaw and Councillor Paul

Council.

"The 146 homes, built in partnership with West Lothian Council, are a great example of Wheatley's new-build, housing and care teams working together to transform the community and provide life-changing services to customers."

All types of social housing in West Lothian, whether council or RSL, are currently in very high demand

and as a result, anyone considering applying for social housing in West Lothian is strongly encouraged to ensure that they register not

just with the council, but with all Registered Social Landlords who operate in West Lothian.

**For further information on the housing options available in West Lothian, please scan the QR code:**

For more on Wheatley Homes East, visit: [www.wheatleyhomes-east.com](http://www.wheatleyhomes-east.com)

Other RSL's with sites currently under construction across West Lothian include: Ark, Cairn Housing Association, Homegroup, Link and Places for People.



## National success for Council Apprentice



**An apprentice electrician with West Lothian Council has been named Apprentice of the Year by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Scotland.**

Chris Harkins, who is a second-year apprentice electrician, picked up the Overall Apprentice of the Year Award (1st Year) 2023.

The 26-year-old former St Kentigern's Academy pupil, was nominated for the award by colleagues as he was the standout apprentice in the last 12 months in both the workplace and at college.

Once he was selected as a finalist, Chris had to undertake an interview process with APSE before he was selected as the Overall Apprentice of the Year

winner.

This award is just the latest recognition for Chris after being named West Lothian College Electrical Apprentice of the Year for 2022.

Following his win, Chris has some words of advice for anyone potentially considering an apprenticeship in the future.

He said: "I am delighted to win this award. I'd like to thank my colleagues and tutors for putting me forward for this award in the first place and for passing on their expertise."

"I've had a great experience so far. Every day on the job is different, so it keeps the days interesting and enjoyable, you are always learning something new. I would advise anyone thinking about an apprenticeship to grab the opportunity with both hands and go for it. It is a trade that will set you up for the rest of your life. The people and experiences are great, you won't have any regrets."

Executive councillor for housing, George Paul congratulated him on his success.

Councillor Paul said: "It was a pleasure to meet Chris Harkins and to congratulate him on his success. To be named the overall apprentice of the year is no mean feat and he should be proud of this achievement. It is a reflection on his hard work and I wish him all the best for the future."

**Scan the QR code to view apprenticeship opportunities currently available with West Lothian Council:**



## New housing project for Livingston

**The planned delivery of 49 new council houses including supported housing for young people has moved a step closer.**

The council's plans will consist of 28 houses specifically for young people with onsite support, including 16 flats which can be converted into mainstream housing in the future.

The project will also provide 21 new council homes which will be available for mainstream housing with a mix of two- and three-bedroom houses. All accommodation will have parking and external spaces in line with new build standards.

The joint £9.1million project will be located at Almondvale Crescent, Livingston and both will be built as a single project which will deliver efficiencies both in terms of cost and time.

The council will work with partners, Hub South East, to look at feasibility work on different construction methods to enable the project to be delivered within budget. The proposed new

facility is subject to statutory consents being secured, including planning permission.

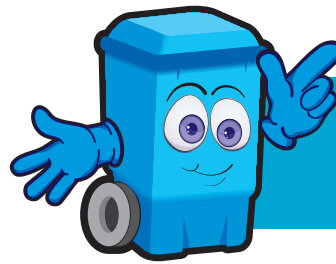
Depute Leader of West Lothian Council, Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan said:

"I believe it is vital that we continue to support young people who are experiencing hardship and cannot find alternative accommodation. The provision of additional housing is urgently required. Officers need to ensure that the solution that delivers best value for the council requires to be developed as part of the design process."

"The site we have chosen is close to amenities with the college, hospital, transport and shopping facilities all within walking distance. These are all important factors in choosing a site that is specifically designed to help young people in need."

# Let's get recycling sorted

 recycle for West Lothian



Find out more including checking your bin collection dates and what goes in each bin by scanning this QR code.



Scan me

Last year we provided you with a **new green recycling bin** for **plastics, cartons, tins and cans**.

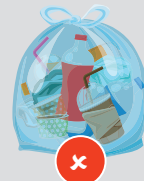
At the same time we changed the items you could recycle in your **blue bin** to **paper and cardboard only**.

Unfortunately some residents are contaminating their bins with the wrong items - this can cause problems with the recycling process. Contamination happens when the wrong items are placed in recycling bins. It is also caused by items that haven't been rinsed properly and are covered in food residues or liquid.

If your bin contains too many of the wrong items it **will not** be emptied - we will tag it and you will be asked to remove the wrong items before putting your bin out again on your next collection day.



**NEVER** place any of these items in your recycling bins:



**Bagged recycling**



**Nappies**



**Wrappers or crisp packets**



**Food or drinks contaminated packaging**



Your **GREEN** bin is only for the following items:



**Plastic bottles**



**Cartons**



**Tins & drink cans**



**Empty plastic bags**



**Plastic pots, tubs & trays**



**Aerosols & tin foil**



Your **BLUE** bin is only for the following items:



**Newspapers & magazines**



**Large & small cardboard boxes**



**Unwanted mail & envelopes**



**Corrugated cardboard boxes**



**Office & shredded paper**



**Kitchen & toilet roll tubes**

Make sure all your items are  **CLEAN**  **EMPTY** and  **DRY** before you recycle them.

# Online boost to West Lothian's growing economy

West Lothian's strategic role as an economic hub for science, technology and higher-value industries has been highlighted through the launch of a new dedicated online, place-marketing portal.



The new Invest in West Lothian website, [www.investinwestlothian.com](http://www.investinwestlothian.com), was showcased recently at a special launch event hosted, Livingston-based Q<sup>2</sup> Solutions, a wholly owned subsidiary and laboratory division of IQVIA, together comprising Scotland's largest employer in the life sciences sector.

Key economic partners including the UK Government, Scottish Enterprise, West Lothian College, Heriot-Watt University and a number of major local employers attended to find out more on the support on offer to help attract and retain the best businesses to West Lothian and grow the area's higher-value business sectors.

West Lothian's dynamic economy, strategic location and motivated workforce makes it a key economic hub for Scotland, reflecting its attractiveness as a place to invest, live, learn and work. This is why a wide range of major employers have chosen to make West Lothian their long-term home, including Q<sup>2</sup> Solutions, Sky Television, Mitsubishi, Tesco, Glenmorangie and Shin-Etsu.

The portal has been specially developed by the Business Gateway team within West Lothian Council's Economic Development service to highlight the range of support for local firms and sells West Lothian as an inward and mobile investment

destination.

Marking the formal launch of Invest in West Lothian, Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan, Depute Leader of West Lothian Council, said: "I'm confident the Invest in West Lothian website will play a significant role in continuing West Lothian's amazing economic success story in the future.

"Local firms have responded positively to the support highlighted on the Invest website around new premises, developing new markets, skills training, digital marketing and carbon reduction projects. At this time of macro-economic challenges, we know that the support provided to business is

making a real difference."

Launch event hosts, Q<sup>2</sup> Solutions, updated guests on why they chose West Lothian to be the site of their Scottish HQ.

Dr Karen Tait, Q2 Solutions' General Manager and Livingston Site Head said "We made the strategic decision to commit to expansion in West Lothian because of the access to a skilled workforce, proximity to major roads for transportation and the joined-up support from public agencies. We're delighted to promote the Invest website and support its objective to encourage business investment in West Lothian."

West Lothian Council

**Find out how we can support your business!**  
[www.investinwestlothian.com](http://www.investinwestlothian.com)

20
new

## Foster families are needed **urgently**

West Lothian children are waiting for caring and committed people to foster them. We have primary and secondary children who need long and short-term foster families and the lengths of placements can also range. The children who need foster families are the same as other children, they go to school, they like the cinema, they like to play, make friends, listen to music and take part in clubs.

However, they will often have experienced troubled or disrupted family lives, or they could have experienced separation, loss or abuse. Fostering is a way of offering these children and young people a safe, stable, family environment while their own families are unable to look after them.

### We care... **could you?**

#### Who can foster?

We welcome single people and couples regardless of your gender, sexuality or ethnic background.

#### Are smokers allowed to foster?

If you are a smoker, we will only approve you to foster children aged five years and over.

#### How much space do I need?

You must have a spare room and enough space for the children you foster.

#### What happens if I have a pet?

Pets are welcome and can bring many positive experiences. Your pet will be assessed as part of the process.

#### Are there age restrictions?

Yes, you must be aged 21 years or over.

#### What about training?

All prospective foster carers must be available for assessment, and must attend the pre-approval training course. Once you are a foster carer you will receive ongoing support.



Email [C&FFamilyPlacementTeam@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:C&FFamilyPlacementTeam@westlothian.gov.uk) or call 07863557552 to book your place on the Foster Preparation Course and to find out more about fostering in West Lothian. Further information on fostering in the local area can be found by scanning the QR code or visiting [westlothian.gov.uk/lovefostering](http://westlothian.gov.uk/lovefostering)

# Explore West Lothian's fantastic country parks this summer

Beecraigs, Polkemmet and Almondell and Calderwood country parks are free to visit and offer superb scenery, forest walks, fun activities and fascinating history for the whole family.



## Polkemmet

The home of the historic Baillie Estate, Polkemmet Country Park has a wealth of history within its grounds, including the old boating and carp pond and the Baillie Family Mausoleum.

The original stable and tack room buildings of the former country house remain and now house a small Visitor Centre for information

and refreshments which can be contacted on 01501 743905.

The park is also home to a nine-hole golf course and driving range, and almost 4km of waymarked picturesque woodland walks alongside the River Almond. Look out for The Horn, a 79ft-high stainless-steel trumpet artwork, on your way around the Blue Route.

The popular children's play area has recently been upgraded with additional inclusive and accessible play equipment, including sensory play panels and a wheelchair roundabout.

Close by is the Dardanelles steam train, which is a genuine piece of history from West Lothian's coal mining days.

## Beecraigs

Beecraigs Country Park is set within the Bathgate Hills, with the Visitor Centre offering incredible views over the Firth of Forth and beyond to Edinburgh. On a clear day, you can see all the way to the Isle of May and to the Bass Rock.

Whilst in the Visitor Centre, learn about our wildlife by interacting with our wildlife displays, and grab a park map to explore with. The Hideaway Café also offers an extensive menu of refreshments, with gluten free options available.

The Park has over 30km of forest paths and trails and three waymarked routes to choose from, where you can take in Beecraigs Loch and the recently upgraded Balvormie Play Area. It is also home to over 16km of waymarked Mountain Bike Trails of varying difficulty. Horse riders are welcome, and are advised to park in Hillhouse car park if they are bringing a horse box or trailer. The Visitor Centre can be contacted on 01506 284516.

## Almondell & Calderwood

Sitting between the historic town of Broxburn and villages of East and Mid Calder lies Almondell, the picturesque estate of the Earls of Buchan. The River Almond meanders through the heart of the Park, with riverside paths providing lots of opportunity for exploring by foot, bike and wheelchair. The river is crossed by several historic bridges, including the wonderful 19th century sandstone Nasmyth Bridge.

The original stable block of the former estate house now houses the Visitor Centre, which offers information, refreshments, seating and local art exhibitions and can be contacted on 01506 882254

There are four new colour-coded waymarked routes to choose from to explore the park's amazing nature, passing through ancient trees, wildflowers and colourful rhododendrons.

Pick up a map at the Visitor Centre and take the Heritage Trail produced by the Friends of Almondell and funded by the Heritage Lottery.



## Events

The Ranger Service are running two combined Wild Wednesday & Bioblitz events in Livingston this year, in partnership with the Ecology & Biodiversity team and other external partner organisations. These environmental fayres will offer nature and Scottish Outdoor Access Code-themed

activities and information at Almond Park on 28 June and Campridge Pond in Murieston on 19 July.

Please check the West Lothian Council Facebook Page and the Ranger Service Eventbrite page for more details on these and other events.



## Volunteering

The Volunteer Ranger Service runs on one Thursday and one (alternating) Saturday/Sunday a month, at different sites across West Lothian.

They also work in partnership with several Friends groups, who help to look after their local Parks and greenspaces and meet one Saturday per month.

No experience is necessary to get involved, and you don't need to join the Friends groups, just come along and help if you can.

To book your place on the Eventbrite page, please scan the QR code or visit: [wlcangerservice.eventbrite.com](http://wlcangerservice.eventbrite.com)



## Enjoy the Country Parks Responsibly



In Scotland, we are fortunate enough to be able to access most land to enjoy the outdoors, as long as we do so responsibly.

West Lothian's Country Parks are public spaces for all kinds of visitors. Please be considerate of others whilst visiting greenspaces, and keep an eye out for any Ranger Service notice.

Please keep dogs under close control, and ensure you pick up after your dog, placing bags in any of the bins around the park.

Please only use disposable BBQ's on picnic tables that are fitted with metal plates. Always bring sufficient water with you to put them out once you are finished.

Open fires are not permitted as these can set fire to dry grass and vegetation, and never discard cigarettes.

Thank you for your help in keeping our Parks and greenspaces safe.

Scan the QR code or visit [www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot](http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot) for more information on how to enjoy the countryside responsibly



# Bus service update

West Lothian Council has stepped in to fund a number of subsidised bus services, following recent significant changes within the commercial network.



## ■ Why?

McGill's Eastern Scottish have submitted registrations to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner which seek to amend their commercial local bus network within West Lothian.

West Lothian Council has no influence or authority over their commercial operation. Councils do not have any role in regulating the commercial bus network, which (in West Lothian) represents around 80% of bus journeys.

The changes will also affect subsidised contracts held by McGill's and came into effect from Monday 8 May.

## ■ Impact

The commercial network change will also impact on the relatively small number of council subsidised contracts held by McGill's. The council uses limited funding to support around 20% of local bus services, to fill gaps in the commercial bus network.

## ■ Action

Due to the reduction in the number of subsidised services that McGill's provides, the council has agreed that subsidised funding, that would have been used for these services, is spent on bus services that provide a transport option for people that would otherwise have no travel choices at all – specifically

within the Blackridge and Greenrigg areas.

The council has agreed to award a subsidised contract LBS 10 to McGill's Eastern Scottish to extend the 21 service to provide a connection between Blackridge and Bathgate via Armadale. The council has also agreed a

contribution to Strathclyde Partnership for Transport to reinstate a bus service linking Whitburn with the Shotts area, which will provide a connection for residents in Greenrigg.

## ■ McGills have now introduced their revised service.

The council is also exploring

the use of developer funding to re-establish any lost connection from Winchburgh to areas such as Livingston.

The council has also written to Kevin Stewart MSP, the Scottish Government's Minister for Transport to ask him to reinstate the COVID recovery support for buses.

## ■ Key points:

These changes will see the largest commercial network change by an operator in a number of years and will impact journey options for passengers. 80% of bus services in West Lothian are commercial services, and West Lothian Council has no influence or authority over their commercial operation.

The council receives no Scottish Government funding to provide a local bus service and the council did not reject, nor was offered, revenue funding from the Scottish Government for bus services.

The Transport Act 1985 deregulated bus services in the UK, moving from council-run buses to an open commercial market.

If you have any questions, our local bus FAQ might be of interest: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/local-bus](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/local-bus)

## Calling Men! - Prostate Cancer - get tested



Councillor Tony Pearson joined Charlie Hogg to promote the Prostate Cancer Support Group

Men in West Lothian are being urged to get checked for Prostate Cancer.

Members of the West Lothian Prostate Cancer Support Group were out and about to help spread that message recently.

Charlie Hogg – Group Leader – said: "More men need to get tested earlier. One in

eight men are expected to get diagnosed with Prostate Cancer and even more if it has been in their family.

"It is crucial that men get a PSA blood test at their local GP surgery."

Edinburgh & Lothians Prostate Cancer Support Group meet on 27 July & 19 October at Crofthead Farm Community Centre, Templar Rise, Dedridge, Livingston.

For information about the group or for help & advice, please contact Duncan Wallace on 01506 632309 or email [dingbrodunky@gmail.com](mailto:dingbrodunky@gmail.com) or email Charlie Hogg at [charliehogg@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:charliehogg@blueyonder.co.uk)

### Macmillan in West Lothian

In partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, the council's Advice Shop can offer support to those affected by cancer within West Lothian in a number of ways.

The Advice Shop offers a dedicated Macmillan Benefits Team who can support those living with cancer. We have specialist knowledge of benefits, tax credits and grants and can offer you up-to-date, invaluable advice. You can contact one of our Macmillan benefits advisers by calling 01506 283000.



Councillor Sullivan joined members of the council's Advice Shop

## Check what benefits you are entitled to

Reports suggest that around £15 billion in means tested benefits are unclaimed each year in the UK, and a significant amount is going unclaimed by West Lothian residents.

Support and advice for people is available via West Lothian Council's Advice Shop - who have helped raise over £25 million in benefits, in West Lothian, in 2022.

The team can help local people find out what benefits they are entitled to, and ensure that they are not missing out on support.

The Advice Shop is a free, impartial and confidential service to help the people of West Lothian with a focus to alleviate poverty and to promote inclusion and equality through

advice, assistance and advocacy in Welfare Benefits, Energy Advice, Money and Debt and Housing Advice.

Depute Council Leader Kirsteen Sullivan said: "Benefits exist to help people who need that extra support and it's clear through our work that many people don't realise that they are entitled to that additional support. £15 billion of benefits are going unclaimed across the UK and a significant proportion of those missing out will stay in West Lothian. I'd urge local people to contact us as quickly as possible and arrange for a benefits check. It can be done online, over the phone or in person and it doesn't take long to do."

Customers can use the online benefit calculator by scanning the QR code, or by visiting [www.westlothian.gov.uk/benefit-calculator](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/benefit-calculator)





# #DON'T WASTE WESTLOTHIAN



Look after West Lothian's amazing natural environment by ensuring you dispose of all your waste responsibly.

**Fly-tipping is illegal and dangerous**  
Anyone caught could be fined up to **£40,000** or face a **jail sentence**.

Report it:



[westlothian.gov.uk/dontwaste](http://westlothian.gov.uk/dontwaste)

## HELP TO DEAL WITH PESTS THIS SUMMER

**WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL'S PEST CONTROL TEAM IS ON HAND TO HELP WITH PESKY PROBLEMS THIS SUMMER.**

Wasps are probably the most feared of the pests that the council's team deal with and it's this time of year you are more likely to have them trying to set up home near you. If you see wasps going into any spaces within your property it is time to get help from the pest control team.



Please call **01506 280000** (select option 4) to book a visit from the team

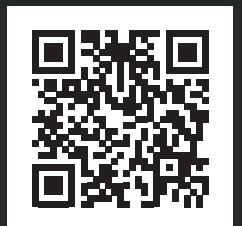


The Pest Control team can also deal with other pest problems you may have Rats/Mice or other pests.

The council do not treat bees as they are not designated pests and in some cases are becoming endangered. Bees will only sting when they feel threatened and the best advice is to leave them well alone.

Please note that a charge is applicable depending on the course of action required by the Pest Control team.

You can find a list of prices and more useful information on pest control by visiting the West Lothian Council website: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/pestcontrol](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/pestcontrol)



# News in brief

## Changes to the process for lodging licensing applications



Following improvements designed at making it quicker and easier to lodge licensing applications, customers are now able to go online to access licensing application forms and make payments.

Applications and payments are no longer accepted at council payment offices or other council buildings.

This covers applications and payments for the following licenses:

- Alcohol licences
- Gambling licences
- Hire car licences
- HMO licences

Various types of civic government licences e.g. street traders, public entertainment etc

Customers can access application forms and relevant information on all types of licences administered by the West Lothian Council Licensing Team via the licensing section of the West Lothian Council website:

[www.westlothian.gov.uk/licensing](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/licensing)

## Roof replacement works at Fauldhouse Partnership Centre

Work has been taking place as part of an £830,000 programme to replace part of the roof at Fauldhouse Partnership Centre. The full replacement of the roof above the sports hall was approved by Council Executive, and is required after inspections found water damage was affecting the reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) roof planks.

The project will be completed in this summer.

## Planning permission granted for over 400 homes at Bangour

A planning application has been approved for the development of 357 houses and 55 flats at the site of the former Bangour Village Hospital to the west of Dechmont.

The application from site owners, Ambassador Developments (Bangour) Limited, was approved subject to conditions, by West Lothian Development Management Committee.

This is the first detailed application for residential development on the site with planning permission in principle already in place for the master plan for the redevelopment of the Bangour Village Hospital area. A new primary school and new village hall are just two elements proposed to be delivered in the

future as part of the master plan.

The new homes will be a mix of private and affordable housing with a number of listed buildings in the area set to be retained.

## Almond Valley application approved

Almond Valley Heritage Centre's plans to create a new access and carry out upgrades to their car park have been approved by the council. Planning permission was granted by West Lothian Council's Development Management Committee.

Almond Valley Heritage Centre has been granted permission to move their existing entrance and main access route 50m further north. The current entrance will be closed and replaced with gates and planters.

The relocation of the access away from the front of the building will make the area around the building entrance safer for pedestrians, in particular families and children. The existing informal footpath which is located at the proposed new entrance point will be replaced by a formal pedestrian access, which will allow people to continue to use the route connecting Millfield to Thirfield Wynd.

## New electric car vehicle charging tariffs now in place



New tariffs for West Lothian's electric vehicle (EV) public charging network have been introduced.

West Lothian Council owns a total of 32 public charge points at seventeen locations.

There are a number of charge points operated by other organisations, including those located at railway stations

As the uptake of electric vehicles and the use of council owned facilities has increased, so have the costs of operating and maintaining the network and infrastructure. These costs are currently met by West Lothian Council, which is not sustainable given the rising cost of electricity.

Introducing charges for council-owned charging points allows the council to recover the costs of operating the network, maximise the availability of rapid chargers by improving driver behaviour and encourage private investment in the network, further increasing provision of EV charging points in future - which is widely seen as a way to help meet the future growth of electric vehicles and

demand for charging points.

The majority of Scotland's councils already have tariffs in place for public owned charging points.

The new tariffs cover the costs incurred for the unit cost of electricity, maintenance and future investment and expansion of new EV charging points.

Drivers using the network must ensure they register details with ChargePlace Scotland. Details on how to do so can be found by [chargeplacescotland.org](http://chargeplacescotland.org)

## Pharmacy lease approved at Strathbrock

West Lothian Council has approved a ten year lease extension for the Pharmacy Unit at Strathbrock Partnership Centre.

The council currently grants a lease of the unit to Lloyds Pharmacy.

The current lease was due to expire in July but has now been extended to 2033.

## Preferred option for future of St Kentigern's

A £30 million proposal to secure the long-term future of St Kentigern's Academy in Blackburn has been supported.

Council Executive voted to continue to progress a preferred option for St Kentigern's, that would see the parts of the school affected by reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) roof planks demolished and a new wing constructed in the same location.

A further £10 million has been allocated towards delivering this three-year project, taking the total funding commitment by the council to £20.2 million.

This leaves £10 million outstanding, and it was agreed to approach the Scottish Government for financial support for the remaining funding required to deliver the project, as further borrowing would negatively impact on the budget available for education in West Lothian.

Design work will continue over the summer, with the aim of a further report back to committee in Autumn 2023 to give final approval for the project, if additional funding can be secured.

An additional £300,000 was also allocated to maintain the temporary units at the school for a further year to provide the additional classroom space necessary in the short-term.

# Legacy of Chattel Slavery



**Established in 2021, the West Lothian Legacy of Chattel Slavery Working Group is exploring local links to transatlantic slavery and colonialism.**

This work was initiated against the backdrop of the Black Lives Matter movement and a growing awareness of the role which Scotland and its people had in the history of transatlantic slavery and British colonialism.

A thematic review document has been developed by the group. This highlights the ways in which transatlantic slavery and colonialism touched all aspects of life.

A number of Conversation Events have taken place. Information and views gathered at these events will support the Working Group in making recommendations to West Lothian Council. These recommendations will outline actions that might be taken to acknowledge the history of the past and will also help to tackle the racial discrimination and inequalities still experienced by people from our ethnically diverse communities.

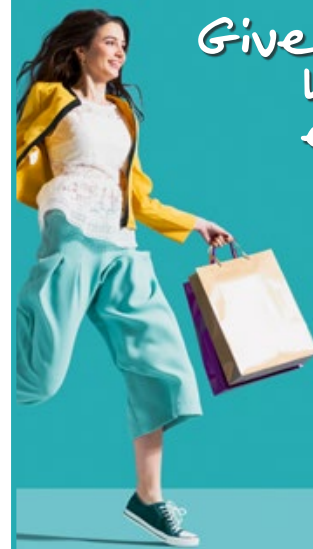
You can also share your views by completing a short online survey. If you would like to request a paper copy of this survey, or have any questions, please contact

[LegacyofSlaveryWorkingGoup@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:LegacyofSlaveryWorkingGoup@westlothian.gov.uk).

To find out more, and to view the review document, please scan the QR code or visit: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/transatlantic-slavery-and-colonialism](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/transatlantic-slavery-and-colonialism)



Give back to the West Lothian economy this summer



Local residents are encouraged to consider buying West Lothian Gift Cards to boost local businesses.



Over 140 local and national businesses based in West Lothian have signed up to the scheme, with discount supermarket Lidl the latest household name to join.

The card can be swiped at the till like a debit card, with the available balance automatically updated after each purchase.

**Any West Lothian-based business who wish to join the scheme should email [wlgiftcard@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:wlgiftcard@westlothian.gov.uk) or visit [www.lovelocal.scot/giftcard](http://www.lovelocal.scot/giftcard) for further details.**

**For more information or to buy gift cards, please visit [www.scotlandgiftslocal.com](http://www.scotlandgiftslocal.com)**



# Xcite Colour Run

Over 200 energetic children celebrated the end of the Easter holidays at the first ever Xcite Kids Colour Run on Sunday, April 16th.

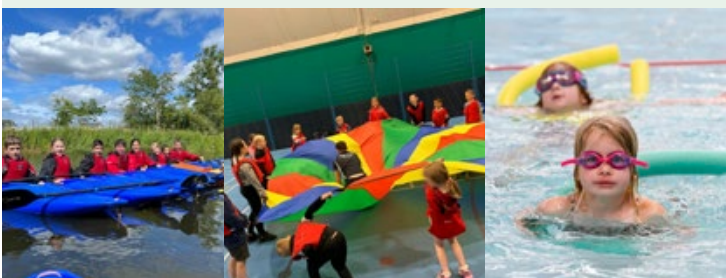
Participants danced, walked, and ran through the course, tackling thrilling slip & slides, cargo net crawls, and inflatable obstacles along the way. It was a day filled with non-stop laughter and a lot of colour!

The demand for tickets was incredible and we are already planning our next event - keep an eye on our social channels, the Xcite Colour Run will be back!



XCITE

## The Xcite Summer Holiday Programme



Monday 3rd July - Thursday 10th August

Keep the kids active this summer with the Xcite Summer programme! We've got everything from golf and multi-activity camps to crash course swimming lessons, and outdoor adventures! ASN sessions are also available. Scan the QR code for more details.



## Entertainment for Everyone at Howden Park Centre

Barbara Dickson returns to Howden Park Centre with Nick Holland for a very special acoustic performance where they explore her catalogue of songs at an intimate level. The pair perform a wonderful range of material drawing on Barbara's folk roots, contemporary greats, and some of her classic hits. The performance is on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> July, 7.30pm.



There is great family entertainment this summer with **The Smeds and The Smoos** presented by Tall Stories. A joyful tale of star-crossed aliens. Soar into space with this exciting adaptation of the award-winning book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler. *The Smeds and The Smoos* © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 2019, published by Scholastic. Shows on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 1.30pm and Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023 at 10.30am and 1.30pm. For all aged 3+.

Get ready for the **Ultimate Pop Party!** on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2pm. This pop concert extravaganza features the UK's top tribute acts to Ariana Grande (Ariana Live), Dua Lipa (Dupa Lipa) and Little Mix (Little Fix). The biggest solo female pop stars join the world's greatest girl group for the Ultimate Pop Party Perfect for the little one's first concert experience or a fun day out for all the family!



And did you know **The Happiness Collectors** need YOU! The world's supplies of happiness are running low and they need your help to top them up. Pop on your headphones and go on a journey of sounds and silliness, Happiness Collectors is audio-immersive storytelling for family audiences. Each audience member experiences the show through a set of wireless headphones. Shows on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> July 12.30pm and 2.30pm Recommended for 4 yrs+

On Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> August, 7.30pm come see **Ireland The Show**, featuring an all-star Irish cast of the Emerald Isle's most talented award-winning performers, accompanied by the fabulous Keltic Storm Band and world champion Gael Force Irish dancers from Kerry, Mayo and Clare. Guaranteed to take you to Ireland and back in one night!



For full details on these shows and our full programme, please visit our website at [www.howdenparkcentre.co.uk](http://www.howdenparkcentre.co.uk), follow us on social media or get in touch with the team at the box office on 01506 340700.



## Canalympics



Care providers from across West Lothian came together for a thrilling afternoon of friendly competition and sporting challenges at the Xcite Ageing Well Care Activity Network (CAN) 'Canalympics' event held at Xcite Craigswood.

Supported by CAN and SMILE, the Xcite event saw 11 teams showcase their skills and enthusiasm.

Attendees were treated to refreshments provided by the Tesco community champions, and a dedicated team of volunteers, including 15 West Lothian College students and 30 Xcite Ageing Well volunteers, offered their assistance throughout the event.

Following the excitement of the challenges, participants had the opportunity to socialise and enjoy a tea dance celebration, concluding the afternoon on a high note.

