

## A message from our Chief Executive, Sandra Black

Today marked another milestone for us in our response to the Coronavirus outbreak as lockdown measures were reviewed for the second time by Scottish Government. Due to the continuing likelihood of a large number of us being infected with the disease if the lockdown is relaxed now, physical distancing restrictions currently remain in place.

**That is not to say that there has not been progress, and we continue to see signs of hope, not least in the declining numbers of people requiring intensive care treatment. This is testament to the sacrifices you have all made in staying at home and to the commitment and dedication of our NHS and health and social care colleagues. I am very proud of the contribution you are making.**

[Read Sandra's message in full here.](#)



## Latest information and advice —we've got you covered!

The Scottish Government this week confirmed that current lockdown restrictions will continue beyond **May 7** and updated its document that sets out the approach it will take in making decisions about the easing of current restrictions. For now, this means we must still stay home and only travel if it is essential. It also means that home working will continue for many staff for the time being and so we are continuing to focus on how to look after your wellbeing, helping you to remain active and connected to people. The update from the Government indicates how restrictions might be eased when the time is right—this includes being able to spend a little more time outdoors and being able to meet with some friends or family out with your own household. There will also be a gradual return of some businesses and NHS services. But for now, the current restrictions continue, and the Stay Home message remains. We will provide further updates when available. You can read more about the approach here [www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-further-information/](http://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-framework-decision-making-further-information/)

To take part in the conversation that will help inform the Scottish Government's plan for easing restrictions and eventually ending lockdown visit the following webpage: [www.ideas.gov.scot/covid-19-a-framework-for-decision-making](http://www.ideas.gov.scot/covid-19-a-framework-for-decision-making)

Though we must continue to stay home in order to save lives and protect the NHS, it's also vital that you do not ignore any medical emergencies whether you believe it to be Coronavirus related or not. Don't forget, the NHS is still there for you and is continuing to provide world class health care to all who need it every single day. Don't ignore something that could turn into a bigger problem down the line. Always seek the advice and treatment you need when you need it. Remember, if it's urgent, it's urgent!

For all the latest on guidance from the NHS, UK and Scottish Governments visit our Coronavirus information page.

[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus)

## Public holidays

A huge thank you to everyone working the May public holidays. If you don't normally work on a public holiday, this will not change unless your service requires additional support at this time. If you have been asked to support your service on a public holiday, you will be paid at the normal public holiday rates.

If you have any queries regarding these arrangements, please discuss these with your line manager.

Visit our website at  
[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk)

## Help us get it right...

So much has changed in such a short time. Now, more than ever, our staff communications need to be the best they can be.

To help and support you in this new normal we want to make sure we're keeping you updated with what's happening at work, connecting you with colleagues, helping you take care of your wellbeing and creating new ways to keep in touch with you.

Could you take 5–10 minutes to answer a few short questions to help us get it right? <https://arcg.is/1Wyn08>

The survey will be available until **Thursday 21 May**. Thanks for taking part.

Don't forget you can follow us on Facebook @Renfrewshire and Twitter @RenCouncil for the latest staff updates or check out the staff section of our public website at [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/staff](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/staff)

## P60s go paper free

This year we are moving to paper free P60s meaning no more paper copies will be produced. P60s for the year 2019-2020 are currently being developed and everyone will be able to access theirs online via Business World very soon.

This move is in line with the council's progressive strategy of working towards a paper free environment and utilising the functionality of our online employee self-service tools. In addition, it also provides the added benefit of being able to view not only your P60 but also all of your payslips in one place on a secure centralised system.

Business World Guidance can be found here: [www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/7621/Business-World](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/7621/Business-World)

## Health, Safety and Wellbeing at work and at home

What could be more important than taking care of our physical and mental wellbeing at this time and always?

With the latest information on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and further tips and guidance on how to stay safe while on the job, our 'Health and wellbeing at work' page is there to help whether you are on the front line or working from home. Here you can also find the first of a series of useful online learning guides under 'Working at home' which includes resources to support remote working, managing virtual teams, managing in a crisis situation, working from home and dealing with stress.

[www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-and-Wellbeing-at-Work](http://www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/article/10207/Health-and-Wellbeing-at-Work)

The Scottish Government has put together some useful tools and advice for keeping your body and mind healthy during this challenging time. For ideas on exercising, healthy diet, maintaining a social life and staying emotionally centred visit <https://clearyourhead.scot/>

Don't forget our employee counselling service is still available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Professional counsellors are on hand to provide you with free, confidential support via telephone and digital channels such as Skype. Visit the webpage [www.timefortalking.co.uk/](http://www.timefortalking.co.uk/) for more information or call **0800 970 3980** for free support now.



## Commemorations Continue for Victory in Europe (VE) Day

Friday 8 May marks 75 years since the end of the Second World War and though this will be a VE day like no other, Legion Scotland and PoppyScotland are pulling out all the stops to ensure the day receives the recognition it deserves.

With public events unable to take place and restrictions ongoing that mean no-one should travel to pay their respects this VE day, it does not mean that commemorations are cancelled.

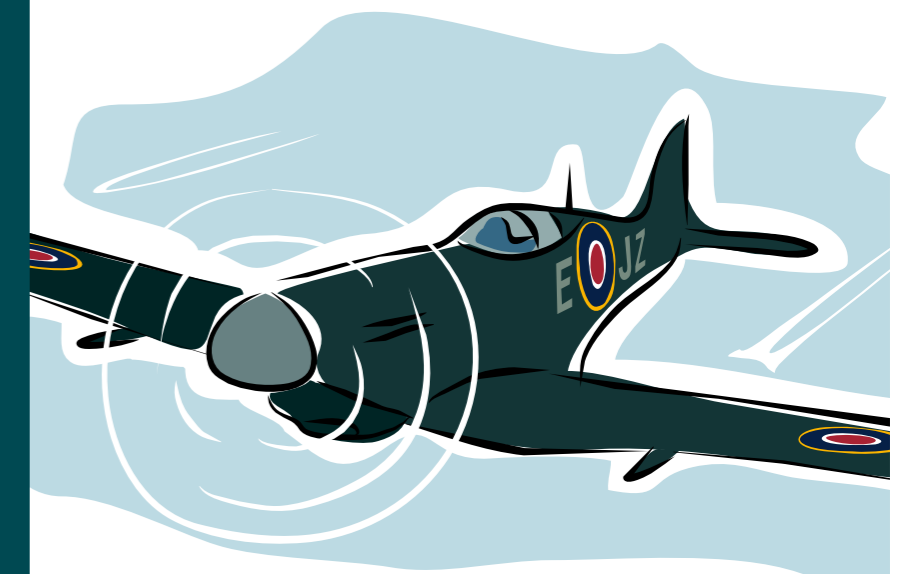
At 10.40am a virtual Service of Remembrance will take place accessible via both charities Facebook pages followed by a one-hour tribute by an array of performers who had been booked for the public event this year at Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh.

To help households relive the spirit of 1945 and mark the occasion with a bit of gusto, PoppyScotland has pulled together some fun activities from wartime recipes to World War 2 playlists, that can be used to throw your very own VE day party. Why not video call some friends and relatives and make it full blown celebration?

Go to [www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-involved/ve75/virtual-ve-day-party/](http://www.poppyscotland.org.uk/get-involved/ve75/virtual-ve-day-party/)

## VE Day—resources for little learners

Learning about history is an important part of the school curriculum and while schools are closed, anything that can assist kids to learn from home is a bonus. A range of educational resources are available on the PoppyScotland website that will help bring history to life and educate youngsters on the significance of VE Day and remembrance. <http://learning.poppyscotland.org.uk/>



## Survey for Parents and Carers

If you live in Renfrewshire and are supporting a child's education from home, our Director of Children's Services Steven Quinn passes on his 'sincere thanks and appreciation'. Children's Services have now created a short survey for parents and carers and Steven asks that you 'take this opportunity to ask any questions you may have.' He goes on to say that 'as well as offering a reply, I would hope these questions will further support the work we are doing to ensure we can best meet the needs of all our children and young people.'

Complete the survey here: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/>





## Unheard Voices

Youth Services are continuing their work engaging young people to ensure their voices are not lost in midst of the current pandemic. The new Unheard Voices campaign launches on Monday 11 May and will see Youth Services supporting Renfrewshire Youth Voice (RYV) in its efforts to give young people an online platform full of useful resources. These include activities to keep busy during self-isolation, fortnightly surveys, call outs for journals and storyboards telling their personal tales of lockdown and isolation, plus podcasts with interviews on how they have been affected by the pandemic and what they are doing to keep going and support others. They'll even be developing a plan for celebrating their liberation when lockdown finally ends.

As an incentive to take part in these activities, the campaign is offering Young Scot Reward Points and prize draws.

All the information gathered will be used to assess how best to meet the needs of young people in Renfrewshire during this time and in the future.

Youth Services Manager, Fiona Taylor, said 'Ensuring we listen to young people and fully understand what challenges they face is a vital step towards providing them with the right supports for now and in times to come. This is particularly important as we recognise the increased pressures on young carers and the mental health implications that many young people currently face.

'The whole project is underpinned by empowering young people to become agents of their own development through planning and decision-making. This approach supports young people to become active citizens influencing the communities they live in, local services and finding positive opportunities. The hashtag [#youthworkchangeslives](#) is a popular statement on social media for highlighting the importance of the work we do.'

More information and resources can be accessed via the Unheard Voices webpage here: <https://young.scot/campaigns/renfrewshire/unheard-voices>

## Working from home?

In previous weeks we've had some fabulous photos from a few of you who are working from home. Please keep them coming!

Here's a few of our colleagues in the Communications Team and their quarantine companions...



Content Designer **Angela McInnes'** cat Lily is very curious to know why her pet human is taking selfies at lunch time instead of dishing out the Dreamies



Senior Communications Officer **Graeme Crawford** has his work cut out as he grapples with working from home and entertaining his 10-month-old cockapoo Charlie



Fighting for space—Senior Communications Officer **David Christie** finds sharing an office with his daughter **Orla** interesting to say the least

# Frontline focus



**Tommy Wright** Concierge Caretaking Coordinator

## Rising to the challenge

Our Concierge and Caretaking team are another of our vital frontline brigades who are continuing to work 7 days a week to support residents living in all 14 of our council high-rise blocks.

Since the beginning of the lockdown measures, they have been extremely busy with a variety of tasks including carrying out regular fire safety checks, ensuring bin stores are cleared and handling out-of-hours emergency repair calls.

There is no doubt their presence is a constant reassurance to residents as they are also there to provide help and assistance whenever needed. As well as essential safety checks and maintaining standards in the entrances and common areas, staff are keeping their eyes out for anyone who may need a bit of extra support. They are always happy to do what they can whether it's carrying shopping up flights of stairs or just being there to lift spirits with a friendly smile and a wave.

Tommy Wright, Co-ordinator of the Council's Concierge & Caretaking service, is pictured at Glencairn Court, where concierge staff make daily welfare calls to older tenants, checking in with them and making sure they are ok. He said, 'my team have been working full out since the COVID19 restrictions were put in place. We have certainly found the last few weeks to be a real challenge. However, we are determined to continue to carry out all our daily safety checks, as well as going the extra mile to help keep connected with residents.

'The residents at Glencairn Court who are receiving our daily welfare checks have all expressed their appreciation. Though they weren't best pleased when we had to close off the tenant's lounge putting a stop to their frequent social events. But they quickly accepted the situation and have hinted that my team will be guests of honour when the lounge eventually reopens!'

Are you part of a team who are working hard to deliver frontline services during this challenging time? We want you to get the recognition you deserve! Send your stories to [internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

## Unsung Heroes

With over 250 staff currently at work within schools, care homes, sheltered housing complexes and offices, our fantastic Soft Facilities Management (Soft FM) team continue to work hard keeping all premises remaining open for essential services clean and safe.

Staff at Baltic Park are continuing to provide the Community Meals service to the people of Renfrewshire and catering staff at schools prepare lunches for all volunteer staff, teachers and children, all while strictly adhering to social distancing. Anne Miller, who normally works as a cleaner and Community Meals operative for Ralston day centre, has recently been working at extra care premises Banktop Court in Johnstone providing meals for the residents. She said 'I'm really happy to help in the care home during this time. Everyone is working as a team and together we will get through this!'



**Cleaner Barbara Harkins**



**Cleaner Moira McIntyre**

Residents at three of our sheltered housing complexes have welcomed the presence of cleaner Michelle Gordon, who is keeping the complexes sparkling clean. Michelle is normally a caretaker at Foxbar community centre but has stepped into the shoes of cleaner Margaret Love, who is currently shielding. Michelle said 'I'm happy to be giving residents peace of mind as they can see their living environment is cleaned and maintained daily. I feel I'm making an important contribution to our service which is doing its best to meet the challenges of this lockdown!'

Janitorial and cleaning staff at school hubs are kept busy each day ensuring they provide a clean and safe environment for the children of key workers who attend. Our janitor from St Fergus Primary School, Scott Anderson, who has been carrying out his role at West Primary School hub said he 'never doubted for a second' that he would do what he could to contribute to the fight against Coronavirus. He explained 'I knew from the beginning I wanted to stay at work in support and solidarity with key workers across all sectors. I hope my presence at West Primary hub helps the children feel safe and happy while their parents are at work carrying out their vital roles!'

Offices including the Mile End Centre in Paisley are frequently being cleaned by staff like Moira McIntyre & Barbara Harkins. Moira is glad to make her contribution and feels we should all be 'doing our bit' in these trying times. Barbara said she is 'happy to contribute in any way that helps improve conditions for frontline workers as they deliver essential services!'

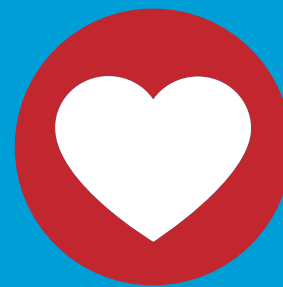
The current situation has highlighted just how much these staff and their colleagues deliver every day to make sure council services run smoothly. They are all making a critical contribution to Renfrewshire's efforts in tackling the Covid-19 pandemic. Their positivity and continued presence at council premises have been crucial in maintaining a semblance of normality for staff and service users. For this, the Soft FM and wider Facilities Management team sincerely thank you!



**Janitor Scott Anderson**

# Social Shout Outs

Our Facebook and Twitter channels have received some more fantastic feedback from the people of Renfrewshire this week. Just goes to show all your hard work is recognised and appreciated. Here are just a few of the comments we have received so far...



**"Well done to all Renfrewshire Council's teams, continuing to work in these weird & uncertain times."**

Doris Wheelan via Facebook

**"...@AttainRen @RenCouncil...Well done Team Attain, you are doing amazing work for your children, families and volunteers at this time"**

Jen Reston via Twitter

**"Thank you to all the bin lorry drivers. We have a lot of rubbish now a days and I for one is very grateful for every uplift. Big hugs and prayers."**

Jeanette Docherty via Facebook

**"Thank you for your help :) I really appreciate it"**

Daniel Murie via Facebook

**"Just want to say thank you to Graham, the bin man who helped my mother in law this morning in Rotherwood with her bin. Well done and thanks."**

Gillian Dyer via Facebook

**"Many thanks to our Renfrewshire health and social care teams - you're doing a grand job, and much appreciated"**

Lesley via Facebook

**"That was so emotional to watch. And every bit of it true and I hadn't thought of it as a team effort before as there are so many Renfrewshire council employees ....our teachers, bin men, Street scene carers and even all the virtual support from Ren Leisure is fantastic. I don't know who is behind attain ren on twitter but my 9-year-old from st Catherines is absolutely loving the challenges being set... I think you've all shown perfectly well I'm feeling teachers most especially that things are fine as they are and with the council you are all doing a tremendous job to find us a 'new normal' so we can at least cope and adapt to a new way of living with this pandemic. And the bin men who come down gallowhill already know hopefully how grateful I am to them... Missing our litter picks with Team up to clean up on this nice weather but we'll be back out there soon enough the children are desperate to get back out! Take care all..."**

Jenna Givens via Facebook in response to the elected members video of thanks to council staff and local people

**"Stay safe guys. We all really appreciate the work you do."**

Stephen Murray via Facebook

**"Perfect! Thanks so much for your quick reply!"**

Paula Ramsay via Twitter after receiving a response to her query



## Share your stories and photos

Don't forget we'd love to hear from you! Let us know how the current pandemic has affected your working life. Have you started volunteering or taking on new roles and responsibilities you never thought you would? As Renfrewshire Council staff we are all playing an important role. We want to hear about yours! Send your story to [internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk)