

Welcome to the first of our new monthly staff newsletters, packed full of the latest updates and stories from our people across the Council. Each month we will introduce the newsletter with a message from a different staff member.

This month we hear from **Director of Children's Services, Steven Quinn**.

"We are currently preparing for our children and young people to return to our schools and nurseries from 12 August, in line with government guidance published on 30 July."



"We have all faced many challenges since lockdown began, not least our children who have not been able to attend school and nursery.

"Our senior pupils have now received their results and I would like to wish each and every one of them every success in their future. Well done!

"Supporting learning both at home and in childcare hubs has been a massive task and I want to thank all our teaching, early years, support staff and wider council teams, including customer and business services, catering, cleaning and janitorial staff, community learning and development, Renfrewshire Leisure and other partners who have contributed.

"When staff, children and young people return, our main priority is to support their health and wellbeing while getting back into the learning environment.

"We want our schools and early years centres to be safe and welcoming places for everyone, with robust hygiene measures in place. We are and will continue to carefully follow government guidance to achieve this.

"I'd like to thank everyone who has supported the childcare hubs, both during term time and over the summer. I would also like to thank our families for their support during this difficult time and our children who have conducted themselves in an exceptional manner throughout this period.

"I know many of our workforce will be parents and carers and that having to balance work with the demands of supporting your child to learn at home has been incredibly challenging at times. I'd like to thank you for your continued patience and support.

"I sincerely hope we can now look forward and welcome our children, young people and staff back into our schools and nurseries."

What's inside this month's issue?

- > Latest information and advice
- > Taking care of your wellbeing
- > Life "on the road"
- > Our Values
- > Spotlight on ICT End User Support Team
- > For Your Information: Eclipse Case Management Software
- > Staff stories and thanks
- > Social Shout Outs

Latest information and advice



Phase 3 of the route map out of lockdown

With the easing of restrictions over recent weeks many of us will by now have enjoyed some of the basic comforts that we had missed, like spending time with loved ones, dining out and not forgetting some very overdue haircuts!

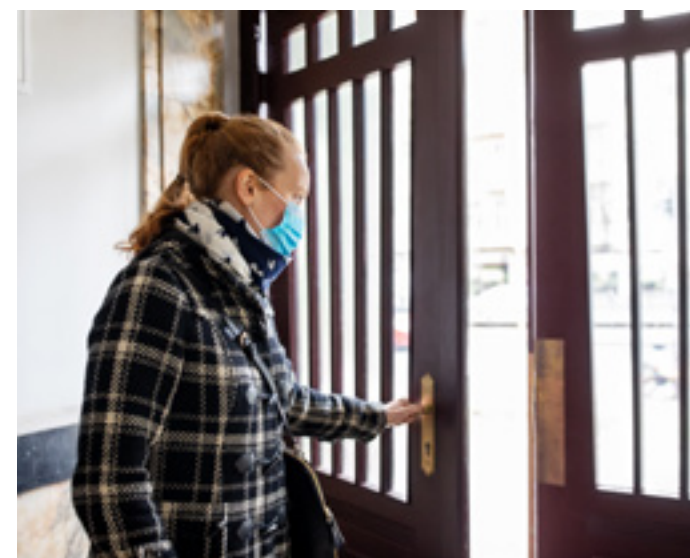
Though Phase 3 of Scotland's roadmap out of the crisis is set to remain in place for the next few weeks, we have already seen significant changes including relaxation on household visits.

Additionally, an easing of restrictions on attendance at funerals, marriage ceremonies and civil partnership registrations was welcome news, though physical distancing and limited numbers must still be observed.

Phase 3 changes have also led to the resumption of important healthcare services including some NHS screening programmes, dentists and opticians.

With the relaxation of the 5-mile travel limit and the easing of restrictions on hospitality, places of worship and certain tourist attractions, life will now be a little more colourful and enjoyable for most of us.

Some restrictions on children and young people have also been relaxed with children under 12 reuniting with their friends for some summer holiday playtime, free from physical distancing. Childcare providers have been able to reopen much to the relief of many working parents and carers and children under five can now be tested for Coronavirus. Additionally, outdoor face to face youth work and organised outdoor contact sports for children and young people has now recommenced.



For shielders

There has been happy news this month for those who are shielding whereby restrictions were gradually eased followed by the pausing of shielding guidance altogether. This means that those who have been shielding are now free to follow the same guidelines as everyone else—with the added advice to take extra care adhering to hygiene and physical distancing rules.



Planning the way forward

As we move through the Route Map, the potential for local outbreaks is still a possibility. Therefore, it is crucial that we all continue to play our part by following guidelines and be prepared for a re-introduction of restrictions if needed.

We are developing a series of contingency plans ready for such events within Renfrewshire. These plans are being carefully considered, taking into account all the lessons learned from the national lockdown and recent localised outbreaks of cases. We can draw upon the experiences of our organisation, our people and the local community to make any potential future measures as effective and successful as possible.

Remember **FACTS** for a safer Scotland

F	Face coverings	
A	Avoid crowded places	
C	Clean your hands regularly	
T	Two metre distance	
S	Self isolate and book a test if you have symptoms	

Remember the FACTS campaign and don't forget, if you think you have symptoms of Covid-19, no matter how mild, you should immediately self-isolate at home and book a test straight away. The guidance for self-isolation for Covid-19 or suspected cases has been increased from 7 to 10 days. For more information visit www.nhsinform.scot/.

We continue to follow Scottish Government guidance and you can find the latest information you need on our website: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/coronavirus



John McCrate

Life "on the road"

Our roads team are among those essential services that have continued to work hard on the front line throughout lockdown.

Keeping Renfrewshire's roads safe to use remained a priority as the team adapted to new guidelines and different ways of working. Roads inspectors have been carrying out regular inspections and are trialling the use of tablet devices which will allow them to raise repair instructions on site. Roads operators have continued to work together, maintaining physical distancing and ensuring road repairs are carried out safely.

Roads inspector, John McCrate, joined the Council during the first week of lockdown. He said, 'It's been a strange time to start a new role, as I've only met my team online. But it's been good working throughout Renfrewshire and getting to know the area.'

Road operations supervisor, Peter McMahon said, 'As a workforce we are used to dealing with emergencies and the different scenarios that come our way. Anything from flooding to winter snow and ice, we adapt well and meet these challenges head on. But Covid-19 presented a whole new challenge, different from anything we've had to overcome before. I'm proud of how well we coped. By following management and government advice we were able to keep going, getting the job done whilst always putting the safety of our team and the public first.'

Taking care of your wellbeing

Our **Health, Safety and Wellbeing At Work** page is there to help whether you are on the front line or working from home.

You will find a new online learning guide for working at home which includes resources to support home and remote working, managing virtual teams, managing a crisis situation and dealing with stress.

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/health-safety-wellbeing



The Scottish Government has also put together a great package to help people keep 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/ for more information or call 0800 970 3980 for free support now.

Staying Connected

For those who have been working at home, staying connected with colleagues, celebrating milestones and keeping a sense of the team collaboration has been a vital part of maintaining a sense of wellbeing.

With all the great tools available, different teams have chosen to stay connected in different ways. Here are a couple of examples of the great ways some of you have been keeping in touch with your teams...

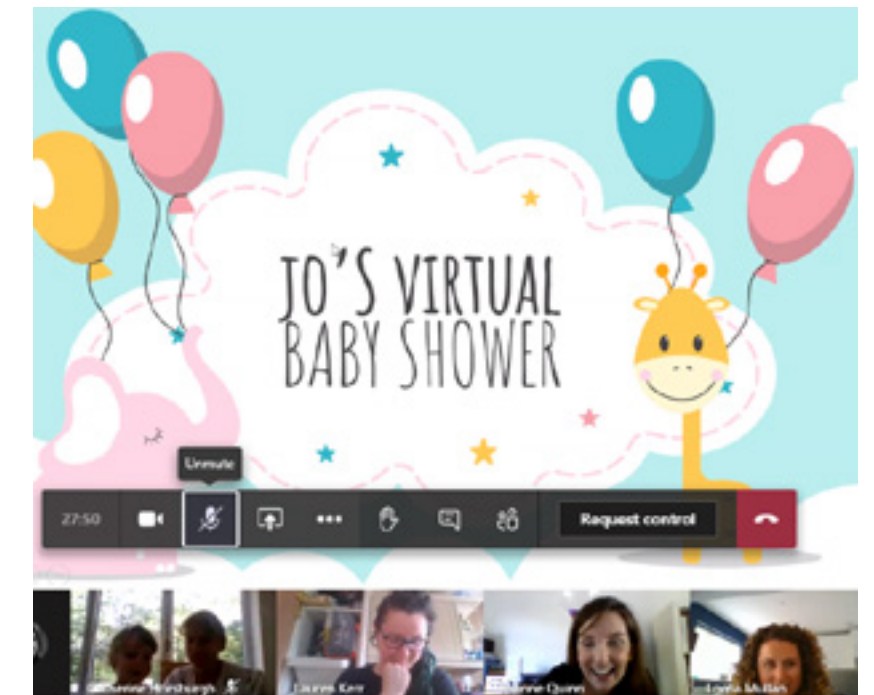
Mum's the word!

When marketing manager and mum-to-be Joanne Quinn was preparing to wind down for maternity leave in June, her colleagues across marketing, events, communications and design did not want to let the occasion go unmarked.

A virtual piggybank was created for gifts and a decoy meeting was set up during Joanne's last week. Logging on ready to discuss handover preparations, Joanne was surprised and delighted to see the whole team ready to celebrate a virtual baby shower with her.

Jo' was overwhelmed as gifts from the team (arranged for delivery that day) were presented to her by her husband.

The shower even involved a baby-themed quiz including a 'Guess the baby' picture round—a great team building exercise!



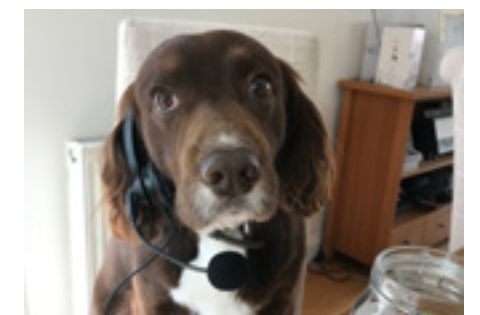
Contact Centre team leader, David Quinn working to infinity and beyond with his wee boy.

Music maestro

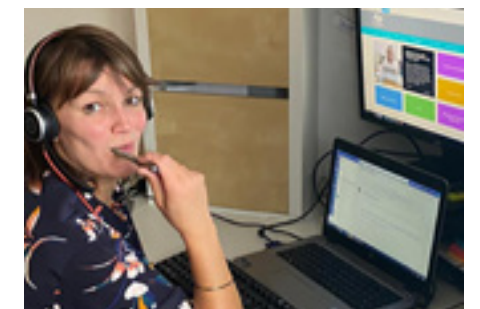
Resource analyst in customer and business services (CBS), Dawn Guthrie has pulled together a fabulous Friday playlist on Spotify gathering requests from across the service. Now CBS colleagues can listen in together (from home) and share in that Friday fun feeling.

Employee Engagement Officer for CBS, Craig Jinks, has been busy creating a Working from Home gallery of colleagues complete with a musical montage. Check some of these out...

What great ideas for those working from home to share their new office realities with others!



Stakeholder liaison officer, Pauline Kelly's office pal Molly.



Manager Leahan Thomson from the Digital First team

How do you stay connected?

Tell us on Yammer using #connected. Or email internal.communications@renfrewshire.gov.uk

Our Values

Back in June, we officially launched Our Values with a fabulous video showcasing some of our fantastic staff and local people. This was a key milestone in the journey we started last year in a conversation with our staff and communities to develop the values that support the kind of organisation we all want Renfrewshire Council to be.

Since then we have shared insights from different staff members each week shining the spotlight on each of our four core values; Fair, Helpful, Collaborators and Learning.

Communities and regulatory manager, Chris Dalrymple shared his thoughts in the first of our case studies on 'We are fair, we treat each other and everyone we deal with respectfully and work hard to build trust in Renfrewshire Council'.

Up next was facilities co-ordinator Lynne Tervit who spoke about how as an organisation 'We are helpful, we care about getting things right and are always approachable.'

We then spoke with Karen MacKechnie, headteacher at Kirklandneuk Primary School about why she thinks 'We are great collaborators; we work as one team and with people who care about this place.'

In the final of our #LivingOurValues series, procurement assistant Kevin Milliken spoke about why 'We value learning to help us innovate, improve and deliver better services'.

Our values are for everyone working here at Renfrewshire Council, no matter what your role and we have pledged our commitment to you in making these values the thread of our organisation.

Read more about how we plan to do this, catch up on our case studies and download your guide to 'Living Our Values' at: www.renfrewshire.gov.uk/ourvalues



Kevin Milliken

"Learning is really important to me... It's part of your journey of life. It defines who we are."



Lynne Tervit

"We go above and beyond, anything we're asked, if we can, we will.."



Karen MacKechnie

"...a really happy, vibrant staff team working together for the benefit of our children and families."



Chris Dalrymple

"...three words that describe fair for me are respect, trust and transparency."

Share your values story...

We know so many of you are already living these values each and every day.

This was proven countless times as you continued to give your all, supporting your colleagues and local communities through the Coronavirus crisis while dealing with massive changes to your own personal routines and lifestyles.

Whether it was taking part in the mass operation to organise and coordinate parcels of food and essential items to vulnerable people, being there for your service users as a supportive presence in their lives, assisting and reassuring customers over the phone or social media, volunteering in a redeployed role, taking care of our streets, collecting waste or taking your work into your own personal space at home and

juggling a whole new kind of work-life balance, you have been amazing!

And it's not just in times of crisis. We know that so many of you are fair, helpful, great collaborators and value new lessons learned every single day. So, we want to hear about how you live our values and why they are a core part of your approach to your role.

Get in touch and tell us why you are proud to be living these values, what they mean to you, what you have achieved through living them and how you plan to continue doing so as we move forward and adapt as an organisation.

Send us your stories to internal.communications@renfrewshire.gov.uk



Audrey Roberts

Spotlight on our End User Support Team

When they scooped the 2019 'Organisation Award' at last year's Staff Recognition Award ceremony, the ICT end user support team could never have imagined what was in store for them in 2020. Their role of providing an ICT customer support service to staff across the council was about to take on a whole new dimension as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Business relationship officer, Audrey Roberts said, 'At the very beginning we were under immense time pressure to provide equipment for the big shift to home working and immediately getting phones to emergency staff on the front line. Since then I am incredibly proud to say we have successfully allocated over 1,000 items of hardware—no small task!'

With most of the team moving to home working themselves, they were learning and adjusting to the new conditions whilst supporting everyone else at the same time. With around 2,000 staff members connecting from home each day, the primary function to assist colleagues and resolve ICT issues continued but was now a different ball game with a myriad of new challenges including increased demand for equipment, connectivity obstacles, lockdown/shielding restrictions, sudden

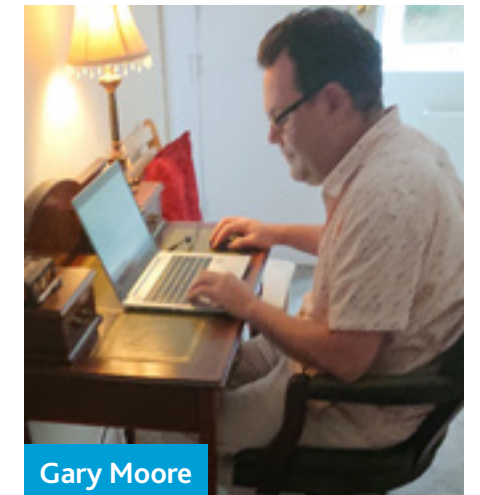
isolation or the sharing of home workspaces with spouses, kids and pets!

End user technician (EUT), Gary Moore misses the face-to-face interaction with colleagues. He said, 'It's taken a bit of getting used to that's for sure! As someone who lives alone, I need that social interaction with my colleagues.'

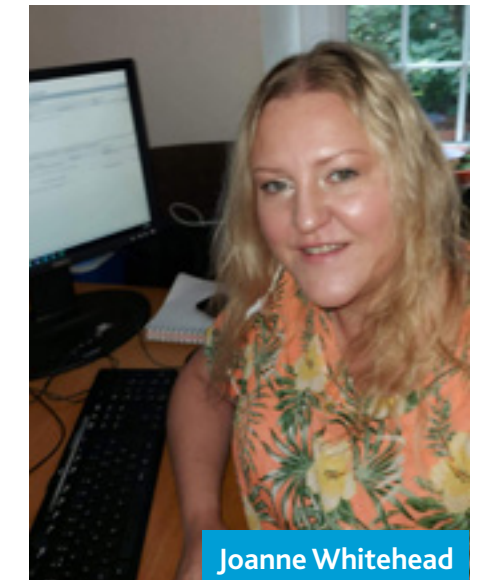
Collaborating as a team and helping one another has been a key factor in coping with these unprecedented times. EUT, Joanne Whitehead said, 'Working from home has been challenging for me due to childcare. But thanks to my colleagues' support and understanding it has been a smoother process.'

Looking ahead, the priority remains to provide the best possible ICT support to colleagues whilst supporting homeworking and assisting with the reopening of Council buildings. An additional focus is ensuring schools are ready for the return of our youngsters in August with the continuation of Windows 10 and server upgrades in every school.

Reflecting on recent events and the challenges faced Audrey said, 'I'm so very proud of our ability to adapt as a team and embrace new ways of working.'



Gary Moore



Joanne Whitehead



Patrick Welsh

"Well-handled Renfrewshire Council and all the management in keeping the team spirits up and keeping us safe!"

Patrick Welsh, EUT



Good luck Pat!

Environmental services area manager, Pat O'Donnell retired on 30 June after 31 years with Renfrewshire Council.

Pat's team wanted to ensure she had a great send-off, albeit under unusual circumstances! They arranged for gifts to be sent and friends and colleagues joined Pat and her husband Raymond in an online retirement party hosted by colleagues Stephen Heron and Helen Walker.

Pat started her career with Renfrewshire Council back in October 1989 as a cleaner at Linwood High School. She soon took on the additional responsibility of training new recruits. Later, Pat became an SVQ Assessor and went on to help hundreds of frontline workers achieve a vocational qualification.

In 2007, she became an area manager in soft facilities management (FM)—or Site Services as it was at that time. There she was responsible for catering, cleaning, janitorial, school crossing patrollers, police stations, social work locations and community halls—in fact, Pat has been to every one of our schools and probably knows all our other buildings inside out!

In 2018, Pat started assisting waste services at Underwood Road. Her positive, caring nature really

shone and she regularly helped members of the public with their enquiries.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Pat has helped ensure physical distancing is always maintained by transporting refuse collectors on their rounds. Unsurprisingly the early mornings and weekend working were not a problem for Pat. Colleagues have known her to always be full of positivity even at 6:30am!

Pat has been described as someone who is always willing to give something a go, always up for a blether and always prepared to help others. There's no doubt with her kind nature, knowledge and years of experience. Pat will be a real loss to the organisation and missed by all.

"Pat, after 31 years with Renfrewshire Council we want to wish you and your husband Raymond many years of happiness and good health. We hope you enjoy spending more time here in Scotland and with your family in Australia."

Gwyneth Heaney, Environmental health officer.



Thank you to waste services

The team received a lovely thank you email from a local resident delighted with the team's efficiency and friendliness.

"Thank you to your staff for the prompt collection of the items which I'd asked to have uplifted. They're always efficient and pleasant too."

The refuse collectors and employees at Linwood Recycling Centre are also to be praised, and for the same way that they carry out their work.

All very professional and much appreciated, particularly during the past difficult months."

Food Bank Food Rush 2020



2019 Food Rush: Kevin handing over donations from Renfrewshire House to foodbank volunteers last year.

Procurement assistant and organiser of the 2020 Food Bank Food Rush, Kevin Milliken, said, "I want to pass on a huge thank you to everyone who has donated and supported the Renfrewshire Foodbank this year. Your contributions will provide

invaluable help to so many families in Renfrewshire during this uniquely challenging time.

The online portal closed for donations on Friday 31st July with over £1,000 raised—smashing the £1k target!"

Thanks from COSLA

Have you seen COSLA's recent video recognising the incredible work of local authority staff across Scotland during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Check it out on their Facebook (@CofSLA) and Twitter (@COSLA) pages and see if you can spot any Renfrewshire colleagues!



FYI: Eclipse Case Management Software

Despite the recent challenges, services across the Council are working hard to progress their digital capabilities in order to provide improved support for the people of Renfrewshire.

This month, the SWIFT/AIS/CCM systems will be replaced by the ECLIPSE case management system. This step will transform the way social work and social care teams operate across the council and with the Renfrewshire Health and Social Care Partnership (RHSCP) enabling more efficient support for our communities.

The transition to ECLIPSE begins with social Work teams in children's services going live on 5th August. This will be followed by HSCP adult services and criminal justice in 2021 and will conclude with financial services during 2022.

Renfrewshire's Chief Social Work Officer and Head of Child Care & Criminal Justice, John Trainer said, 'The ECLIPSE case management system will improve the processes that underpin the fantastic work of our practitioners. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the system's development. Your ongoing support will ensure a smooth transition to this improved way of working'.

Social Shout Outs

Our Facebook and Twitter channels have received more fantastic feedback from the people of Renfrewshire recently. Just goes to show all your hard work is recognised and appreciated.



Here are just a few of the comments we have received...

"Renfrewshire this is brilliant news! Can't wait!"

Janet Westwater via Twitter in response to our post on expansion of cycle routes through the Spaces for People fund

"@RenCouncil 🙌🙌 Brian from Energy Advice Team has been a wonderful help today 🙌 #changinglives"

Jack Kennedy via Twitter

"The very cheery staff at these sites are doing a brilliant job. I visited both Miller Street and Linwood this week and provided an excellent informative service. Thanks to all the staff."

Sharon Hanlon via Facebook

"@RenCouncil what a welcome sight—tractor cutting grass behind community centre at last! Weans and Dugs soon won't be at risk of getting lost in the jungles of Gallowhill—thank you 🙌"

Lorraine Lindsay via Twitter

"I think environmental services have been outstanding in their bin collection and litter picking."

Magi McCulloch via Facebook

"Congratulations St Paul's Primary. Super effort in the Renfrewshire Olympics—overall 4th 🙌"

Louise Maher via Twitter

"The boys done a good job on Spateston grass areas today, thanks"

Carol Collins via Facebook

"@RenCouncil That's awesome, thanks for the reply! You too, your refuse collectors and other key workers have my upmost thanks!"

David McC via Twitter

"Well done to the staff for all their hard work during this unprecedented difficult time. 🙌🙌🙌"

Gillian Whyte via Facebook

"I think from the way you laid out the roads to enter, the way you were guided to your bay, the professionalism of those working has always been excellent! Thank you for all your hard work!!!!"

Lisa Irvine via Twitter

"@RenCouncil They have done a fantastic job in the circumstances. I hope they get to enjoy some type of summer holiday. #worklifebalance"

Tracey Lundie via Twitter

"big thanks to all those who have continued to work and effort put in from schools during this time"

Carol Shaw via Facebook

"You are all doing a fantastic job... Our family really appreciate all the efforts the staff and teachers have gone to, to make it a safe environment for our children. It gives mountains of reassurance to the anxious parents who are worried guidelines aren't being followed. Which they clearly are by Renfrewshire Council employees. Thank you 🙌"

Jenna Givens via Facebook



Share your stories and photos

Don't forget we'd love to hear from you! It could be a photo of you working from home, something interesting from your daily walk, or a photo of your new "colleagues" (furry friends most welcome!). Have you started volunteering or taking on new roles and responsibilities you never thought you would? Tell us all about it and we can share your stories. Send them in to internalcommunications@renfrewshire.gov.uk