



# Bulletin

Get in touch with West Lothian Council

[www.westlothian.gov.uk/contactus](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/contactus)  [westlothiancouncil](https://www.facebook.com/westlothiancouncil)  [@LoveWestLothian](https://twitter.com/LoveWestLothian)

*Thank you for supporting West Lothian*



Lanthorn Community Centre, Dedridge



Craigshill Good Neighbour Network



Waste Services staff



West Lothian Foodbank



School catering and Community Transport staff



School Bank West Lothian



Boghall Drop-in and Norvell Lodge, Boghall



Polbeth Community Hub

*..and everyone else who has helped in their local community*

## LOVE & help protect West Lothian

For the latest coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance from  
NHS Scotland [www.nhsinform.scot](http://www.nhsinform.scot)

The **Protect Scotland** app from NHS Scotland's Test and Protect is a free, mobile-phone app designed to help us protect each other and reduce the spread of coronavirus. [www.protect.scot](http://www.protect.scot)

More on  
Page 3





Councillor Conn and officers visited the bridge earlier this year to see the completed project.

# Work completed on £2.4 million bridge

An impressive new Skolie Burn Bridge joining Addiewell and Loganlea has been completed.

West Lothian Council invested £2.4 million on the major project to replace the old bridge, which had reached the end of its lifespan.

The large-scale project took over a year to finish, and was delayed by a few months after all building work was stopped due to the covid-19 outbreak in March.

In line with government guidance, contractor RJ McLeod resumed work with physical distancing measures in place to complete the project once building work was permitted.

Executive councillor for the environment Tom Conn added: "It was a huge and complex project to build a replacement Skolie Burn Bridge, and I'm pleased to see it has been successfully completed.

"The impressive new bridge has a

design life of 120 years, so will be used by generations of Addiewell and Loganlea residents for many years to come."

The complex project involved building a temporary replacement bridge, so access could be maintained, removing the old bridge and building a permanent bridge.

Additional landscaping and tree planting will be carried out around the bridge in the autumn.

"With over 60 years' experience delivering critical infrastructure in Scotland's communities, we know the importance of such projects. The Skolie Burn Bridge replacement has been uniquely challenging, requiring construction of three bridges and demolition of one, all in a small area."

With COVID-19 around, it's more important than ever to get your flu vaccine.

Flu  
IS SERIOUS

Help protect yourself, others and the NHS.



[www.nhsinform.scot/flu](http://www.nhsinform.scot/flu)

PROTECT YOURSELF



• Every year in Scotland thousands of people are hospitalised with flu. It can be serious and life threatening.

• Getting vaccinated is the safest and most effective way to protect yourself. During vaccination, strict infection prevention and control measures will be in place.

• The vaccine contains no live viruses, so it can't give you or people around you flu.

PROTECT OTHERS



• Reduce your risk of getting flu and spreading it to others, especially those who are most at risk, including: people with health conditions, pregnant women and anyone over 65.

PROTECT OUR NHS



• Help our NHS avoid the pressure that a spike in seasonal flu would put on top of COVID-19.



## Car charging points go

Electric Vehicle charging points have been installed in Broxburn.

LIVE

The new units are located at Strathbrock Partnership Centre and were officially unveiled during Scotland's Climate Week by West Lothian Council's Executive councillor for the environment, Tom Conn and the council's energy manager, Peter Rogers.

The chargers are a 50kW rapid charger and a 22kW fast charger and are currently free to use as part the Chargeplace Scotland Network. Those looking to use them will be able to register at [chargeplacescotland.org](http://chargeplacescotland.org)

Funding for the points was provided by Transport Scotland as part of their Local Authority Installation Programme with the installations being managed by West Lothian Council. The devices were installed by Swarco and their local sub-contractor Boyd Brothers who are based in Livingston.

"West Lothian Council is fully committed to reducing our carbon emissions and we're delighted to have this new facility available for local people to use. It's part of our

overall aim to encourage more sustainable forms of transport."

Peter Rogers added: "The council now operates a total of 14 dual outlet charge points with plans for another 8 to be installed this financial year, including 4 at Morris Square Car Park, Livingston. The site at Strathbrock was technically challenging and we are delighted that the work undertaken with our contractors and Scottish Power Energy Networks has brought forward a solution."

## Photography

Please rest assured that appropriate guidance was followed when each of the photographs contained within **Bulletin** were taken. Photos were taken at different periods throughout the Spring, Summer and Autumn period but all appropriate measures were followed. Kind regards, Corporate Communications Team.



# LOVE West Lothian

The support and patience shown by those living and working in West Lothian has been incredible. 2020 has been a tough year but...

WE WILL GET THROUGH IT TOGETHER.



## Council Response to COVID-19

The impact of the Covid-19 virus and the measures that have been put in place to restrict the spread of the virus has had a significant effect on how council services have operated throughout the last eight months. Whilst some services were temporarily withdrawn or reduced to comply with physical-distancing guidelines, the majority of the council's essential services have continued to operate with staff finding new ways to work and communicate, and to support our communities.

From March to the end of August we processed 6,175 applications for crisis care grants with £371,866 issued - a 117% increase on the same time period last year



Awarded Business Support Grants totalling **£27.4m**

Administered **2,152** Small Business Grants

Awarded **261** Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants  
Rates relief was administered to **741** Retail, Hospitality and Leisure organisations

Provided free school meals to over 3,000 children daily



Prioritised essential services such as careline, social care, care at home, waste collections, social work, essential housing repairs and care for vulnerable people



Provided key-worker school hubs to support critical workers



Provided support to over **5,600** individuals who are at the highest risk of illness

Provided additional financial support to over **5,500** children

Provided support through the West Lothian Food Fund

Provided financial support to local businesses, charities and community groups

## Praise for community response to coronavirus

Leader of West Lothian Council Lawrence Fitzpatrick has led the tributes to those who went above and beyond during the COVID-19 outbreak. Members of the local community made a huge effort to support others since the pandemic began.

This includes our key workers, the army of volunteers, parents/carers and many other who showed just how much we all care. Councillor Lawrence Fitzpatrick said: "It's been uplifting to see how well our community has responded to the immense difficulties posed.

"There are too many people to mention personally, however, the council's dedicated care staff, including those in our care homes supporting vulnerable residents, have been at the forefront of dealing with this virus, alongside their wonderful NHS colleagues. I know the community will share with me in expressing our sincere gratitude for their

dedication. "Special praise must also go to council staff including: our bin men for their hard graft ensuring that we were the only council area in Scotland to receive a regular waste collection service: the teachers and other school staff who kept our children learning, cared for and supported throughout; and all the other key workers around the council, including those who took on new and unfamiliar roles to ensure essential services could be maintained.

"Our appreciation also goes to all the parents/carers and key workers in the private sector, such as those involved in postal, retail and distribution services. Thanks to all who also played a critical role in keeping West Lothian functioning through an unprecedented situation."



## Incredible work of West Lothian volunteers recognised

The incredible role played by volunteers in West Lothian's covid-19 response has been commended. Local organisations and members of the community stepped up to support local residents who needed help and support in vital areas, such as supplies of food and medicine. Executive councillor for voluntary organisations Kirsteen Sullivan said: "It truly has been inspiring to see the fantastic response from West Lothian's voluntary organisations to the coronavirus outbreak.

"So many groups have re-focused their work to meet new priorities, forged new partnerships and risen to the challenge of helping the communities they service. The West Lothian Food Network is a fantastic

example of over 30 local voluntary organisations working together to ensure everyone has access to food.

"The response from individual volunteers has been nothing short of amazing too, with so many coming forward to offer their help or supporting neighbours, friends and family. A number of local groups have been formed, using social media to co-ordinate help for those who need it or share important information.

"On behalf of the West Lothian community, I'd like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the volunteers and voluntary organisations for their incredible work this year."



Please take care of yourself, your friends and your family, and adhere to the guidance provided.





Visit West Lothian



visitwestlothian.co.uk

As tourism businesses continue to re-open across the country, Visit West Lothian is working to help promote a safe return to some of your favourite sites across our area.

**By staying local, you can help businesses near us in this recovery.**

Visit Scotland, together with the tourism agencies across the rest of the UK, have developed the “**GoodToGo**” accreditation - an official benchmark to signal that a tourism and hospitality business has worked hard to follow Government and industry COVID-19 guidelines and has a process in place to maintain cleanliness and aid social distancing. Within West Lothian, this includes sites such as Linlithgow Palace, Five Sisters Zoo and Almond Valley as well as a number of accommodation and food and drink providers. You can check out full listings on [visitwestlothian.co.uk](https://visitwestlothian.co.uk) to see which sites are participating.



Film on Forth is a new collaboration between **Visit West Lothian**, **Visit Falkirk**, **Visit Scotland** and a number of partners to promote the wide range of sites that have featured in TV and Film productions across our area. With a selection of self-guided itineraries, you can explore sites such as Linlithgow Palace, Beecraigs Country Park and Midhope Castle (featuring in the popular “Outlander” TV series and books), as well as a number of sites in nearby Falkirk.



A new website has been developed where you can view these itineraries, and build your own, as well as learn about the variety of productions from the area. These are all self-guided, allowing you to visit at your own pace.

[www.filmonforth.co.uk](https://www.filmonforth.co.uk)

## OUR TEENAGERS NEED



### COULD YOU PROVIDE A YOUNG PERSON WITH A **SAFE** AND **LOVING** HOME?

We are looking for foster carers to provide care to our young people aged between 11 – 18 years.

Email [C&FFamilyPlacementTeam@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:C&FFamilyPlacementTeam@westlothian.gov.uk) or call **01506 284440** if you think **YOU** could make a difference.





# LARGEST EVER INVESTMENT IN WEST LOTHIAN’S SCHOOLS

Over **£78 million** is being invested to build new schools across West Lothian.

West Lothian already has one of the best school estates in the country, and the new Early Learning Centres, primary and secondary schools will improve this further.

For more and more people, West Lothian is the place people are choosing to raise their family, and the new schools and well-maintained school estate provides the perfect platform for learning.

Attainment has been rising in West Lothian for eight consecutive years, as more and more local pupils go on to positive destinations such as higher and

further education or employment.

Winchburgh will see West Lothian’s biggest ever investment in education, a £60.7 million project to build two new secondary schools and a primary school as well as a shared sport, leisure and community facility.

Over 3,500 new homes are set to be built in the Winchburgh core development area, along with a marina, district park and improved transport links.

The new £14 million primary school at the core development area of Calderwood

in East Calder will also cater for the demand of the expanding area, while new Early Learning and Childcare centres at St. Mary’s Primary in Bathgate and Blackridge will allow us to meet the pledge of delivering 1,140 hours of free childcare for eligible pre-schoolers.

All the projects are delivered on behalf of the council by its development partner Hub South East, with Morrison Construction as the primary contractor, which is the same team who delivered the award-winning West Calder High School.

£60.7  
MILLION

to build two new secondary schools and a primary school in Winchburgh

£2.7  
MILLION

for new Early Learning and Childcare centres at St. Mary’s Primary in Bathgate and Blackridge

£14.3  
MILLION

to build new primary school in Calderwood, East Calder



Archbishop Cushley and Councillor Fitzpatrick marked the beginning of construction work

## Work starts on new Sinclair Academy in Winchburgh

Construction has begun on the new Sinclair Academy in Winchburgh.

It is expected to open to pupils during 2023, and is named after the venerable Margaret Sinclair, who is revered for her work helping people through both trade unions and as a Sister of the Order of St. Clare.

Leader of West Lothian Council Lawrence Fitzpatrick welcomed Archbishop Leo

Cushley, whose archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh includes West Lothian, to mark the start of construction on the new school site.

Councillor Fitzpatrick said: “I’m delighted to see work begin on the fantastic new Sinclair Academy in Winchburgh.

“Thanks to Archbishop Cushley for coming along to mark the start of construction of this important new facility,

for the growing community of Winchburgh and the east of West Lothian.”

Archbishop Leo Cushley said: “It’s a huge pleasure to be invited along to see work start on the new Sinclair Academy in Winchburgh.

“Margaret Sinclair was a hugely inspirational figure during her short life, dedicating herself to supporting those in need.”

## New Winchburgh Academy starts to take shape



Executive councillor for education David Dodds recently visited the site of the new state-of-the-art school to see the initial works taking place.

The new school is expected to be open in 2023 and will offer non-denominational education for 660 young people to cope with the increasing demand in the expanding village, which has been designated a core development area.

The innovative design of the school means that it can be expanded to accommodate up

to 1,210 pupils as the village increases in size.

Executive councillor for education David Dodds said: “Winchburgh Academy promises to be another fantastic school for West Lothian, providing the perfect venue for top-quality education.

“The adjacent shared facility will also be a valuable resource for all the new schools and the wider community, offering a hub for sport, leisure and community activities.”

## New home for Holy Family

Building has started on a new home for Holy Family Primary School in Winchburgh.



Executive councillor for education David Dodds and Archbishop Leo Cushley at the site of the new Holy Family Primary School

A new state-of-the-art school is currently being built, which will allow Holy Family to move from their current shared site with Winchburgh Primary in 2023.

Executive councillor for education David Dodds said: “It’s fantastic to see work starting on another superb new school in West Lothian.

“The new Holy Family Primary will increase capacity for both denominational and non-denominational primary education in Winchburgh, which is essential due to the ongoing development in the area.”

Archbishop Leo Cushley, whose archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh

include West Lothian, added: “I was delighted to be invited to mark the start of construction for the new Holy Family Primary School.

“When completed, the new Holy Family will stand side by side with the new Sinclair Academy, allowing strong links to develop between the two school communities.”



# WEST LOTHIAN PUPILS CONTINUE TO ACHIEVE



Graham Paris, Headteacher of Armadale Academy, was joined by Councillor Dodds and pupils to mark the school's exam success

## The number of West Lothian pupils achieving Higher level or equivalent qualifications continues to rise for a record eight years.

A recent report to the council's Education Executive showed that performance of S5 and S6 pupils at Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 6, which includes Highers and equivalent qualifications has risen considerably in the last five years.

Those achieving five or more awards at Higher level rose by two percentage points this year to 43%, and those with three or more awards rising by two percentage points to 60%. Numbers achieving at least one Higher-

level qualification rose by four percentage points to 75%.

In the last five years, those achieving at least 5, 3 and 1 Higher level qualifications in West Lothian has risen by 17, 17 and 12 percentage points respectively.

Executive councillor for education, David Dodds, said: "It's fantastic to see pupils in West Lothian achieve improving SCQF awards for an amazing eighth consecutive year. "Well done to all the pupils for their hard work and dedication, which

was particularly challenging this year due to the covid-19 pandemic.

"My appreciation also goes to all the teachers and Education staff who have supported our young people to achieve these outstanding results. Your efforts to help pupils reach their potential and focus on raising attainment has been phenomenal.

"Finally, huge thanks must also go to all the parents and carers, who play an essential role in the success of our young people."

## West Lothian school first in Scotland to achieve Reading Schools **GOLD** award

The drive and determination to embed a reading culture in Whitburn Academy has seen the school crowned the first ever Reading Schools' Gold award winner.



The Scottish Book Trust's Reading Schools initiative aims to encourage reading, with Whitburn Academy introducing a number of innovative schemes designed to get pupils interested in books. This hard work by staff, pupils and parents/carers has paid off when it was confirmed that the school has been awarded the first ever Gold accreditation as a Reading School.

Whitburn Academy Headteacher Tracey Loudon said: "As the first secondary school to win the First Minister's Reading Challenge Inspiration Award last year, I'm delighted that we have built on our success to become the first school in Scotland to achieve Gold accreditation as a Reading School.

"Whilst the award is testament to the hard work and commitment of all in our school community, as we strive to close the literacy attainment gap, our success is in no doubt down to the dedication of our Principal Teacher for Additional Support Needs, Linda Nisbet, whose enthusiasm and energy has been the key driving force in ensuring we achieved our Gold status as a Reading School."

Whitburn Academy Principal Teacher Linda Nisbet added:

She said: "We launched the initiative with a video parody called "All about Those Books", which was planned, filmed, directed and edited by the staff and pupils. This was shared this at assemblies and was watched over 3,000 times on Twitter.

"Our senior pupils were then trained in the "Scotland Reads" method and used these skills to help develop the reading confidence of a targeted group of S1 pupils every morning during paired reading sessions. These pupils also went out into the community to support others with reading, including visits to a local primary school, nursery and care home."

## New Calderwood Primary takes shape

### Works are progressing well on the £14.3 million primary school in Calderwood, East Calder.



The steel frame of the school is already in place after construction started in June 2020. This was later than initially planned due to the covid-19 lockdown, which means the schools is now expected to be open to pupils in 2022.

The new school will provide non-denominational primary education

for up to 462 primary and 128 nursery pupils when complete.

Executive councillor for education David Dodds said: "It's fantastic to see great progress being made to build the new Calderwood Primary. "The design of the new school incorporates elements of the

award-winning West Calder High School, with sustainability and suitability as core objectives.

"Calderwood Primary will provide an anchor landmark for the Calderwood Core Development Area when it opens, helping bring the new community together."



# New ELC centres for Bathgate and Blackridge

Work is progressing well on the new Early Learning and Childcare centres (ELCs) in Bathgate and Blackridge.

West Lothian Council is investing £2.7 million to construct modern, purpose-built centres for early learning and childcare at St Mary's Primary School in Bathgate and Blackridge Primary.

The investment is part of a £12 million investment programme in pre-school education, with the buildings providing up to 64 spaces for early learning and childcare for 2, 3 and 4 year olds when they open in 2021.

Blackridge is also West Lothian's first purpose-built Passivhaus ELC, using advanced design and construction techniques to provide users with enhanced thermal comfort with the use of virtually no energy for heating or cooling.



Pupils and staff from St Mary's Primary onsite earlier this year to mark the start of construction



Pupils from Blackridge nursery school joined school staff to check out the new facilities being created

Please rest assured that appropriate guidance was followed when each of the photographs contained within Bulletin were taken. Photos were taken at different periods throughout the Spring, Summer and Autumn period but all appropriate measures were followed. Kind regards, Corporate Communications Team

## Revised school term dates agreed

Revised term dates for both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 primary and secondary school years in West Lothian have been agreed.

The current school year started four days earlier than previously agreed in West Lothian, with all schools in Scotland starting back on 11 August.

**Following consultation on how to allocate the additional four days holiday it has been agreed to:**

- begin the Christmas break two days early, so pupils will finish for the holidays on 18 December 2020;
- and add an additional day to the February break so pupils will return on Thursday 18 February 2021
- All other dates for 2020/21 are unchanged for pupils.
- In-service days for staff take place on: Tuesday 5 January 2021 and Thursday 6 May 2021.

**For the 2021/22 term**, pupils will return Tuesday 17 August 2021, before finishing up on Friday 17 September 2021. Following the September break, pupils return on Wednesday 22 September 2021 until Friday 8 October 2021.

**Terms dates for both the 2020/21 and 2021/22 terms are available online at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolholidays](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/schoolholidays)**

**The October holiday week** takes place from Monday 11 October 2021, with pupils returning on Tuesday 19 October. **The term finishes on Wednesday 22 December 2021.**

**Pupils resume on Thursday 6 January 2022** and finish on Friday 11 February 2022. They return on Wednesday 16 February 2022 and **break for Easter on Friday 1 April 2022.**

**Term three** lasts from Tuesday 19 April 2022 through to Friday 24 June, with pupils off on Monday 2 May, Thursday 5 May and one of either Monday 23 May, Monday 6 June or Tuesday 14 June depending on where in West Lothian you live.

**In-service days for staff take place on:** Monday 16 August 2021, Tuesday 21 September 2021, Monday 18 October 2021; Wednesday 5 January 2022 and Thursday 5 May 2022.

## Early Learning And Childcare for 2 year olds in West Lothian

Eligible children will receive up to 1,140 hours of early learning and childcare in an early years setting.



Scan the code with your smartphone to apply online or visit the address below

[www.westlothian.gov.uk/apply-for-an-elc-place](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/apply-for-an-elc-place)



# Winter Ready 2020/21

www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter

## Please plan ahead and be **WinterReady**

This special *Bulletin* supplement provides you with an overview of how West Lothian Council has prepared for winter.

West Lothian Council plans to have 30,000 tonnes of salt available for the winter period. This represents three times the amount that is needed for a 'normal' winter.

It is not possible for support to be provided everywhere at the same time. Please note our priority system routes, which can be found at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/winter)

## TRUE GRIT

West Lothian's fleet of gritters and their dedicated drivers are ready to make every effort to keep everyone moving during severe weather.

The council's Roads Operations team have over 60 vehicles available for winter work including seven dedicated fixed body gritters. Eight of our most frequently used vehicles were named by local school children and the names chosen were: Sir Chilly Connolly; Han Snowlo; Elvis Spreadly; West Snowthian; Alba Gritting Ye; Meltin John; Obi Wan Gritobi; and Salt-tyre.

Local residents can see the progress of these gritters, and any other vehicles out treating the roads in severe weather, on the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/grittertracker](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/grittertracker)



## Road and footpath routes and actions

An extreme weather event will be considered to be an event where continuous snow is forecast and likely to give significant accumulations in excess of 10cm covering the whole of the north or south expanse within the council area. The snow will also be expected to remain in untreated areas for a prolonged period due to low temperatures before a natural thaw disperses it.

During periods of extreme weather, treatment may be limited to primary carriageway routes and primary footpath routes or 'snow routes'.

Gritters and footpath resources will be deployed on these specified 'snow routes' continuously until satisfactory snow clearance has been achieved before resources are deployed to any secondary routes, to maintain access to key facilities and other transport needs.

### Primary routes (snow routes)

These are important principal roads, major scheduled bus routes, routes to fire stations, hospitals, ambulance depots and local danger spots on roads and major industrial estates.

### Actions

Gritting and/or snow ploughing 24 hours a day on all days. Pre-grit if required.

### Secondary road routes - Level 1

Other classified routes, distributor routes and connecting routes between centres, minor bus routes, main accesses to schools, medical centres and residential areas.

### Actions

Gritting and/or snow ploughing during normal working hours from 8am to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday. Pre-grit as resources allow.

### Secondary road routes - Level 2

Residential areas, culs-de-sac and other unclassified roads.

### Actions

Gritting and/or snow ploughing during normal working hours 8am to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.

### Secondary road routes - Level 3

Surfaced areas within schools, roads within industrial estates, routes to car parks and car park surfaces.

### Actions

Gritting and/or snow ploughing during normal working hours 8am to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.

### Primary footpath (snow routes)

Urban shopping areas and precincts. Routes to schools, accesses to health centres and medical centres, hospitals, main routes to residential areas and bus stops.

### Actions

During November and March, gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing takes place from 5am to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday. During December, January and February the service will be extended to cover weekends and public holidays (5am to 3.05pm). Reactive treatment only.

### Secondary footpath routes - Level 1

Other routes to schools, residential areas and housing areas in general.

### Actions

Gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing from 8am to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.

### Secondary footpath routes - Level 2

Footway links to car parks, community centres, day centres etc and cycle routes.

### Actions

Gritting of widespread ice/snow clearing from 8am to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday. Reactive treatment only.

## Grit bins



### Grit bin policy

In times of an extreme weather event it is not always possible to service and replenish grit bins due to their location and the deployment of resources in higher priority areas.

In the event that the grit bin service is suspended, the council will provide temporary grit bags and grit heaps at locations across the area for use by the public. The locations will be advertised on the council's website and social media pages.

**Many shops also sell salt/grit for domestic use.**



## Salt conservation

In periods of extreme weather, it may be necessary to restrict the use of salt to 'snow routes' only. West Lothian Council reaches a minimum stock level when there is only enough salt for six continuous days.

**Please note: Salt is less effective at minus six degrees and has minimal impact on ice and snow below minus 10 degrees.**

**Heavy rain following a treatment of salt can wash the salt from the road meaning we often need to return to the beginning of the priority cycle before many secondary routes are reached. Unfortunately this familiar pattern can prevent any significant progress through the various priority levels.**

## Schools

Safety is a top priority for West Lothian Council and the decision to close a school or nursery to pupils is one which is not made lightly.

The Headteacher has responsibility for undertaking a risk assessment in the event of severe weather or building difficulties. There are several factors which may impact on this decision, which is made in consultation with an education manager.

West Lothian Council will provide as much notice as possible of any school closure so that you can make alternative arrangements for your children. We will contact you via Group Call, provide information to local radio stations, and update the council's website and social media channels. Many schools can also contact parents/carers by email.

## Travelling to school

In extreme weather conditions, parents/carers should assess whether they consider it safe for their child to travel or walk to school, and

alert the school of their decision at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Please check that your child knows how to access the online education community GLOW, where pupils can access educational material online.**

## Severe weather volunteer service

The service to help vulnerable members of the community is ready to be activated should this winter prove to be challenging.

If this happens information will be shared via the local media, the council's website, social media channels and the email information service.

## Waste collections

During the winter, please continue to present your bin as usual. Please ensure snow has been removed from the lid. The council will only suspend the household waste collection service in extreme situations. For example, where there is widespread heavy snow which makes it impossible for the bin lorries to enter residential areas.

If the service is suspended, updates will be provided via local press and the council's website and social media channels.

## Winter colds and prescriptions

Please ensure your medicine cabinet is sufficiently stocked with over-the-counter remedies so that if you become unwell you are prepared.

GP Surgeries will be closed at times over Christmas and New Year.

Prepare by ordering medication to cover both Christmas and New Year holiday breaks.



# Don't give COLD a chance

## Protect yourself and your home

### Inside your home:

#### Frozen Pipes:

- turn off the water supply (make sure you know where this is).
- turn off the stopcock in your cold water tank, if you have one.
- protect everything around the frozen pipe to avoid damage; if it bursts, place buckets, basins and towels around the area.

#### Thawing Out:

- open the tap nearest to the part of the pipe you think is frozen, so the water can flow through when it has melted.
- thaw the ice in the pipe with a hot water bottle or hairdryer (taking care to keep it well away from any water). Start from the tap end and work back toward the cold water tank.



NEVER use a heat gun or blowtorch – the pipe needs to be thawed out slowly and safely!

#### Try the following care tips:

- if your tank is in the loft, open the loft trap door on very cold days to let heat in.
- if you're going on holiday and your home will be empty drain down the water system. If you are a council tenant contact your local housing office who can arrange for this to be done.
- in very cold weather, if you're going out for the day, or perhaps away for a couple of days over the Christmas period, keep your heating on, or set it to come on a couple of times a day.

**Following this advice should minimise the risk of having a frozen or burst pipe. However, if you are a council tenant and this happens, please report it immediately to our Customer Service Centre on 01506 280000.**

### Outside your home:

**In very severe cold spells, care should be taken outside your property due to the formation of icicles, which can become dangerous when they grow large, especially if they have a long distance to fall.**

#### What you shouldn't do

Don't try to knock large icicles off the gutters. Hitting icicles could cause more pressure on the guttering which in turn could cause them to collapse. Large icicles in particular are unpredictable when they fall and could cause injury or property damage.

#### The best thing to do

Leave them alone and monitor them. If necessary cordon off or block the area where the icicles are hanging to prevent and deter anyone from walking directly below them.



## How can you help?

- Consider the steps you can take to protect your home and business.
- Living with severe weather is frustrating – please be patient with council staff who are trying to work in challenging situations.
- Consider volunteering.
- Keep an eye on your neighbours and

share information.

- Make sure that your child's school has up-to-date contact details for you.
- Follow the council's social media channels for updates.

#### Clearing snow:

There is no law preventing members of the public and businesses from clearing the

snow and ice from public roads and footways outside their property. However, please take care when attempting to undertake any snow clearing so you don't create any further hazards.

#### Park sensibly:

Abandoned cars hamper access for snowploughs and diggers, emergency

vehicles, bin lorries and other road users.

#### Travel:

Check your travel arrangements before starting out and leave extra time for your journey.

Prepare your car for winter now.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### New bus service for Breich residents

The new LBS 34A bus service started in September.

The services provide the Breich community with a regular connection to Livingston and beyond.

Operated by Stuart's of Carluke, the service will run between Lanark and Livingston via Fauldhouse and Breich meaning West Lothian bus users will also have the option to visit South Lanarkshire.

This new service comes following a collaborative project between Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and West Lothian Council for the 34A service which resulted in a successful bid for a cross boundary service between South Lanarkshire and West Lothian.

West Lothian Council will be contributing £65,000 annually to subsidise a section of the route.

News of the new bus service comes following the withdrawal of the LBS 71 service from the Breich area earlier this year with the council putting a Taxibus service in place to mirror the route of the withdrawn service.

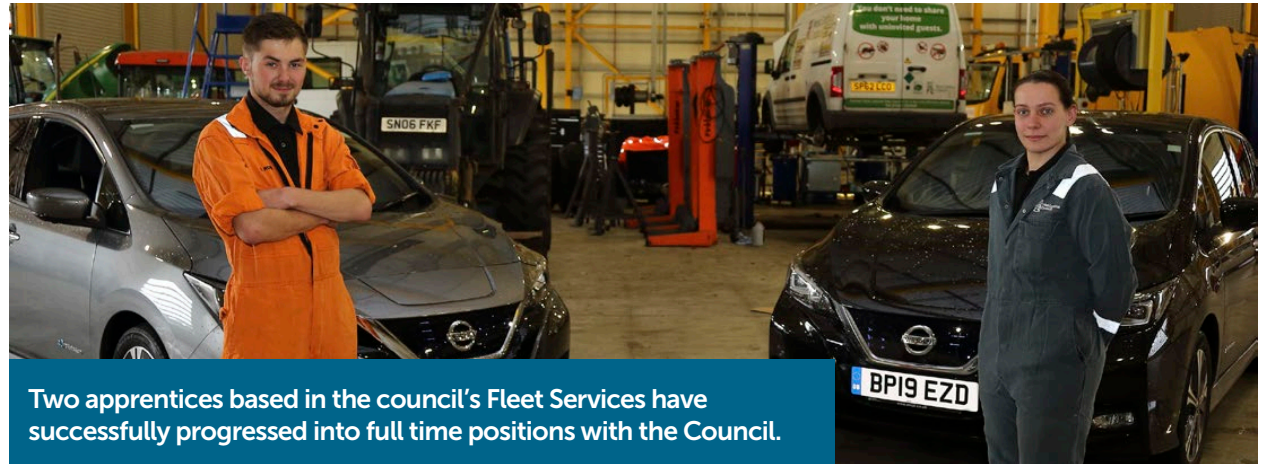
Executive councillor for development and transport, Cathy Muldoon said: "In these uncertain times we are living in it is especially important that communities are not left feeling isolated. This is positive news for all the communities along this route and particularly for the residents of Breich who will continue to have the opportunity to utilise public transport."

### Face masks

**Members of the public are being asked to wear a face covering when visiting a council building.**

This applies when visiting public/communal areas of all West Lothian Council operated buildings. This includes venues such as West Lothian Civic Centre, Partnership Centres, Visitor Centres and other community facilities.

## Apprentices now full time with Fleet



Leighjane Drummond and Connor Waldron have both spent time with the Fleet Services team working as Apprentice Mechanics. They learned on the job undertaking a variety of tasks in order to keep the council's fleet of vehicles on the road.

Now fully qualified HGV Mechanics, they accepted full-time positions upon completing their four-year apprenticeships.

Leighjane, 23 from Whitburn, attended West Calder High School prior to starting her apprenticeship with the council. Not only is she now a qualified HGV mechanic but she has also successfully gained a full HGV Driving license.

Leighjane said: "I've enjoyed working with and learning from a variety of mechanics and doing many

varied things on a wide variety of equipment and vehicles over the past four years."

Connor who is 21 and from Bathgate, attended St Kentigern's Academy before beginning his apprenticeship.

He said: "I am grateful for West Lothian Council for investing in me and supporting me throughout my journey from a school leaver to a fully qualified HGV Mechanic. I have really enjoyed the first-class workshop facilities we now have and also the team spirit within Fleet Services for the encouragement they have given me."

West Lothian Council fleet operations manager Bruce Robb noted: "it's great to see our qualified apprentices move into full-time roles. "Thanks and appreciation must also go to the of

the wider Fleet Services team whose mentoring, support and commitment to Connor and Leighjane has seen them gain a lifelong skill set."

Executive Councillor for the environment Tom Conn congratulated both saying: "West Lothian Council has a proud tradition of offering apprenticeships designed to really help people expand their skillset and knowledge in order to help them progress in their future career journey.

"Congratulations to both Leighjane and Connor on successfully completing their apprenticeship programmes and gaining full time positions with the Fleet Services Team and hopefully there is more success ahead for both of them."



## SUPPORTING PEOPLE, COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

On March 17, West Lothian College went into lockdown along with the rest of the country. However, although our campus buildings were closed, we never stopped working for our students, applicants and the wider community.

Overnight, all courses moved to online remote delivery and our staff rose to the challenge of adapting to a new way of working so that students were supported through a crucial period of their learning.

College IT staff distributed 150 laptops to students who did not have a computer at home which meant that no student was unable to take part in online learning and complete their course.

Lecturers, assessors, trainers and support staff continued to work during the campus closure, helping students and applicants to achieve their qualifications and make the right decisions for their future. Classes and assessments took place online, we ran our first ever virtual open day and interviewed over 1,000 students in the first three months of lockdown.

Students experiencing anxiety and poor mental health were able to access 24/7 mental health support from expert trained professionals through a platform called Togetherall. They also had access to dedicated mental health

counsellors employed by the college. These services continue to be available for students. Staff and students worked hard to support their local communities. The college donated PPE like face masks and disposable gloves to front-line services in West Lothian. Our campus was used as an NHS COVID19 testing station from April to August. Some of our staff even returned to the NHS as key workers.

As we welcomed our students back after the summer break, we made sure our campus was as safe as possible for everyone. We used the lockdown to improve our facilities, for example by introducing new outdoor learning spaces, improving our digital infrastructure for online teaching, and adapting the campus to prevent the spread of Covid19. Examples of this include the purchase of Padcaster kits to enhance digital learning and purchase of drones which will be used across various subjects in areas such as surveying for engineering students.

Courses this year are typically being delivered using a blended learning approach, with

practical sessions and some classes taking place on campus, and other aspects being taught online. Over 200 laptops have been loaned to students who do not have the necessary technology devices to benefit from online learning.

When on campus, lecturers are moving some of their classes outdoors. Being outdoors is an acknowledged as a way of mitigating the spread of the coronavirus. Childcare students, including secondary school pupils, are learning in our forest classroom, in the outdoor learning spaces in the college courtyard, and on the open grass in front of the campus. Professional Cookery students have been foraging in the woodland surrounding the campus and cooking outdoors. Sports students have been using college and local partnership facilities to undertake practical lessons outdoors, whilst other classes across the college have utilised outdoor space across the campus to provide learning and teaching in a safe environment.



West Lothian College remains the top choice for school leavers across the district and full time courses for this year are full. We are now creating a range of education and training opportunities for anyone affected by the crisis so that they can learn new skills, improve on existing skills, or even start a new career.

We will do our best for people in the towns and villages in West Lothian by inspiring and enabling success for all, supporting economic recovery and growth, and strengthening our communities.



## Dial-A-Ride

HcL Transport (Handicabs) restarted its Dial-A-Ride service fully again in July.

New enhanced cleaning procedures have been implemented both daily and between journeys. Drivers wear masks. Passengers must wear masks, unless they have medical reasons that prevent this.

**A maximum of four passengers from one household can travel, accompanied by a carer.**

Dial-A-Ride and Dial-A-Bus services help the elderly, people of any age with disabilities or Additional Support Needs or affected by geographic remoteness that makes public transport very difficult or impossible to use.

The service is also available to those who need help short-term e.g. while waiting for and following surgery such as a knee replacement or hip replacement.

The service is not just transportation, it is a door-through-door service which means the driver helps the passenger from inside their home/outside their home to their destination. The driver takes their shopping onto the bus and then into the passengers home (if they wish). All buses are fitted with wheelchair tie downs so can carry 2 wheelchairs on board with passengers able to remain in their wheelchair. New passengers get £6 off their first Dial-A-Ride journey.

To find out more visit [www.hcltransport.org.uk](http://www.hcltransport.org.uk)  
To book call 01506 633953

## Woodland gift expands Beecraigs



**Mr and Mrs Gibbs have donated 103 acres of young woodland near their Cathlawhill Farm in the Bathgate Hills to the people of West Lothian.**

The land, which is adjacent to council-owned land at Beecraigs, Witch Craig and the Korean War Memorial, will be integrated into the management of Beecraigs Country Park.

The woodlands are already well-used by the public and contain the historic Refuge Stone local landmark, a Geological Wall featuring all the types of rock found in the area, with panoramic views over the surrounding countryside.

Leader of West Lothian Council Lawrence Fitzpatrick said: "I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Gibbs for their generous gift. The

council will now be the guardians of this beautiful woodland area for the benefit of everyone in West Lothian.

"We hope this gift of this scenic woodland will allow us to make further improvements to the amenities in the Bathgate Hills such as improving the path network between Beecraigs, the Korean War Memorial, and the ancient burial site Cairnpapple, which is owned by Historic Environment Scotland which is especially important at this time for both physical and mental wellbeing."

## Community buildings remain in community hands

The council has worked in partnership with local community groups to agree the transfer of two properties into full community control.

The ownership of Eastfield Training Centre is set to be transferred to Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Community Development Trust (FBVCDT) who have run the facility successfully for a number of years.

Meanwhile Polbeth Village Hall has been leased to Polbeth Community Hub for a period of three years as a pre-cursor to a potential transfer of ownership at the end of that lease. The council has a Community Asset Transfer Policy that facilitates the transfer of community assets across West Lothian.

**If you are interested in finding out more about the council's Community Asset Transfer Policy please visit the West Lothian Council website: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/community-asset-transfer](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/community-asset-transfer)**

# Stay safe and enjoy your local parks

This year, parks and greenspaces throughout the world have been affected by the lockdown. Although some elements were closed, many West Lothian parks saw an increase in general use, including walking and cycling. Many people discovered greenspaces on their doorstep that they had never known existed. There was an increase in flora and fauna in our urban green spaces and a new appreciation for native wild flowers and wildlife. Being able to visit local parks and green spaces for exercise was a lifeline for some people, which has highlighted the importance of parks and greenspaces for health and wellbeing.

**Here are some of the improvements we've made to urban parks and greenspaces this year for health, wellbeing and wildlife.**

### West Lothian B-Lines

is the council's two-year partnership project with Buglife, match-funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to create and promote wildflower 'corridors' throughout West Lothian - also part of Buglife's UK-wide initiative. To date, we have created 13 meadows in Linlithgow, Bathgate, Livingston and Uphall, which bloomed beautifully this spring and summer. This autumn we are also creating eight new meadows in Howden Park, Livingston Village Park, Almondvale Park and Stewartfield Park. Look out for the wooden stakes in these parks, which mark the boundaries of the meadows. We also trialled some mass bulb-planting last autumn in Broxburn which was very successful this spring/summer.



This year's **Open Space Capital Programme** has funded improvements, such as upgrading paths, signage, drainage, play equipment, park furniture and landscaping in Kirkton Park, Howden Park, Longridge Neighbourhood Park, Park View Square, Holmes Park, Rosemount Park and Falcon Brae Park. Five additional play areas were refurbished with capital funding for play.

NETS, Land and Countryside Services has also helped local communities with their **Town Centre Fund projects**, such as creating a new local park in Uphall, replacing play equipment in Addiewell and Armadale and adding new wheelchair accessible play equipment in East Whitburn and Knightsridge.



### Over the coming months, we ask you to remember the following guidelines when using our parks and green spaces:

- Keep to the latest government guidelines about social distancing and the number of people/households allowed in groups outdoors
- Bring sanitiser or wipes with you
- Don't touch your face, and wash your hands for 20 seconds when you get home
- Cough or sneeze into tissues or your arm when tissues aren't available
- Wear face coverings when visiting the visitor centres at Almondell & Calderwood and Beecraigs
- Have only one family member accompany children in playparks if possible.
- Dispose of all litter in litter bins-take it home where a bin is not provided
- Pick up after your dog and dispose of dog poo in litter bins

**Protect yourself, your friends and family, please visit: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/coronavirus)**





## New council homes completed at site of old West Calder High School

West Lothian Council have recently taken possession of the first houses from Barratt Homes at the new affordable housing development on the site of the former West Calder High School in Polbeth.

Barratt Homes have built 33 new council homes consisting of a mixture of cottage flats, single storey homes and terraced houses. The development is in the form of a cul-de-sac which helps to promote a safe environment for children and elderly tenants. All of the new homes have individual gardens and dedicated parking spaces. The remaining homes on the site are due to be handed over by Christmas 2020.

Executive councillor for services for the community George Paul said: "Council homes are in short supply across the country and these much-

needed new houses will help provide local people with an excellent place to live. The developer has constructed homes of the highest quality and hopefully the council will be able to work on similar projects in the future. The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on all sectors of society and construction has certainly been one of them. However, it is encouraging that work has resumed on the majority of developments and the council will continue to work towards delivering high quality homes, in a number of ways including working with

developers to secure new properties for housing tenants in West Lothian."

Alison Condie, Managing Director of Barratt Homes said "It has been a pleasure working in partnership with West Lothian Council towards delivering this batch of affordable housing at Limefield.

"By working closely with West Lothian Council, we're able to meet the demand for affordable housing in the region by providing high quality homes, exactly where they are needed, alongside plenty of green spaces and local amenities."



Planning Permission has recently been granted for 29 new homes on the site of the former council depot at Eagle Brae, Livingston.

The development, which will consist of a mixture of cottage flats, two and three bed terraced houses, larger semi detached houses and both two and three-bedroomed wheelchair bungalows, is scheduled to begin in November 2020.

Planning Permission granted for

29

NEW HOMES  
Eagle Brae, Livingston

Planning Permission applied for

29

NEW HOMES  
Deans South, Livingston

West Lothian Council has applied for Planning Permission to construct 29 new homes on a vacant site at the south-east of Deans South.

Construction is due to begin in November 2020.

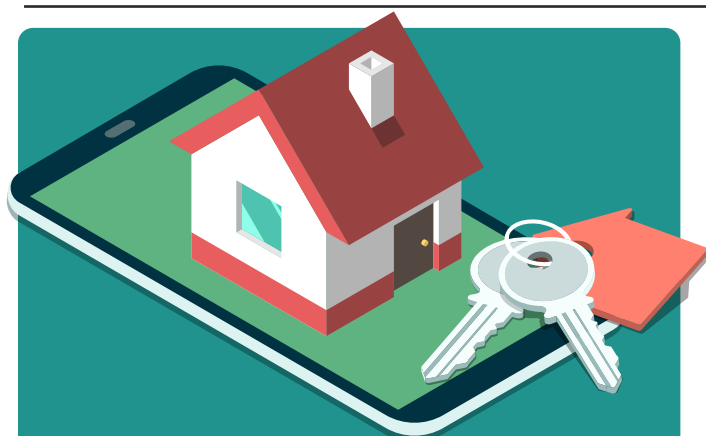
### Other current council housing sites include:

Bathville,  
Armada

Limefields,  
Polbeth

Hopetoun  
Street,  
Bathgate

Standhill,  
Bathgate



### WEST LOTHIAN COMMON HOUSING REGISTER'S NEW ONLINE HOUSING APPLICATION IS NOW LIVE.

People can now create, register, review or amend their housing application online with West Lothian Council, Almond Housing Association and WESLO via the West Lothian Council website:

[www.westlothian.gov.uk/council-housing](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/council-housing)

## Smoke Alarm Installation Programme

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London, a ministerial working group was established to review Scotland's Building and Fire Safety Regulatory Frameworks. In February 2019 the Scottish Government announced that the legislation relating to smoke detection in the home was changing to ensure all domestic properties in Scotland, regardless of tenure, have the same levels of detection, thereby increasing fire safety. Your landlord, West Lothian Council, will be responsible for making sure that your home complies with this new safety standard, which comes into force in February 2021. Whilst all of our council houses already have at least one smoke detector fitted, the new legislation states that all alarms shall be ceiling mounted and interlinked.

### The new standard requires that each property should have:

- one smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes
- one smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings
- one heat alarm installed in every kitchen

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**I already have smoke alarm(s) fitted in my home - do I need new ones?**

Yes - the requirement is to have multiple alarms that are all interlinked. You may not hear the alarm closest to the fire, but by having an interlinked system, you will

be alerted immediately.

**There are lots of different types of alarms available - which ones are the council fitting?**

West Lothian Council have opted to install lithium battery alarms which are interlinked throughout your property. The installation time averages one hour with minimal disruption to your existing fixtures and fittings.

During the Covid-19 pandemic we were not able to fit as many as we had originally planned, so in order for the council to meet the deadline date, it will be necessary to carry out a rigorous and fast-paced installation programme to ensure these essential mandatory works, are completed by February 2021.

With around 6,000 properties still to do, we are asking for your co-operation in booking an appointment now that the lockdown restrictions have been lifted, and our operatives are able to recommence the installation programme safely.

**Booking an installation date is vital to ensuring your home complies with the law and improves the fire safety of your home.**

**So, don't delay, book today!**

**Please call the Customer Service Centre on 01506 280000**





# Get to know your HOUSING OPTIONS

The coronavirus pandemic has created uncertainty across numerous elements of society and has undoubtedly put pressure on the living situations of many people. The chances sadly are that many more individuals and families are set to find themselves in difficult living situations in the months ahead be it through loss of income or a relationship breakdown. West Lothian Council's housing option service is available to provide support and help guide people through the range of options available to them in order to prevent a homeless situation.

For many people homelessness doesn't need to be the end result. Other options exist such as private rented sector, mid-market rent, registered social landlords, low cost home ownership that can provide permanent solutions.

With demand for social housing in certain towns and villages being so significant you could face a longer wait for a home depending on your preference. Information on the range of alternative housing options is available on the council's website at [www.westlothian.gov.uk/housingoptions](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/housingoptions).

The Housing Options Team can also guide you through suitable alternatives that could see you in a more permanent living arrangement sooner rather than later.

For Housing Options advice and assistance contact 01506 280000 and ask for the

Housing Options Team.

Executive councillor for services for the community George Paul said: "Issues brought on by the pandemic will undoubtedly result in people finding themselves in difficulty when it comes to their living situations.

For many people who are thinking homelessness is inevitable, we'd encourage them to contact us or look online at that the housing options available. There are very often alternatives to becoming homeless and they could lead to a more secure future for individuals and families. Some people believe that declaring themselves as homeless results in them being given the keys to a council property. However, the reality is much more complex and different.

There are 9,000 people on the council's housing waiting list and there aren't enough properties to be able to accommodate the demand.

For those that declare as homeless, the options become more limited and that's why so many people can end up in a

bed and breakfast or a homeless unit. Of course, no one would choose to find themselves in such a situation and that's why it's so important that the housing options team is available to help them in the most difficult of times."



**For Housing Options advice and assistance contact 01506 280000 and ask for the Housing Options Team.**



**HOUSING OPTIONS**  
*West Lothian*

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

## External Wall Insulation Programme

The council is continuing to make improvements to its housing stock, as part of the Council's Capital Investment Programme, and has appointed contractor MP Rendering to undertake External Wall Insulation (EWI) works to 196 council properties in Knightsridge, Livingston.

This work commenced in 2019/20 and will be finished over the course of this year (2020/21) following initial delays due to the coronavirus pandemic, with £1,350,000 of investment being made, funded by tenants' rent payments.

This programme targets properties of solid wall (concrete) construction, and covers the outside walls with insulation and new uplifting render. Feedback has been excellent so far, with tenants reporting their houses being warmer as a result.

This insulation work also gives the properties and streets a fresh look and helps

to reduce fuel bills by up to £260 per year.

The scheme is being extended into Dedridge, Elburn, Fauldhouse, Ladywell and Polbeth

this year as a further 181 properties are planned to be completed in these areas, with £1,220,000 worth of additional investment being made.



Ferguson Way, Knightsridge, after EWI works carried out.

## Render and Roof Upgrading

West Lothian Council in 2020/21 will continue to carry out necessary upgrading and replacement of roof coverings and render coatings to properties throughout the district.

Properties have been identified as requiring upgrades through maintenance inspections and stock condition surveys. The same methods have been employed in order to identify further properties to be included in future works.

The works comprise the design and upgrading of roof and/or render to properties and include:

- The replacement of flat/pitched roof coverings, associated joinery work and rainwater goods
- Chimney repairs and removals
- External wall render upgrade with

rainwater goods replaced where required

- Footpath repairs/ replacements where required
- Installation of PIR security lights where required

Properties will remain in occupation whilst works proceed. Disturbance will be kept to a minimum with the utmost care taken to ensure the safety of the occupants, the public and property.

Wall and Roof fabric upgrade is a key challenge for the council over the short and medium term to ensure the housing stock sustains it's SHQS compliance.

### Scheduled Works

- Fallas Place, Walker Road & Main Street, Fauldhouse
- Badallan Place, Fauldhouse
- Church Place, Fauldhouse
- Drummond Place, Blackridge
- Anderson Avenue, Armadale
- Strathlogie, Westfield
- Lochs Area, Whitburn
- Abbotsford, Ambrose Rise, Cedric, Clement, and Quentin Rise, Livingston



# Livingston company key to **COVID vaccine** work

A Livingston based company will be at the heart of the UK's drive to develop a vaccine to combat COVID-19.

Valneva, which specialises in vaccine development, has reached agreement in principle with the UK Government to provide up to 100 million doses of its SARS CoV-2 vaccine candidate, to be manufactured in its Livingston plant.

David Lawrence, Finance Director of Valneva, said: "We are a global company and our facility in West Lothian is thriving. Our workforce, many of whom are local to West Lothian, are delighted to have been selected to take part in this important program with the UK Government."

Leader of West Lothian Council Lawrence Fitzpatrick said: "I know everyone at Valneva are extremely proud to have been selected to take part in this important programme. West Lothian has strong life sciences, technology, engineering and manufacturing sectors which are key contributors to economic sustainability and inclusive growth in the local area.

"We all hope that vaccine development is successful and this investment provides further long-term stability in the local economy which we obviously warmly welcome."



David Lawrence welcomed Leader of West Lothian Council Lawrence Fitzpatrick on a site visit earlier this year.

## CALLING ALL BUSINESSES IN WEST LOTHIAN

Let us help you **KICK  
START YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT** in  
West Lothian



West Lothian Council will help local businesses and charities bid for funding to help create 200 job opportunities for young people.

The council and Community Planning Partners are utilising the new scheme created by the UK Government's Kick Starts programme which has been launched to create new paid six month job placements for young people who are currently on Universal Credit and at risk of long term unemployment.

The Kick Start scheme aims to create new paid 6 month job placements for young people. It will go live in November

2020 and run until the summer 2022. Placements can be created within any size employer in the private sector, public and voluntary sector.

The placements must be new jobs and must not replace existing or planned vacancies.

Organisations that are successful in securing funding will receive 100% of the relevant national minimum wage for 25 hours per week.

The council will act as an intermediary to help organisations create job opportunities and guide them through the process.

Visit: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/kickstart](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/kickstart) for more details on the help, support and advice on offer.

## HELPLINE LAUNCHED

A helpline has been set up by West Lothian Council to help support residents who have been made redundant.

**Call 01506 280010 for support**

Craig McCorriston, the council's Head of Planning, Economic and Regeneration said: "People may require a range of support the primary focus is securing alternative employment including self-employment and to look at their financial position including any benefits they are entitled to, council tax reductions and money management support. When people contact us,

we will include support on CVs, job searching, information on vacancies and support on setting up your own business. However practical assistance is also part of this campaign, such as benefits advice, adult learning and advice on the payment of rent if clients are council housing tenants."



West Lothian is part of a **PACE**, (Partnership Action for Continued Employment) initiative with Skills Development Scotland and DWP. This provides direct support to those who have been made redundant through the company, focussing on those companies that are making more than 20 staff redundant at any one time. It has a national helpline which will direct traffic locally for support outlined above. The local campaign helpline will primarily support those that aren't supported through PACE interventions such as those who that have been affected by smaller scale redundancies.

Need more information about how **PACE** can help?  
Call **0800 917 8000** to speak to an adviser.

## Economic Recovery & Growth Plan given green light

A West Lothian Economic Recovery & Growth Plan has been finalised that aims to support training, create and protect local jobs.

The plan has been created by the Jobs Task Force Partnership which is made up of representatives from West Lothian College, Skills Development Scotland, Visit West Lothian, Scottish Enterprise, West Lothian Council and the Federation of Small Business.

The plan includes practical measures to help the local economy including plans to help

create 500 new, high value, jobs and protect a further 1,750 that are assessed as being at risk.

One key outcome of the plan is to increase the level of local procurement by the council to 40% each year and help local businesses. The plan also includes measures to provide support for school leavers, and provide more training and upskilling, generally, within growth sectors.



The Partnership is chaired by Executive councillor for development and transport, Cathy Muldoon who is confident that the plan will provide a focal point in the weeks, months and years ahead.

*"It is very important to be upfront and honest about the challenges that we all face. Our plan aims to address those challenges head on and create clear objectives that we believe will help create new jobs and protect as many jobs as we can in the local area."*

The plan can be viewed by visiting: [www.westlothian.gov.uk/economic-recovery-and-growth](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/economic-recovery-and-growth)



# Help in a crisis

Struggling to make ends meet is a worry for more households than people would imagine. Financial worries aren't always visible and can impact an individual's mental health and wellbeing.



## Here is how we can help:

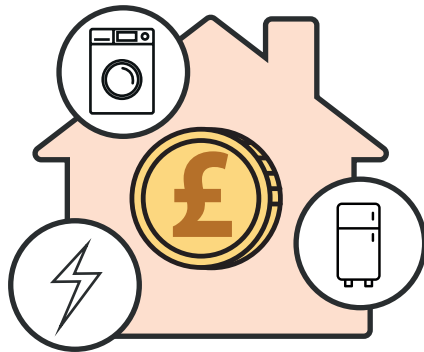
### Help with living costs

#### Dealing with a Financial Crisis?

If you experience a financial crisis, you can apply for a Scottish Welfare Fund Crisis Grant to cover the cost of essential items such as food, gas and electricity. You will be considered for a Crisis Grant if you are on a low income and you have experienced an emergency or disaster and the health and wellbeing of yourself and/or your family are at risk

#### Needing help to maintain or settle into a new home?

Scottish Welfare Fund Community Care Grants are awarded to individuals or families on low income who need help to set up a new home or maintain the home they are living in. This includes



people leaving care, hospital or prison to live on their own, or help people in the community to remain in their own home without the risk of having to go into care. These grants can also help families facing exceptional pressure by providing essential household items such as a washing machine, cooker and fridge freezer.

More information on the qualifying conditions and how to apply for both Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants can be found by visiting [www.westlothian.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/scottish-welfare-fund) or by phoning **01506 280000** and taking Option 6

### Are you struggling to Pay Rent?

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are available to support tenants in West Lothian who are under financial pressure and as a result are not able to meet their housing costs.

DHP's are extra payments which may be made to help with housing costs where tenants:

- Are not entitled to full housing benefit/or housing cost element does not cover the full rent charge.
- Are having difficulty making ends meet due to an illness affecting a member of the household.
- Housing benefit/the housing cost element of Universal Credit has been reduced due to a recent change in circumstances.

- Are finding it difficult to make ends meet due to a new or unexpected expense.
- Are having difficulty meeting rent deposit or rent in advance payments.
- Require assistance with removal costs.

#### Who can claim a Discretionary Housing Payment?

- Those in receipt of Housing Benefit or the housing cost element of Universal Credit; and
- Have a shortfall between the amount being received and the amount of rent due to be paid.

### How to apply

Applications can be made online by visiting [www.westlothian.gov.uk/apply](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/apply)

The Advice Shop can also help you make a DHP application; call **01506 283000** – option 1 or fill in the online referral form and an advisor will call you back [www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop-referral](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop-referral)

## Scottish Child Payment

The Scottish Government has announced that applications will open in November for the new Scottish Child Payment.

The Scottish Child Payment is a new benefit providing low income families with an extra £10 per week for each child in the family under 6. The first payments will begin from the end of February 2021.

**This is not an automatic payment and people will have to apply.**

For more information or to apply go to [www.mygov.scot/benefits/](http://www.mygov.scot/benefits/) or contact West Lothian Council's Advice Shop if you would like to check if you are eligible or need help to apply phone 01506 283000 option 1 or fill in the online referral form and an advisor will call you back [www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop-referral](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop-referral)

**3.8 MILLION**

People have had to borrow to make ends meet through overdrafts, credit cards and other loans

### Recognise the Problem

Facing the problem is often the hardest step. Making a list of your income to compare against your bills, essential spending and debt repayments is a good place to start.



**Try our free online budgeting tool:** [budgetnew.entitledto.co.uk/westlothian](http://budgetnew.entitledto.co.uk/westlothian)

## Make the most of your money

The COVID-19 crisis has had a huge financial impact. This has resulted in many people struggling to cope with mounting financial pressure. The Advice Shop can provide much needed help and support for anyone struggling with money worries.

### Reach Out

You don't need to deal with your debt alone. One phone call could put you in touch with a money adviser to help you:



- work out how much you can afford to repay
- negotiate with your creditors on your behalf
- consider your options and help you to access support
- with statutory debt schemes such as bankruptcy and Debt Arrangement Scheme

### Regain Control

After working with a money adviser, clients tell us:

*"My money adviser made me feel at ease and I can now see light at the end of the tunnel."*

*"I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders after speaking to my adviser."*





## Safety Commitment

Let's get into the routine and keep it pristine!

The health and safety of Xcite customers and its staff are central to what we do, and we have been working with Sports Governing Bodies and Industry Associations to ensure best practices are in place for when you visit.

Xcite have introduced several new features to keep everyone healthier, happier, together! We are one of the few providers in Scotland to introduce Electrostatic Cleaning as part of their new cleaning measures. Also, we have enhanced our cleaning procedures and developed a robust rota with regular timetabled cleaning slots between activity sessions as well as increased cleaning stations throughout our venues for customers to use.

We are a sociable bunch but to maintain social distancing, Xcite has set out directional signage and marked out appropriate floor markings in all activity areas. We are one of the few trusts that have gone the extra mile and fitted protective screens between cardio kit in the gym so you can be assured of safe

training. We do ask you to do your best to maintain social distancing during your visit and to wear a face-covering when entering and exiting the building. You can remove this once you reach your favourite activity and before you start your training.

Before you attend you must pre-book your activity which you can do easily online via the WLL Xcite App or by phoning reception. This is to manage traffic within our buildings and areas at all times. All activities have a limited capacity in line with the latest guidelines. You'll be required to check-in at reception or kiosk to record your visit and this will assist with Track and Trace.

All the Xcite Team will have ongoing training, so they are up to speed with the

latest health & Safety procedures. We have also been provided with appropriate PPE to enable a safe working environment.

Remember to follow the latest government guidance and if you have symptoms please stay at home.

Want to know what to expect when visiting visit our website and view online videos as well as reading our 'Latest Updates' and 'FAQ's' at [www.westlothianleisure.com](http://www.westlothianleisure.com).

As guidelines change this may affect different areas across Xcite and always best to check our website before you attend. If you have any concerns or need support, please speak to a member of the Xcite Team when you visit.

**Healthier, happier, together!**

### Useful links:

**NHS:** [www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

**Public Health Scotland:** [www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/](http://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/covid-19/)

**Sport Scotland:** <https://sportscotland.org.uk/covid-19/latest-sport-and-physical-activity-guidance/>

## Small Group Swimming Lessons

We have introduced **NEW** small group swimming lessons to our Learn 2 Swim programme!

The lessons are available from baby and pre-school to swim skill 4 and cater for a maximum of four children per class. They are great for focusing on individual needs and helping build a stronger bond between your child and their swim teacher.

Small group swimming lessons can help reduce your little ones fears or anxieties towards the water but with the extra attention provided, this could soon be overcome. There is potential for faster progression too as there is additional time spent on perfecting their technique.

Fancy booking in your child to lessons that are more focused on individual needs? Please visit our website [www.westlothianleisure.com](http://www.westlothianleisure.com) to check out our swimming lesson availability and then contact your local Xcite Venue where a member of the team will secure your child's space!

Please note, small group swimming lessons are not included in Junior Memberships. £30.00 per month Swim Skill 1-4 and £32.00 per month for Baby and Pre-school.



## WLL Xcite App

**All customers must pre-book their activity session online before visiting their local venue. The quickest and easiest way to book is via the WLL Xcite App.**

Download on the  
App Store

GET IT ON  
Google Play



**You will have easy access to:**

- **Gym Sessions** - Check out our available gym session times and book with a tap of a finger!
- **Gym Appointments** - Book your Xcite Start Well or Feel Well Programme Review!
- **Fitness Classes** - Get real-time access to our fitness classes timetables.

- **Virtual Classes** - Easily view our virtual fitness class timetables, come and give it a go!
- **Sports** - Book from Badminton, Tennis, Squash to Football!
- **Swimming** - Book your next swimming session, it's time to jump back in!
- **MyWellness** - Instant access to Technogym's My Wellness App, with your

latest gym programme updates and results!

- **Your Bookings** - You will be able to view what activities you have booked and make changes if you need to change your attendance.
- **Latest Updates** - Check out our latest news so you're always up to date with what is happening at Xcite!

## Secure your space NOW!

Xcite have a range of payment options available from pay-per-visit, memberships and the concession scheme. The WLL Xcite App is available to download to your phone or tablet from the App Store or Google Play. Alternatively, you can visit [www.westlothianleisure.com/make-a-booking/](http://www.westlothianleisure.com/make-a-booking/) to book online.

Xcite receptions are also open and phone numbers can be found their website.

*\*Please note activity availability depends on current government guidelines for latest updates visit our website [https://www.westlothianleisure.com](http://www.westlothianleisure.com)*