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Stepping up: Volunteers Rachel Morrison and Theresa Martin

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Message from George

The events of the last week have been unprecedented, unnerving and unreal. I hope that you, your families and your loved ones are safe and well and coping with the additional pressures that this crisis has placed on all of us.

The services that you and your colleagues provide for the citizens of Glasgow on a daily basis are hugely important and I'd like to say a massive thank you to each and every one of you for your contribution at this time.

In this special edition of this newsletter, I want to highlight some of the particular contributions that are being made to keep essential services running during this time.

I am extremely proud of the dedication and resilience of all our employees demonstrating yet again our commitment to delivering critical city services during very difficult circumstances.

George Gillespie, Executive Director

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Rising to the Challenge



From any point of view, these are extremely challenging times. In its role within Glasgow City Council, Neighbourhoods and Sustainability provides key services to the people of Glasgow, and due both to the effects of Covid-19 and the measures taken against it, those services are under pressure as never before.

Staff carrying out key activities are bearing the brunt of this pressure, often with reduced numbers, and they are doing a magnificent job.

To support frontline staff, and to relieve some pressure, the call has gone out for staff who can be spared to volunteer to assist in the provision of key services. Volunteers will receive appropriate training and will be allocated to the highest priority work available.

Rising from adversity, this is a great opportunity to add new skills to your CV, to see working life from a different angle and generally to benefit from a temporary change.

One of our services where volunteers are already providing assistance is the Bereavement Service. This is a particularly sensitive role, but a vital one supporting those who have lost loved ones and giving due respect to the deceased.

Here's what Theresa Martin of our Parks and Development team has to say about her experience so far:

“ I was asked if I wanted to volunteer with Bereavement Services, I immediately said yes, I felt that I definitely wanted to help out my colleagues. I knew that the role would be to perhaps help with cremations, support staff with front of house duties and be there for each other through this particularly surreal time. I felt a little nervous but really up for the challenge of learning as much I could. Over the past week, we have been supported through learning how to assist the cremation tech team and a little about the admin side of things. It has been, only what I can call, a profound and rewarding experience.”

Volunteer Rachel Morrison sums it up:

“ If there was ever a time to be reflective, for me it is now. I've went from basic admin services to learning the whole process of cremations from start to finish in the space of one week. There has been tears, laughter and a tiny amount of curses but this has been a hugely rewarding experience for me to know I am helping where others cannot.

I think Bereavement Services tend to be last on the thank you card list but the amount of work, effort and sensitivity this whole department puts in to their tirelessly demanding posts is exceptional and I have been immensely proud to be part of the team.

If you feel that you can, you should put your name forward to volunteer as I can guarantee that you will feel proud of yourself at the end of it.”

Stepping Up

“ At this difficult time it's great to see the Council operating as a team.”
Says Eric Stewart, Head of Transport Services in Neighbourhoods and Sustainability.

With a lot of schools closed, many ASL drivers are undertaking different work, such as collecting and delivering cars and vans, but two of our ASL bus drivers have stepped up to the plate to help their cleansing colleagues by volunteering to drive bin lorries.

Jim Flavell and Jim McKale (well done, guys!) spent several days familiarising themselves with the trucks – and are now at work on bin collections.





Nextbike

“Cycling is the perfect self-distancing way of moving around our cities during the pandemic.”

Krysia Solheim, Managing Director of nextbike, with support from Glasgow City Council and Scottish Power, has launched a scheme to provide free nextbike memberships to all NHS workers in Glasgow to help them get to and from work safely during the Covid-19 outbreak. The membership provides free unlimited 30-minute rides on the standard pedal bikes.

“The events over the last few weeks have been unprecedented and it’s clear that now, more than ever, we need to come together to get through this crisis.” Said Ms Solheim.

“Hopefully, by offering NHS staff the chance to take a free nextbike instead of having to use public transport, we will be helping to minimise the risks to their health – so they can continue to look after the health of the nation.”

“I would like to say a huge thank you to Glasgow City Council and Scottish Power for lending their support.”

“Our local service provider, Bike for Good, is also doing a vital job by keeping the fleet on the streets for people to use and we can’t thank their staff enough for the dedication they have shown during difficult times.”

The fleet will also remain operational for regular customers, who can still use the bikes to get their daily

dose of exercise and fresh air.

Ms Solheim added:
“Cycling is the perfect way of embracing exercise while practicing safe self-distancing. Getting out in the fresh air is also vital for mental health during these turbulent times and it’s important that people know they can still enjoy cycling as long as they stick to current social distancing and hygiene guidelines set out by the government.”

“We’re encouraging all of our customers to take sensible and responsible measures when using the bikes, including following official handwashing and hygiene guidelines and not using our bikes if they are showing any Coronavirus symptoms.”

Neighbourhoods Coordinator, Karen Venables asked Drumchapel residents to get in touch if they needed anything. An elderly resident contacted Karen, explaining she couldn't get out to get her prescription due to her underlying health condition. Karen immediately offered to pick up the prescription. and left it on the resident's doorstep, calling her to let her know it was there and to see if she was ok. Neighbourhood Liaison Manager, Francine O'Rourke said "A response like this is typical of Karen who frequently goes over and above in her job supporting community groups or residents, well done Karen".

Over the first weekend Alex Colquhoun and a team from 231's Transport Team - Lorraine Finnen, Claire MacKay and Elizabeth O'Keefe - mixed 400 bottles of cleaning solution taking nearly 7 hours. Well done to them all.

St Rollox have reported that road sweeper, Daniel Vernel, is receiving daily praise from residents and public due to on-going work there. Well done Daniel!

Roy Ewing, Jim Hardie, Martin McLaughlin and James Neilly from the Training Section are to be thanked for their input so far and the efficient delivery of training which they have provided consistently over the past few weeks. Apart from the obvious restrictions which have been placed on everyone over the past few weeks, they have shown their ability to adapt training and deliver it quickly in response to operational needs.

A team of City Parking staff have volunteered to help prepare and deliver cleaning spray solutions for all vehicles to all operational depots within NS and Cordia locations. This is being coordinated from City Parking's Charing Cross Car Park offices. The team is utilising five of its vans for transportation.

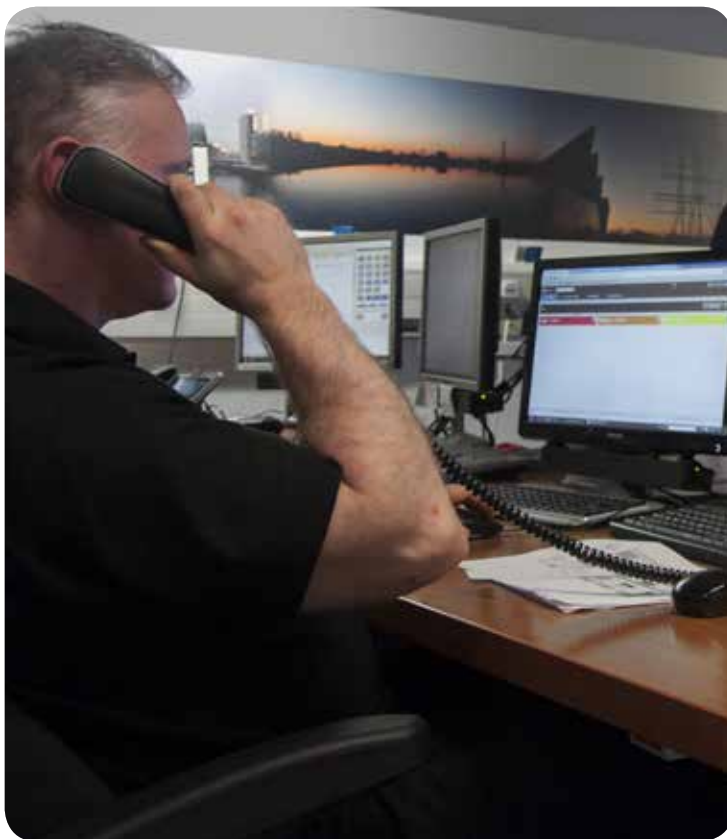
Dawsholm depot cleansing staff have been receiving warm welcomes from local communities in the West and North West of the city over the past couple of weeks. People are showing their thanks by shouting out of their windows about how the team are doing a great job. "Stay safe and keep up the good work" is the most common cheer. The team are hearing these comments on their routes every week which is helping to lift their spirits and making the vital job they do that little bit easier.

WALKY

Keeping Our Communities Safe

In a difficult situation that no one living in Scotland has ever experienced, Community Safety is providing reassurance to our communities and support to our emergency services and is maintaining the security and safety of our properties across Glasgow.

Our staff are going above and beyond to fulfil their activities, watching over our communities and most valued assets during this difficult time. Our dedicated and professional staff continue to use their skills, knowledge and many years of experience on a daily basis to assist the emergency services to provide a much needed support, thus reducing an overwhelming demand on our colleagues within the Police, Fire and Rescue, and Ambulance services.



The following three articles show the areas in which Neighbourhoods and Sustainability Community Safety staff are stepping up.

All our services are working closely with Police, Fire and Ambulance services which is invaluable at this time, as it reduces the impact to our emergency services when resources are at their lowest and demand at its highest.

Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC)

With social distancing and self-isolation this is a crucial time for communities and our Alarm Receiving Centre at Blochairn can remotely monitor a wide range of services to support our Care Workers, Police and Fire and Rescue Services.

Our ARC staff monitor some of our most vulnerable elderly citizens suffering with dementia, providing an appropriate response to any alerts outwith their programmed “safe zones”. There are also a number of life and limb, lift and building management systems, personal attack alarms and CCTV that allow the ARC staff to review a number of areas of the city at any one time and quickly alert our Security Services to attend as needed.

Our Monitoring Officers continue to respond quickly to all alarm activations, remain calm whilst following escalation plans, and clearly communicate facts to key people and emergency services saving lives and keeping our communities safe.

Security Services

When citizens are looking for reassurance in this time of uncertainty our Security Officers are on the front line providing just that. Our Officers are able to provide a level of comfort by ensuring essential community resources are available for safe use during this difficult time and also when the pandemic finally passes.

Our Officers provide proactive patrols to a number

of properties including schools, nurseries, and community buildings to ensure they remain safe for use for essential workers, their children and the most vulnerable.

Security Services also provide a response service to investigate any alarm activations when an incident occurs. Our Officers will liaise with our ARC Monitoring Officers, Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue services to provide the knowledge and support that is needed when dealing with break-ins, fires and vandalism across council assets. This is vital to ensure our buildings are kept secure and operationally safe, allowing critical services to continue their work supporting our communities.


Public Space CCTV and Traffcom

Keeping our streets safe

PSCCTV has been working closely with colleagues from Police Scotland to identify groups who are not following the Government’s advice to ensure they are socially distancing to protect themselves and others. CCTV plays a key role in directing resources to the right places.

PSCCTV are also utilising data and images captured as part of the Avenues Project to measure footfall using video analytics on 4 cameras. The cameras provide images at scheduled intervals which provide an excellent source of information with regard to the current level of footfall within certain areas of the city. The Project is a collaboration between GCC and the Big Urban Data Centre from Glasgow University.

Working from Home



It's quite a shock, isn't it? Even for those of us with good home computer set-ups, negotiating the steps required to link into our secure Council system can be trying. And then there is the practical question of how do you continue to deliver a service to the public? Especially when a lockdown is in place.

Here's how one Neighbourhoods and Sustainability team have responded. Conflict Resolution covers the Conflict Resolution Unit, Mediation and the Domestic Noise Service.

We are providing a limited service, with all officers based at home and contactable by phone. We have also created a WhatsApp group for officers to interact and to maintain our team spirit.

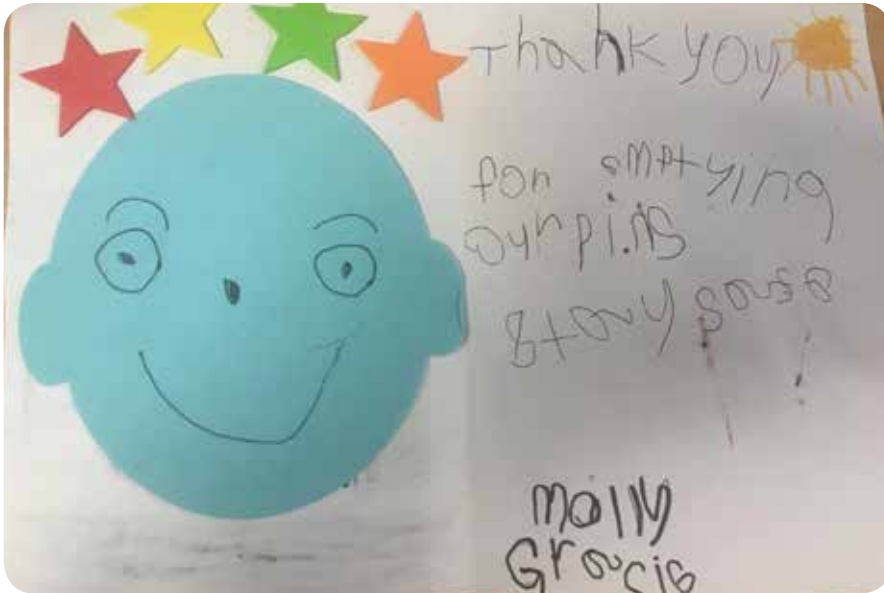
A manager has a laptop which can access databases and referrals. These are then emailed to another manager who can pick them up via iPhone and subsequently phone officers to pass details on so they can contact our service users.

Where we are able to source all party contact details, work is undertaken by phone. CRU are still taking statements and where relevant verbal warnings can still be given. If we are unable to get contact details for the source of any Antisocial Behaviour then we will provide advice, guidance and reassurance. We are still working on existing cases from partner Registered Social Landlords, GCC temporary homelessness accommodation and private sector sources.

Mediation officers can still undertake mediation by a phone shuttle approach, although most callers have decided to place their complaints on hold during this time. Mediation officers have been providing an important "someone to talk to" role in a difficult time.

Noise officers are able to call and provide advice to those affected by excessive neighbour noise, although no visits can now be made to measure noise or indeed to tackle the source of excessive noise. If the noise is very excessive with associated disorder then callers are advised to call Police Scotland.

We are still getting requests for service although numbers are now dropping as would be expected. Spirits are still high and everyone is keeping in touch providing support during this most unusual of times.



Binmulloch!

Throughout the City, Neighbourhoods and Sustainability staff are providing vital, frontline services. From the public, though, expectation often trumps recognition. We only hear from them in the form of complaint.

So, the Cleansing Operations team in the North East were bowled over last week when some very young Barmulloch residents offered their thanks in their own special way. Molly and Gracie from Broomfield Crescent in Barmulloch got their arts and crafts out and made a special 'Thank You' card for the crew that empty their bins.



FARE

FARE is a Third Sector organisation based in Easterhouse providing vital support to people within their community.

During the crisis they have stepped up and are providing regular food hampers to the most vulnerable people within their community. Families of four are receiving food hampers every two days containing 24 meals. Older people are also receiving food hampers that provide them with meals for a six-day period. To date FARE have delivered over 60,000 meals.

Jimmy Wilson, Chief Executive Officer at FARE said *"Discarded packaging was becoming a challenge for the organisation and it quickly built up within the main hall of FARE's premises. I contacted Glasgow City Council and their cleansing team reacted quickly and cleared the packaging giving us back the use of the main hall. The team said they would continue to assist us by clearing the packaging. This help from the council has really made all the difference, I'd like to thank the team for their help."*

Hope springs...



Our lives may be locked down against the coronavirus, but life around us continues. We cannot abandon livestock that requires human husbandry to live a comfortable life.

One of the services administered by Neighbourhoods and Sustainability is the Tollcross Children's Farm. Farm Livestock Supervisor Hugh Boyle came back to work early from annual leave, with staff reduced in the pandemic. Two grounds operatives (Susan Boyd and David Cann) who work on Glasgow Life Contract have volunteered to learn about life on the farm. They learnt perhaps more than they expected when a new lamb decided to make a premature appearance. With the great care of Hugh the lamb was safely delivered.

HOPE



Back to School

Although schools are 'closed' until further notice, they are still providing services for children of key workers while complying with government advice on staff 'going to work'. This puts a heavy load on those members of school staff present on any particular day.

In Milton, two Neighbourhoods and Community staff working at the 'ARC', Amy Hanlin and Shaun Quinn, have volunteered to help out at Chirnsyde Primary School.

According to Head Teacher Jackie Maciver, the two Community Resource Assistants "were invaluable last week. They were able to utilise their skills with the children that we had in. The children loved playing outdoors and indoors, and they are already very familiar with Shaun in particular, so this made the transition easier. Our staff are highly trained to deliver all areas of the curriculum but not necessarily games, sports and the like, so the expertise from the ARC staff was invaluable for us."

FREE Help and Support from Workplace Options

We recognise the need to care for employee wellbeing and have provided an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) for all employees to access.

The EAP is provided through Workplace Options. They have extensive experience in dealing with a wide range of issues, whether they are work-related or personal.

Workplace Options is staffed by professionals and is an expert provider of employee support services. Their staff comprise of a team of highly trained and qualified professionals who are experts in fields such as well-being, family matters, relationships, debt management, employment issues, consumer rights, counselling, and much more.

Freephone anytime: 0800 247 1100

E-mail: assistance@workplaceoptions.co.uk





Doon the Watter

Well, life on the Neighbourhoods and Sustainability river boat 'The Saint Mungo' is not exactly a leisure cruise! Over the last three weeks our river boat team have been working tirelessly in the river trying to keep it clean. Out of the public gaze, this crew of three probably goes unnoticed even by NS colleagues. Their main purpose is to keep the River Clyde free of floating debris, but they are regularly asked to assist Scottish Fire and Rescue and Police Scotland in the emotionally difficult task of looking out for, and recovering, missing persons that may have unfortunately lost their life in the river. They have recovered 3 missing persons' bodies from the Clyde in the last 2 weeks for the police, bringing some comfort to bereaved families during tragic and sensitive times. They are a very humble crew who see this as part of their duties but it is not. They do not need to do this. Above and beyond the call, they make it their duty to assist in these types of recoveries. Just recently one of the crew has had to self-isolate leaving just two crew members to continue cleaning the river and doing their part in cleaning Glasgow.

Below the Watter

Very few of those making the one-minute journey across the river through the Clyde Tunnel probably think of the effort of others to facilitate their journey. Nor do very few think of the importance of the Tunnel as a major route linking Gartnavel Hospital with the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital, the New Victoria Hospital and the Royal Infirmary.

In normal times, twelve Neighbourhoods and Sustainability Network Officers, working in three shifts, keep the Tunnel functioning. Now though, this workforce, knowing well the medical importance of this route in a pandemic, although reduced in number through Covid-19, have been working flat out twenty-four hours a day to keep the Tunnel open, while also overseeing the Tidal Weir which is vital in maintaining water levels in the Clyde

That light at the end of the Tunnel, though, is that volunteers are to be trained to work at the Tidal Weir, reducing the need for the hard-working Tunnel Network Officers to provide cover.



Keeping it Flowing

In the current challenging circumstances, Neighbourhoods and Sustainability's team of Recycling Monitoring Officers have stepped up to the task, to ensure the city's recycling points are being regularly serviced and they are doing an amazing job.

The members of the team, Stevie McMillan, Colin Andrews, Willie Connor and Gillian McDonald, are working across the whole city, and are increasing the number of inspections of the council's network of over 700 public recycling points and communal recycling sites at multi-storey flats and deck access properties. Dependent on the site, there are recycling banks for dry mixed recycling, glass bottles and jars, and textiles. The team are checking each site to identify full and overflowing recycling bins, and if any fly tipping has occurred, which may lead to potential public health issues. The information recorded by the team is collated and provided to the local operations depots to allow them to respond appropriately.

As the current situation forces other council services to be temporarily suspended, for example, bulk waste collections, extra pressure may be applied at the public recycling points which have subsequently been the focus for additional inspections. So the team are out checking these sites, identifying and reporting any issues to the depots promptly.

Stevie, Colin, Willie and Gillian are undertaking excellent work and the information gathered is provided to operational colleagues, on a daily basis. This allows the collection crews and supervisors to arrange a service of the points and, if required, clearing of waste material from the surrounding area. For the operational staff this is imparting an insight into the busier sites, giving them opportunity to prioritise workloads and schedule collections accordingly, whilst minimising opportunity for complaints.

Under the current "stay at home" regime, we are not asking the public to go out to these sites. However, we recognise that many are located within supermarket car parks, shopping centres and on-street locations, where residents will go to get their essential shopping, or potentially walk by as part of their daily exercise routine. They therefore provide residents with opportunities to continue to recycle at these difficult times. Because of this it is essential that the Monitoring Team are out there as the 'eyes' of the service, providing up to date information on the status of the recycling sites to the depots to focus their response.

As with Neighbourhoods and Sustainability as a whole it is all about teamwork!





Improving Social Contact

All over the country, coronavirus support groups have been forming to help the elderly and vulnerable who are in self-isolation amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Neighbourhoods and Sustainability teams such as the Neighbourhood Improvement and Enforcement Service officers, who work directly with communities and individuals, have found themselves well placed to offer support to the vulnerable by providing social contact through regular telephone calls.

The NIES team currently work with approximately 400 Neighbourhood Improvement Volunteers in the city. These individuals take part in a range of activities to enhance their local environment, including litter-picking and reporting environmental issues. Many of our Neighbourhood Improvement Volunteers are retired people who have more time to dedicate to improving their local communities. When the Government introduced Self-Isolation and Social Distancing measures it became apparent that while we must be physically distant, it is crucial that we maintain or even increase social contact with others during this unprecedented time.

The NIES officers based at home have been using their time and mobile phones to maintain contact with the Neighbourhood Improvement Volunteers in their designated areas. In just one week it has become apparent just how many of our volunteers fall into the vulnerable group, highlighting the importance of regular contact.

Officers have reported that their calls have been really well received with many people just grateful for someone to chat to for a little while. We have also heard lots of good positive stories about communities pulling together and helping each other. Isn't it strange that it sometimes takes something like this to actually get people talking to each other!!

Remember, physical distance is very important just now, but it is equally important to stay connected to others as we work together to contend with this crisis.





CATCH IT.



BIN IT.



KILL IT.



**Wash your
hands.**



**Use a tissue
for coughs and
sneezes.**



**Avoid touching
your face.**

Above and beyond...



**THANK
YOU**