Staff and pupils celebrate opening of two new primary schools

New primary schools in Duns and Langlee opened their doors for the first time at the start of the new term in August.

The £10million Langlee school includes 14 classrooms, sports hall, outdoor MUGA sports pitch, a centre for children with severe and complex additional needs and provision for early learning and childcare.

The facility, built by contractors McLaughlin and Harvey, was opened by SBC Leader, Councillor Shona Haslam, and pupils Taylor Patterson (Langlee Lass), Danny Lindores (Langlee Lad), Corey Murray and Taylor Harkness, alongside Marion Romeril, the longest serving teacher at Langlee.

The new school replaces the old building, which has been in use since 1958 and is now being carefully demolished.

At Duns, birthday girl Abbie Armstrong and fellow pupil Harris Gordon opened the £8.6million facility alongside SBC’s Executive Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Carol Hamilton and headteacher Leanne Stewart.

The project has seen the school relocated into the former High School building, which will also be the new home of the Berwickshire Locality Support Centre.

It has been delivered alongside development partner Hub South East Scotland, with GRAHAM Construction contracted to build Duns Primary.

Both projects are part of Scotland’s Schools for Future programme and delivered significant community benefits, with McLaughlin and Harvey creating 16 new jobs for local people, providing work experience to two unemployed people and two students from Borders College and engaging with almost 300 pupils and students.

Scottish Borders Council’s Executive Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Carol Hamilton, said: “It is fantastic to see both of these schools open.

“We are sure the new Langlee school building with be a tremendous asset for generations of children, as well as the Galashiels community.

“At Duns I know everyone had been looking forward to the move to the new campus, which also includes the Berwickshire Locality Support Centre.”
Staff embrace new pool car scheme

A new pool car scheme for HQ staff was successfully launched in the summer.

The Council has teamed up with social enterprise Co-wheels to run the initiative, which is part of SBC’s Workforce Transformation programme.

Fifteen White Toyota Yaris vehicles are located in the Bowden Road Car Park for employees to take to meetings and other events.

From mid-July until the end of August 570 bookings had been made with the cars doing over 15,000 miles between them.

If you are based at HQ and travel as part of your work, and haven’t yet signed up to the scheme, email corporatebusinesssystems@scotborders.gov.uk

A set of FAQs and a short video showing you how to use a pool car is available on the intranet. Go to ‘Your Job’ then ‘Human Resources’.

Home technology and smartphone salary sacrifice scheme

The popular home technology and smartphone salary sacrifice scheme will be available from 16 October to 12 November.

The scheme allows you to purchase equipment such as iPads, computers, smart televisions and smartphones along with some new products including the Microsoft Surface Pro, Parrot Bebop Drone and Apple Watch Series 2.

For more information

Look out for more information on the intranet or visit the web portal from 16 October to find out more:

www.SBStaffBenefits.co.uk

If you have any queries, email:

hrteam@scotborders.gov.uk

Council staff ensure wheels don’t come off major cycle events

The Borders hosted two massive cycling events on Sunday 3 September and Council staff were integral to their smooth running.

Stage one of the 2017 OVO Energy Tour of Britain came to the region passing through the likes of Duns, Coldstream, Melrose, Scott’s View St, Boswells and finishing up in Kelso.

The annual Tesco Bank Tour O’ The Borders sportive started and finished in Peebles with entrants covering either 120km or 88km.

SBC staff helped to plan both events months in advance through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) process.

Officers teamed up with colleagues from the Police, Fire and Ambulance services along with race organisers to co-ordinate proceedings on the day in the emergency bunker.

And many staff spent hours on the ground stewarding and assisting members of the public.
What does your work involve on a daily basis?
Scottish Borders Youth Voice is the name we give to activities for young people under the age of 25 to get actively involved in decision-making, youth-led campaigns, active citizenship and the promotion of Children’s Rights in the Scottish Borders.

Our vision is for children and young people in the Borders to feel empowered to be active participants in decision making processes, to engage in democracy and to have the knowledge and skills to fulfil their roles as rights holders under the United Nations Conventions on The Rights of the Child.

Where are you based?
HQ but work Borders wide

How many are in your team?
The two of us.

How long have you been with SBC?
Ceri: Three and a half years. Pam: 17 months

What do you enjoy most about your work?
The variety. No two days are the same. We get to be creative and meet lots of interesting people, especially young people.

What’s the worst part of your job?
Pam: I would say admin. Both of us have too much stuff and nowhere to put it.

If you could give up this job for another, what would you like to do?
Ceri: Child Rights Officer at Scottish Government. Pam: An adventurer/explorer/travel photojournalist, or something like that.

What do you see as the main benefits of working for SBC?
Permanent contract and pension

Who would you most like to meet & why?
Ceri: Steve Beko because of his strength and courage to stand up for what he believed in during the apartheid movement. Also the Novella Brothers. They host the Skeptics Guide to the Universe podcast.

Pam: Nelson Mandela as I think he would be fascinating to speak with. Also Neale Donald Walsch. He wrote the set of books “Conversations with God” and while I am not religious I found them both funny and insightful.

What do you do to relax?
Ceri: Sing and dance. Pam: You really don’t want to know.

Most embarrassing moment?
Pam: When I nearly called HRH The Duke of Edinburgh ‘Phil’ to his face at a cocktail party.

What is your lifetime goal?
Ceri: Be Glinda in Wicked the Musical. Pam: To travel the world doing a range of crazy off the wall things.

Where would you like to be just now?
Ceri: Somewhere where there is no IT or phone access. Pam: On a boat in the Maldives.

Worst habit?

What would you do with £1million?
Ceri: Pay off mortgages and practical stuff. Pam: Buy a house to store my stuff then buy a sailing yacht and travel the world.

Where was your best holiday?
Ceri: New York but would love to go to Japan. Pam: Not got there yet but I want to go to Vietnam.

Earliest memory?
Ceri: Making sandcastles on the beach in Jersey. Pam: Playing on my grandparents’ farm.

Which film character most accurately reflects your personality?
Ceri: We are the minions. I am the sweet little one in the polka dress and Pam is the tall noisy one in dungarees but don’t be fooled – we sometimes we switch and also turn into the evil minions.

Favourite place?
Ceri: The forest. Pam: The beach.

Something no one knows about you?
Ceri: Was in a Brad Pitt Film ‘World War Z’ and Taggart. Pam: I once hit Sarah Greene (actress) in the face with a door.

Biggest achievement?
Ceri: Finishing my postgrad degree while working full time. Pam: Getting to university and achieving a BA (Hons) and three postgrads (still finishing off the MA) despite having Dyslexia.

What three things would you take on a desert island?
Ceri: Kindle, machele and boat. Pam: Knife, book and my glasses.

Last book you read?

In the Hot Seat
Geri Hunter is Engagement and Participation Officer and Pam Rigby is Youth Engagement Worker in the Children and Young People team. The ladies are tackling In the Hot Seat together.

Pam (back left) and Ceri (far right) are pictured with members of Scottish Borders Youth Voice on a trip to Westminster.
The future is digital

How many of us use online banking? Supermarket home delivery? How about doing most of your Christmas shopping online? Who connects with friends and family on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram? Do you remember when a visit to the post office was the only way to pay for your road tax? Most of us transact online for at least some of these things and for many of us this has freed up time to do other things and saved us money.

You may have heard the phrase ‘digital transformation’ and you may be wondering what it actually means to you and to the way you do your job. All of the above are examples of digital transformation. The Council is undergoing its own Digital Transformation to take advantage of new technology and ways of working. This covers the services we make available to customers online and the processes we use internally within the Council.

As we progress on our digital transformation journey, the Council has made a commitment to ensure that employees have the necessary skills to work in these new ways. We will also be encouraging staff to use technology to help us achieve our aims. Did you know that you can share your laptop screen with others during meetings or on the phone using Lync? This may mean you choose not to travel for meetings, or print papers. How many of us use OneNote to take notes or organise our paperwork? Having an extra computer monitor helps reduce printing as we can work from two screens. Using technology in this way reduces costs and also saves your time.

Fancy winning a £10 M&S voucher?

Look out for a staff survey from the Digital Transformation team who are seeking information on staff use of work related IT. This survey is intended to find out the current level of use of various IT software/applications and functions available to SBC employees who have access to IT for work purposes. The software and applications are those used for various tasks to help organise, contact or support us in our work. These include Lync, OneNote and SharePoint.

The team is also looking to find out how you currently use the intranet, your views on what you would like to see and how you would like to interact with it in the future.

Everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a prize draw where up to five M&S vouchers worth £10 each are up for grabs.

The survey can be completed online and in person in various Council offices. Look out for communications updates for further details.

My Digital Journey

Corporate Risk Officer Justine Leuty has been trying to make the most of the technology available at work. SB-scene had a word with her to find out all about it:

Tell us what made you change the way you work?
As Corporate Risk Officer I organise risk reviews, risk identification workshops and deliver risk management training. I was a heavy printer user, always in full colour too. I would print out risk registers for every meeting and training materials for up to 15 delegates for each training session. This was a lot of paper, ink and my time stapling it all together. I could spend a few hours organising training materials. During risk reviews I would print copies of the risk register for everyone at the meeting and then make handwritten notes. I would then go back to my desk to update Covalent with this information. Sometimes I was overwhelmed by the paperwork piling up on my desk. That wasn’t my only motivator though - I was shocked at how much money it costs to print. I also like to think I am environmentally responsible and wasting all of this paper did not sit well with me.

So what changes did you make?
I was aware that Lync enabled me to share my screen but it wasn’t just me I had to convince. I had to tell the people I was meeting that I would no longer be printing papers and that they needed to bring their laptops to meetings. I was not only changing the way I worked but asking others to follow suit. Sharing the screen means that I can update risk registers during the meeting and everyone at the meeting can see the changes at the time. This means that amendments can be made in real time and I am no longer doubling the effort by going back to my desk and updating from handwritten notes. The great thing is that I’m not only saving my time but the time of the other people, as I no longer have to send them the updated risk register and ask for approval after the meeting.

What about reducing the amount of travelling to meetings?
I could also share my screen whilst on the phone to someone. As my job involves working with people who are not based in Newtown, I could do risk reviews over the phone. This saved their time and cut down on unnecessary travel.

What else have you done to use technology at work which makes your life easier?
I used to take a notebook, pen and papers with me to meetings but then I was in a meeting with someone and saw they were taking notes on their laptop. I asked what software they were using and it was OneNote. This has made a huge difference to the way I work. OneNote is basically a lever arch file that enables you to make notes and organise them into folders. I no longer take handwritten notes and it saves me time as I can send the page to
people if I need to using email. I can also copy and paste notes into other documents - saving time again! Finding notes is also easier, you can also link notes to meetings in Outlook calendars. It really makes a huge difference to my time.

**How did you learn how to use Lync and OneNote**
I asked others how to use some functions and I played around with them too. I know that there are also quick reference guides available on Knowledge Share, a new SBC tool which you can find on the intranet, in addition to training materials on eLearning.

**Finally, what would you message be to other technophobes out there?**
Give it a try! Don’t be afraid to ask for support and if you use these things already share your knowledge. I find the easiest way to learn is someone showing me. You’ve also just got to be open to learning new things which isn’t always easy.

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**Looking for Digital Champions**

Do you fancy helping others to use IT to its full potential? No IT knowledge is necessary as we will give full training to enable you to train and support others. Even if technology makes your blood run cold we can help you overcome your worries to become confident in using the likes of Lync and OneNote. You in turn will then have the knowledge and confidence to help others. Training will be carried out during working hours and your Digital Champion status will also enhance your CV.

Increasing the use the different types of software will also help us achieve aims such as: reducing unnecessary printing; reducing business travel by organising conference calls; reducing the likelihood of a data breach by not printing confidential information; and the ability to share documents in a safe online environment with our partners.

Email transformation@scotborders.gov.uk or further details and to register your interest

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**SBC makes formal commitment to Digital Participation**

The Council has signed Scotland’s Digital Participation Charter.

This is a Scottish Government initiative to increase the number of people who are able to access and use online services.

Jenni Craig, Service - Director Customer and Communities, said: “We will be working with our staff and our partners to ensure that everyone in the Scottish Borders has the basic digital skills to take full advantage of the benefits of being digitally connected.”
Another great year for our senior pupils

As nearly 2,000 senior pupils from across the Borders nervously waited for the text or postal delivery that would confirm just how they had done in this year’s exams, an extremely brave group from Earlston High agreed to open theirs live for the local media.

In what has now become an annual tradition, one high school is chosen each year to host an event to celebrate the high standard of results that is generally achieved by Borders pupils with television, radio and newspaper journalists all keen to help us spread the good news.

This year was no exception with record numbers having been put forward for examinations across the Borders during 2016/17. Despite a static school roll, 723 additional pupils presented at National 5 level while there were 489 more at Higher level and 13 more at Advanced Higher Level. While there were 482 less pupils presented at National 4, this was because they were presented for the more challenging National 5 award instead.

In addition, more pupils were awarded course awards than last year with an additional 422 at National 5 level, 292 more at Higher and 10 at Advanced Higher level.

Earlston High School Headteacher, Justin Sinclair, said: “We were delighted to be asked to be featured this year. I knew our school would be more than up for the challenge and could represent not only their own school, but also their fellow pupils from the other eight secondary schools, and they certainly did us proud.”

For those pupils who may not have got the results they were hoping for; teachers were on hand to provide reassurance and guidance on alternative options. Information was also provided on support available from the SQA website: www.sqa.org.uk

More pictures, including images of pupils at other Borders’ schools, are available from: www.flickr.com/photos/scottishborderscouncil

Matching Unit makes great progress

A new centralised service for matching requests for care at home provision with home care providers is proving a great success.

Set up with funding from the Health & Social Care Partnership’s Integrated Care Fund, the Matching Unit became operational in the Teviot area on 17 April 2017. Since then the service has been rolled out to Tweeddale, Central and Cheviot and preparations are underway to roll out to the Berwickshire area.

The team is located in Hawick and is made up of three co-ordinators and a team leader.

Project Manager, Elena Hendry, said: “The results the team has achieved since becoming operational have been outstanding. Not only have they sourced 168 care packages for people urgently needing a service, within the first week of opening in Tweeddale they were able to almost clear the waiting list.

PS5/6 at Lauder PS win AVMI/SMART competition

Pupils of PS5/6 at Lauder Primary School were given a special surprise on the last day of term when a brand new 65” Smart touchscreen panel was delivered to their classroom. The class were lucky winners of a competition held by AVMI/SMART and CGI to design a ‘Classroom of the Future’. The panel had been very impressed with the level of entries and the quality of creative presentations and content that AVMI/Smart are looking to use some of the suggestions they received in a business capacity. Three other schools are also to be congratulated for their entries and are also set to receive a prize: Newtown St. Boswells (2nd), Kingsland PS (3rd) and Trinity PS (4th).
“The feedback received from both people receiving the service and staff within social work teams has been overwhelmingly positive and we are delighted with the results. This is such an encouraging start to the project and the team is to be congratulated and thanked for making such a difference already.”

Planning is also underway for the Matching Unit to assist with sourcing care at home that will enable people to be discharged from hospital.

For more information, contact Elena at: elena.hendry@scotborders.gov.uk

Moovers and Groovers

Appointments

Michael Batty has been appointed as the new Chair of the Child Protection Committee. He will bring substantial experience of working at a strategic level and knowledge of safeguarding, community safety and partnership working to the role. Thanks go to Duncan MacAulay who has been an enthusiastic and effective chair and has contributed much to child protection in the Borders.

Congratulations to Kim McPartland on being appointed to the post of Group Manager Criminal Justice which she took up at the end of July.

Leavers

Goodbye and good luck to Deborah Beattie who joined the Contracts and Facilities Team in 2006 before moving onto the People Information Management Team. She left in July to start working with a recruitment agency and goes with all good wishes for her new role.

After working for over a quarter of a century within social work, Irene Forrest will be retiring on 1 October. Here’s wishing Irene a long and happy retirement, and thanking her for all the hard work and commitment she’s put into her various posts with the Council during that time.

The Communities and Partnerships Team bid Modern Apprentice Aaron Bolton a fond farewell at the end of August when he left to take up a place at Napier University to study Business Management. The team would like to thank Aaron for his enthusiasm and the skills that he has brought to the post. But most importantly they would like to thank him for reducing the average age of the team quite considerably.

Sanna Aziz, MSYP for Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale has been selected from hundreds of young people across the UK to take part in the Jo Cox Memorial Exchange. She will join a group of 16-18 year olds who will travel to several American states to explore programmes which promote tolerance and inclusion in communities and schools.

New phone number

The Children and Families Social Work Duty Team has a new phone number. From 7 August, all concerns about children, referrals and requests for help and support for children and families should be made to 01896 662787.
Steve’s lunchtime lizard discovery

School janitor Steve O’Hara had a surprise encounter during a lunchtime break this month.

Steve discovered a five foot lizard – nicknamed Iggy - while stopped in a layby on the A702 road near Broughton.

When approaching the Iguana, Steve noticed it was cold and rigid and decided to put in a large box and heat it up in his van, before travelling to Broughton Primary School where he works.

Steve says: “I don’t think it would have survived another hour or so out in the cold. I called the Scottish SPCA when I saw the lizard and then took it to the school for collection. By the time they arrived the lizard was getting a bit lively and certainly had its strength back.”

Contact the team

SBscene is written by employees for employees, so contact the Communications and Marketing team with articles, features, ideas and suggestions:

• communications@scotborders.gov.uk
• 01835 826632

The deadline for the next issue is Wednesday 1 November 2017. Articles longer than 250 words should be discussed with the team well in advance of the deadline date.

Please note that the views expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily be the views of Scottish Borders Council.

More information about working with the Communications and Marketing team can be found on the intranet in the Your Job > Communications, Marketing and Design section: http://intranet.scotborders.gov.uk/yourjob/Pages/comms-marketing-and-design.aspx

You can get this newsletter on CD, in large print, and various other formats by contacting the Communications and Marketing team. We can also provide information on language translations, as well as providing additional copies.

Kelso High’s Golden Swarm celebrates beekeeping

Kelso High School is taking part in an exciting new project which will mark their move to a brand new school building this autumn, as well as celebrating and promoting beekeeping in the Borders.

Pupils have raised over £11,000 toward the project which will see the school’s Bee Club working with local primary schools and community members to create a unique and highly original piece of collective artwork.

The Golden Swarm will consist of over 1,000 individually created clay golden bees, one for every participant, with each bee having been fired and painted gold to form part of the art overall installation. They will also contain a wish for the new school building.

The piece will be revealed at the opening of the new high school in the autumn where it will remain on display until spring 2018. It will then journey to its permanent home in the gardens of Floors Castle.

Tee-time for SBC golfers

A successful SBC golfing outing took place at Minto Golf Club back in May.

Paul Grigor, Roads Planning Officer, came out on top in the individual Stableford closely followed by Mark Landles in second and Keith Patterson in third.

The Texas team event was won by Barry Fotheringham, Kevin Sewell, Andrew Graham and Keith Patterson.

Another golf day was due to take place at Newbattle in Dalkeith on 22 September.

Look out in future editions of SBscene about more outings.