

New Year, New Neilston!

Village set to be Scotland's first Renaissance Town

In a move destined to put Neilston on the map nationally, local people, an 'A-team' of urban experts and East Renfrewshire Council will this week launch a Place Plan process for the village with the community at its heart.

Story pages 2, 4 & 5

Neilston tied up in red tape?

A chance for you to
make your mark!



Inside this copy of *The Space* you'll find a length of ribbon attached to a postcard, inviting you to mark your favourite spot in the village. It could be the church you were married in, your local pub, the nicest viewpoint, a bench in a sunny spot, the place you hang out to meet pals, your favourite piece of green space. Your place can be chosen for its personal associations or its attractiveness.

It's not just a stunt, either. It's a starter for ten for the Renaissance Town process. By taking a look at where the red ribbons appear, the team will be able to get an immediate impression of what matters to people about their place. The comments on the postcards will help too. But the overall effect – with hundreds of ribbons appearing all over the town, will remind the village that something's on the go.

New Neilston Launch

Glen Halls
Thursday, 15th January
1.30 and 7.30pm

Crèche provided at 1.30 meeting

Lifts to both meetings can be arranged –
please call 881 1337.

Find out more about Village Renaissance

Display at Bank from 12th January

AND

Look out for something special around
the village over the next few days.

YOU WON'T MISS IT!

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Looking forward: Our beautiful plan

The Scottish Renaissance Town programme will be launched in the Glen Hall on 15th January. It will be five years – almost to the day – since the beginning of Space to Live and the first mention of a grassroots-led village plan.

Maybe that's as long as it takes to grow a good idea; we have been patient. During that time – when perhaps it seemed that nothing was happening – we've been running workshops, speaking to councillors, lobbying policymakers and movers and shakers all over the place to convince them that ordinary places like Neilston deserve every bit as much care in their planning and building as city centres and conservation areas. For as Sam Galbraith famously said, 'Where are the conservation areas of tomorrow?'

But it's not only bricks and mortar. People must be at the centre, and that is why during those five years, Space to



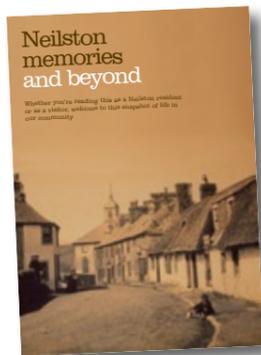
FLASHBACK: an earlier chapter

Live, and then Neilston Development Trust, has steadily built upon the real sense of community here, celebrating it with the Neilston Live festival, the Bank Programme, encouraging our pride of place. And not just the Trust. Among residents' associations, clubs and individuals there seems to be something afoot, a new sense of energy and possibility.

Perhaps that's why we have caught the eye of some influential people, who agree with us that there's life in our small

towns that needs recognised and expressed in a quality environment. In this special edition of *The Space* you'll learn about the team and the landmark process that we have been able to attract to our town.

Neilston's been here for centuries and will be, long after we've gone. But for now, in this tiny moment in its history, we can say that Neilston's time has come. *Let's hear it for the small towns of Scotland!*



Neilston oral history map

A walk down memory lane and around the village

Amid all the brave talk of New Neilston, a wonderful NDT project has been gathering in memories of older residents reflecting on how life used to be in the village – dramatic changes have taken place even in the space of one lifetime, and they need to be recorded. Angela Fussell and her co-interviewers Joyce Wallace and Kirsty

Bradley have gathered in the accounts, a taste of which feature on the map, with the rest being archived for posterity. The map is crammed with other information – an overview of village history provided by local expert Irene Hughson, key buildings, plus info community organisations and groups doing all kinds of work on local heritage.

It's meant to form a snapshot not just of the past, but of where we are now, looking to a future we're about to shape.

The map will be free and will provide a good general introduction to the village for visitor and resident alike.

Coming this way soon!

What's on at the Bank



Bank Transformation

We're very excited about the plans for the bank redevelopment – a model has been on show for a few months now, and planning permission has been granted. Funding applications are well under way. Big Lottery (who funded the purchase) has been asked for another serious amount (decision February) and if that is successful we have to persuade other funders to match it. But we hope our plans for the provision of flexible, gorgeous spaces for all types of activity will captivate funders and deliver the cash.

What's in the plan?

Ground floor: reception area and interview room; open plan café with bay window to front, opening onto patio area; kitchen in side extension, leaving a much bigger space for flexible community use; 'garden room' extension to rear, which can be used separately or together with café's small meeting room to rear; improved access for all in remodelled front area.

First floor: reached by a new separate staircase with its own front door, a suite of offices in varying sizes, for let to business and service providers.

When?

Even with the best funding outcome, we won't be on site till the end of '09, when the

bank will be vacated for up to a year. Seems a long way away, but we reckon the wait will be well worth the hassle.

The Bank Café Grows

This year has seen us 'grow' the café team both in numbers and in skills. 11 volunteers now serve you with a selection of home made soups, toasties, cakes and scones. New equipment means that some of our soups and goodies can be made on the premises. One of our recent volunteers is a trained chef (such talent in this village!) so look out for an expanded menu in the coming months.

The economic downturn means we're all watching our pennies, but we figure you'd be hard pressed to beat our bargain lunch for seniors – home made soup, sandwich, and tea for £3.00. Join the regulars!

A survey conducted for the bank refurbishment suggests we should open at weekends. We'd LOVE to do this, but we have to build up the customer base and recruit more volunteers to make this viable. Take a look at the plans for the Bank, with its fantastic new café space. But don't forget to support us in the meantime!

Spot check from Environmental Health – we are doing a great job – place spotless – all credit to Elma and volunteers!

New Volunteers

Welcome to new volunteers Teresa, Angela, Kay, Isobel, David, Anne and Ewa and good luck to Lorraine and James who left in the summer to begin courses at Reid Kerr. We're now receiving much needed support in administrative tasks as well as the café.



Credit Union plans

Future visions, memories past are all very well, but what about current gloom? Credit crunch downturn, recession – it all adds up to the same thing; money will be tighter in 2009.

Credit Unions are a fantastic way to save and borrow. They're massively popular in Ireland and other parts of Europe and getting bigger here too.

From the outset NDT has been keen to promote the Bank as a hub for community financial services and now someone with a lifelong experience of the CU movement has joined the Trust. Ian Fraser will spread the word in the coming months with a view to building membership in the village.

Important Announcement

The team was recently very aggrieved by the fact that a member of the community reported a volunteer on benefits as 'working' in the bank. The matter was immediately cleared up by our volunteer co-ordinator but we wish to emphasise that all our volunteers give their time generously (some 85 hours per week in the café alone!) and without payment. Whilst we are actively seeking funding for a staff team for the Trust, the whole operation is almost totally reliant on volunteer input.

Our Renaissance



On January 15th, as the result of years of local campaigning, Neilston becomes the first pilot Scottish Renaissance Town. A team of top-flight designers and thinkers will join Neilston's people, local officers and elected representatives in the launch of a new initiative, which hopes to bring new life to Scotland's small towns.

All eyes will be on Neilston!

Some thoughts from Alan Simpson, design team leader for the Renaissance Programme:

"Many European cities have a tradition of urban care and a sense of quality that makes their urban centers so attractive.

In the UK many towns and cities also maintain high standards in the urban environment – places like Durham and Bath, the Cotswold towns, in Edinburgh ... (However) while as a nation we value quality in our buildings and civic spaces - the value of tradition, amenity and beauty – we nevertheless lack real concern about what a place looks like in its everyday life. This lack of concern manifests itself in low quality buildings, the poor state of our public transport system and the general condition of many of our streets and squares. It manifests itself in the prevalence of litter and pollution and in the shortage of attractive landscaping, street trees and good public art. It manifests itself in the lack of an overall concept of amenity and in a sheer lack of beauty.

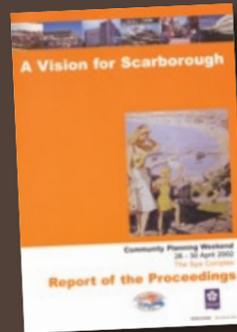
The Renaissance Towns initiative seeks to help bring about a revival. At the heart of the renaissance of these towns is **the fundamental belief in the value of local empowerment**. A need is recognised to more fully engage and empower local communities in order to release their latent skills, knowledge and desire to improve their towns as places to live, invest and visit."

Alan Simpson will be describing the Yorkshire experience at the launch meeting on 15 January, and how these projects attracted massive local participation.

The Process

The concept embraces community involvement through:

- The formation of **Town Teams**, made up of residents, business leaders, local authorities, indeed all relevant stakeholders and provide a vehicle to engage the interest, support and ideas of the local community;



Last year members of NDT went to visit Scarborough, one of the Yorkshire Renaissance towns, and met members of the Town Team and action groups that have been working together since the process began in 2002. In 2008 Scarborough was the national winner of the Enterprising Britain

award, and the Town Team still meets monthly to press forward the programme which has brought so much development and acclaim to this once failing seaside town. Although a much bigger town with very different issues, the process offers much to Neilston and other Scottish places.

- **Large Scale Planning Workshops**



2005 Space to Live workshop with Gehl Architects

- **A Community Charter** will be produced, which is an agreement signed up to by all parties, as to the way forward, leading to more detailed management and business plans.

Renaissance: Another piece of fancy talk?

You could say Renaissance is a new take on 'regeneration'. Regeneration has been around for a long time – regen programmes have come and gone, sometimes leaving little trace in people's lives for all the money spent. So what's in a name? Who says renaissance will mean anything more? (It certainly doesn't mean pots of cash in the Neilston context!)

The first time the word appeared (think of Leonardo, Michelangelo), it described a whole bundle of new ideas, new art, new ways of doing business and seeing the world, while reclaiming the best of the past. So the concept's right, even if the label seems strange.

Make way for the Medicis of Mafeking, Madras and Murdochmuir!

Who is involved?

- Architecture and Design Scotland (A+DS)
- The Urban Lab at the Mackintosh School of Architecture
- The Lighthouse (The Networks Team and SUST)
- Neilston Village Regeneration Group
- East Renfrewshire Council
- Urban Design Skills (UDS)
- Other public agencies...

And YOU!

Take a **community driven project** where the community isn't in the driving seat and what do you get? A runaway vehicle, heading for the nearest ditch!

This really is a different kind of process, not just an exercise in 'consulting' the population on decisions already made behind the scenes.

Upwards of 5000 people live in Neilston. That's a whole lot of understanding, memory, experience – and jokes.

The success of all this will depend on a couple of key factors:

- The degree to which local people from all walks of life get involved;
- The commitment of all parties to work for the long term delivery of the plan, once the roadshow has left town.



THE MEDICIS OF MARYHILL - THE SPIRIT OF THE NEW PATRON, COMMISSIONED BY THE RIAS FROM MARCUS FATTON

Flashback to the heyday of community based housing associations, a revolution in housing that aimed to put local people at the centre of regeneration. Image: RIAS

Renaissance Timetable

Saturday, 10 January – Saturday, 17 January
Red ribbon event

Thursday, 15 January, Glen Halls, 1.30 & 7.30pm
Public launch of the Renaissance town process

February – March
Urban Design Skills workshops to assist community members and others to fully participate in the workshop to come, demystifying all the jargon, learning how designers work.

Thursday, 26 March – Sunday, 29 March
The Big Workshop
Three day intensive session for the whole community to set down ideas and aspirations, discuss the wider context and agree principles of the Plan.

Early April
Draft Town Charter presented to the community and on the website for comment.

Wednesday, 15 April
Finalised Charter presented to Leader of East Ren council by the people of Neilston.

Announcements

Fifth East Renfrewshire Storytelling Festival

2 February – 29 March

The aim of the festival is to celebrate the art of storytelling in all its forms, from the spoken word, through song, dance and theatre. For centuries storytelling has played a vital part in many civilizations throughout the world with stories being handed down from one generation to the next.

The festival will feature storytellers from near and far that have come to share and enjoy a tale or two. Lots of children will be entertained in schools, libraries and nurseries, but there are also plenty of events for adults to attend. Look out for a Murder Mystery night in Eastwood House, crime writer Stuart McBride in Barrhead

Library, *Sunday Herald* columnist Fiona Gibson, Nicholas Parsons at Eastwood Park Theatre and much more. From the very young to the very old there will be something for everyone. Brochures available from mid January from Neilston Library.

Events at Neilston Library

Free tickets available from Neilston Library

Friday, 13 February, 2pm

Fairy Tales to Scary Tales (5 –12yrs)

Saturday, 28 February, 10.30am

Storytelling with Maria Cairnie (5 –12yrs)



Maria Cairnie working her magic at Neilston Live

neilston leisure centre

time table swimming gym

Gym Opening Times

Monday	10.00am - 8.40pm
Tuesday	7.30am - 8.40pm
Wednesday	10.00am - 8.40pm
Thursday	7.30am - 8.40pm
Friday	9.00am - 8.40pm
Saturday	9.00am - 3.30pm
Sunday	9.00am - 3.30pm

Become a member of Neilston Leisure Centre and enjoy access to our swimming pool, gym and fitness classes. Ask a member of staff for details or call 0141 577 4811

Public Swimming Times

Monday	
Public Swimming	10.00am - 2.00pm
Aqua Aerobics	1.00pm - 1.45pm
Public Swimming	6.00pm - 8.00pm*
Tuesday	
Public Swimming	7.30am - 12.00pm
Little Splashers Pool Party	9.00am - 10.00am
Public Swimming	6.30pm - 7.30pm*
Adults Only	7.30pm - 8.30pm
Wednesday	
Public Swimming	10.00am - 3.00pm
Public Swimming	6.00pm - 8.15pm*
Swimfit	6.00pm - 7.30pm
Aqua Aerobics	7.30pm - 8.15pm
Thursday	
Public Swimming	7.30am - 12.00pm
Little Splashers Pool Party	1.00pm - 2.00pm
Friday	
Public Swimming	9.00am - 12.00pm
Fun Session	6.15pm - 7.45pm
Adults Only	8.00pm - 8.40pm
Saturday	
No Public Swimming	
Pool Party bookings available from 1 - 4pm.	
Please contact reception for details	
Sunday	
Public Swimming	9.00am - 12.00pm

* Two swimming lanes in place. When swimming lessons and other activities are taking place, pool areas may be restricted. During school and public holidays this timetable may be subject to change. Please check notice boards or at reception for details. Times correct as of May 2008.

Happy New Year from all at Neilston Leisure Centre!

Why not enjoy a healthier lifestyle in 2009 by coming to one of our **Aqua Aerobics Classes**? These classes are designed for all abilities and you don't need to be a swimmer to take part. Classes take place on the following days and times:

Monday	1.00pm – 1.45pm
Wednesday	7.30pm – 8.15pm
Thursday	9.45am – 10.30am

Or why not join our **fitness gym** and burn off those extra Christmas calories with our cardio vascular equipment? Drop in sometime and talk to our friendly staff for more details or call us on 0141 577 4811.



neilston leisure centre

Family Swim Sundays

Every Sunday 10.00am to 12.00pm

Special Family price* only £4.70



*A family can be 2 adults and 2 children or 1 adult and 3 children.

www.eastranfrewshire.gov.uk/neilston-leisure-centre

Swimming Lessons

We offer a wide range of **swimming lessons** to suit all abilities. You can take part in one of our group lessons or book your own teacher for a one to one session. Why not come along and pick up one of our Ocean Orbit leaflets?

For Parent and Toddlers, we also have our **Little Splashers** sessions on Tuesday mornings from 9.30am – 10.30am.

Now Here's a Good Resolution: Join the Credit Union in 2009

It has never been easier to pay into East Renfrewshire Credit Union in Neilston.

Why not join the Credit Union, receive a Pay Point card, unique to each member and this lets you pay direct into the Credit Union either at Neilston Post Office, Neilston Co-op or any other shop with a Pay Point sign.

Ian Fraser, now retired to Neilston, has been involved with Credit Unions for twenty five years and a great believer in how Credit Unions can beneficially affect people's lives, says 'Start planning for 2009 by joining your local Credit Union and help your community grow in confidence'.

A Credit Union is a not for profit financial co-operative organisation run to benefit its members. It has a volunteer Board of Directors democratically elected by the membership at an AGM.

The aim of a Credit Union is to encourage members to save and give them access to borrowing at low rates of interest. Volunteers and staff run the day-to-day business of the Credit Union and our local office is based on the High Street at Barrhead.

The common bond of East Renfrewshire Credit Union means that all those who live or work within East Renfrewshire qualify for membership.

The events of the last few weeks have given enormous weight to our belief that mutual and local financial services such as Credit Unions are the way forward in making sure that individuals and families have safe and secure financial services.

Is it safe?

Credit Unions do not rely on borrowing from other banks or the international money markets and are not in the business of buying up the debts of other financial institutions. Savings in Credit Unions are covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme – in the same way as deposits held in banks and building societies are. The extra compensation limits which have recently been announced are to be welcomed in helping people have peace of mind that their hard earned savings are protected.

So why not give it some serious thought? Make 2009 the start of your membership and become part of this growing and successful community organisation.

(Sign me up now! –Ed.)

Contact

East Ren Credit Union on 881 1353 or at www.ercu.coop or speak to Ian on 563 679.

Credit Unions save Christmas

Extract from *The SUN* 27 Nov 2006...

Jackie Mayes was devastated after the collapse of the Farepak hamper and Christmas savings club left her £435 out of pocket. Then her local credit union came to her rescue and loaned her £500. She said: "I found out that credit unions usually work as a saving scheme where you pay in money and then withdraw it". Jackie will pay about £60 interest on her loan over the next year, a fraction of the rates charged by backstreet moneylenders. "The quicker you pay up, the less interest you are charged... once I have paid off the loan, I will carry on putting in money to save up for Christmas next year.

Neilston Development Trust 100 Club

Would you like to help NDT in its work? As a registered charity, fundraising is vital to keeping us afloat.

Join our 100 Club to help guarantee funds and also have a chance of winning prize money. Members who agree to a monthly pledge of £2 (that's only 50p a week!) are issued with a number (similar to a lottery number). You can buy as many numbers as you like – the more numbers you have, the more chance you have of winning prizes. Each month, a draw will take place with a first prize of £50, 2nd of £30 and 3rd of £20, with bigger prizes at Christmas.

Better odds than the National Lottery!
40% of money received goes to prizes

If you are interested in joining please complete the form below:

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email Address _____

I would like to buy (please choose preferred option):

[] 1 number (£2 per month)

[] 2 numbers (£4 per month)

[] Other _____

Please note: monthly subscriptions can be paid by Standing Order or Direct Debit to the NDT bank account.

Please detach and return this form to:

Neilston Development Trust 84 Main Street Neilston G78 3EB

Festival Flashback



This year's fourth Neilston Live (August 1 – 10) was another triumph of organisation, entertainment and fun, with workshops, concerts, dances, culminating in the Big Outdoors Day which goes on record as probably the wettest August Saturday ever. The show did go on and the Glen Halls saw its biggest crowd for years.

Images (left to right): Return of the Pakistani Pipers!, Cheerleaders raining on the parade, Walking Theatre mayhem.

Cultural Programme



As regulars at the Bank will know, the Neilston Live programme isn't just for August. The team is hard at work all year round, thinking of creative ways for Neilston folk to come together in fun and interesting attractions that support existing local talent and build community. And not just that (as if that wasn't enough), There's always been a concern to keep relating our Neilston Live programme to the place that is Neilston – Oral history, education, natural environment. And now it's all coming together as we prepare to explore the future life of the village.

Images (left to right): Sew Crafty group, Girls' group getting arty, Apple Day at the Bank, Youth Open evening.

Why not learn Gaelic the Ùlpan way?

Ùlpan is a fast and effective way to learn a language. It has been used to great effect in Wales, where it has brought thousands of adult learners to fluency. With Ùlpan, speaking comes first, and reading and writing follow a little later.

The plan is to run a course twice a week, in the Bank, morning or afternoon, starting in February 2009. I will be happy to discuss, explain costs, and arrange a "taster" session so you can give it a try before signing up.

Contact: Andrew Wilson 01505 702392

Remember Summer? Hillside Gala



Adopt-a-Station is going well

Planting took place on one of Neilston's rainy day specials but there were still plenty of smiles to go round AND our last issue prompted an amazing response from none other than Councillor Watson, Chair of Strathclyde Transport, who wrote expressing interest in the Neilston line and offering to pen an article for us soon. Many thanks to the Neilston resident who handed him a copy of *The Space*!

NB: Commuters can now pick up an extra copy of *The Space* from the magazine rack in the station waiting room.



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