

Newsletter

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One Small Step

Congratulations to ASDA. The supermarket chain are going to levy a £60 fine on drivers who use parking spaces intended for disabled people and parents with children. The fines will go to two disability charities.

The initiative follows a three month trial in Liverpool which had been very successful.

So think before you park and understand that your action does impact on people who rely on the marked bays to do their shopping.

North Lanarkshire Council are backing the initiative. Well done to them too.

So, come on other stores in North Lanarkshire - how about following suit and encourage people to think and be “nice”.

We can all do our bit. If you see someone parking without thinking, speak to the staff in the store and ask them to check it out.

Here’s hoping for a successful outcome.

North Lanarkshire Access Panel

The North Lanarkshire Access Panel is being launched on 21 February 2008 at the John Wilson Town Hall, Stirling Street, Airdrie, in a joint Disability Involvement Event with the North Lanarkshire Council Disability Equality Scheme.

The event will open at 10.30 am for registration, begin at 11 am with a break for lunch at 1 pm and close at 4 pm.

The morning session will be on the Access Panel and a new initiative, to map every town in North Lanarkshire, will take place. We are looking for what is good and bad in the areas of disability friendly services and access. Further meetings will take place throughout North Lanarkshire to continue the work started at the Launch. The Access Panel are looking for volunteers to get involved in individual areas.

The afternoon session will be on the Disability Equality Scheme which is now one year old and among the questions asked will be “where do we go from here?”. Public involvement is key to the continuing development and improvement of the Scheme.

The event is open to disabled people, carers, anyone who has a disabled friend/relative or has an interest in disabilities and organisations representing disability issues.

To register for the Event please complete the enclosed Registration Form or for more information, contact :

Fiona Johnson, Chair of North Lanarkshire Access Panel, on 01698 275710 or

Audrey Cameron, North Lanarkshire Council, on 0141 304 1570

Disabled Person Parking Bay Bill

There are over 1 million disabled people in Scotland of which 224,000 are Blue Badge holders with 96,000 of them being wheelchair users.

The Blue Badge Scheme provides a range of parking benefits to disabled people who travel as either drivers or passengers. Primarily badge holders gain access to free on-street parking in designated bays (those marked with a yellow box).

The Blue Badge Scheme does **not** apply to off-street car parks (in supermarkets, etc) nor **advisory** disabled parking bays (marked with white lines). No penalty or fine can currently be imposed on drivers of cars not displaying a Blue Badge who abuse these bays.

Approximately 85% of current on-street and residential parking bays are advisory only (this is where “nice” comes in) and can be used by anybody, regardless of disability, without enforcement action being possible.

A survey by Capability Scotland found that 44% of disabled person’s parking bays at shops were occupied by vehicles not displaying a valid Blue Badge.

You can help change this by visiting your MSP at their surgery or writing to them (letter or e-mail) and urging them to support the Bill currently being steered through the Scottish Parliament by Jackie Baillie MSP. This Bill will result in people who are not Blue Badge holders being fined for parking in Disabled Parking Bays.

You can get contact details for **all** your local MSPs by going to : <http://www.scottishparliament.uk/msp/memberspages/mslocator.htm> and typing in your post code.

Inclusion Scotland has also produced a standard letter which can be used in writing to your MSP.

For a copy of this, e-mail Bill Scott - policy@inclusionScotland.org

Your Home Eyecare

Do you need new glasses but cannot get to an optician? If you do, there is a home visit service available.

An elderly lady of our acquaintance used the services of Pauline Raeburn of Your Home Eyecare for new glasses and was delighted with the results.

Pauline does home visits and can be contacted on

0800 9520064

This is a free phone number

Greenlink

The next programme of Greenlink health walks starts on Wednesday, 30 January 2008 at 11 am with an hour's walk using the Old Mill Hotel in Motherwell as the start point. The walks are a really sociable way of getting out of the house, stretching your legs, improving your fitness and meeting new people along the way.

With a front and back leader, who walk at the fastest and slowest paces of the group, the walking speed is suited to each individual so everyone enjoys the walk at their own pace. The walks take in local woodland areas, Strathclyde Park, RSPB Nature Reserve, Chatelherault and other beautiful places.

To be included in the mailing list or for more information :

E-mail to greenlink@csft.co.uk or call **01698 267368**

North Lanarkshire Carers Together

North Lanarkshire Carers Together exists to represent carers interests and to work to improve the quality their lives.

For more information or to become involved, contact them at :

51 Hope Street
Motherwell
ML1 1BS

Tel : 01698 404056

Fax : 01698 404053

E-mail :

admin@carerstogogether.org

Or visit the website :

www.carerstogogether.org

New Community Café

The North Lanarkshire Volunteer Centre is pleased to announce the opening of a new Community Café in Wishaw as part of its services. The café is run with the assistance of volunteers and has full disability access.

The menu was planned by volunteers and Volunteer Centre staff and so far the hearty soup has been a big success on cold days!

To visit the Café go along to :

The Volunteer Centre North
Lanarkshire, 84 Main Street,
Wishaw

Feet 4

Megan Black, BSc(Hons) is offering a home visit service on Podiatry and Chiropody care.

Contact her on : 07828 981725

Volunteering By Giving, You Can Also Get A Lot Back

Volunteers are remarkable people; they give up their free time to help others in their Community and help improve the quality of life of those around them.

In the UK there are over 21 million of these remarkable people giving time to volunteering each year.

People of all ages and walks of life volunteer; whether it be helping an elderly neighbour with their garden, running a children's club, being part of the Community Council or getting involved with a local community project.

Although there is usually no financial incentive for volunteering, the personal rewards cannot be underestimated.

Volunteering can be a great way of meeting new people and making friends, learning new skills, trying new activities

Volunteers often feel they gain confidence and experience as well as learning about their local community and feeling more involved, which can help to assist with personal development.

So maybe volunteering is something you have thought about but never taken up. Well, now could be the time to take things further and see what volunteering opportunities you might be interested in in your area, so you can start to make a difference.

One of the beauties of volunteering is that you can tailor it to fit into your life. Just decide how much time you can commit and when is best for you and there will be a project out there grateful for your help.

Some of the organisations you can contact in North Lanarkshire to find out more about volunteering are listed in the following page.

North Lanarkshire Disability Forum on 01698 275431
Volunteer Centre North Lanarkshire on 01698 358866
Greenlink on 01698 267368
BTCV Green Gym on 01236 700497
Greenhead Moss on 01698 402097

Give it a try and enjoy VOLUNTEERING

North Lanarkshire Disability Forum New Outreach Clinic

North Lanarkshire Disability Forum, with funding from the Voluntary Action Fund, has opened a fourth Advice Clinic in Cumbernauld at :

Link Centre, Cumbernauld
Contact No : 07879836803

on the second Tuesday of every month and fortnightly thereafter between 11 am and 1 pm.

The Clinic provides information and advice on a number of issues including -

- ◆ Disability Issues
- ◆ Benefits
- ◆ Access
- ◆ Aids and Adaptations
- ◆ Housing Benefits and Council Tax

The other Advice Clinics are in Bellshill, Motherwell and Shotts. All information and advice is given by disabled people who understand the difficulties of living with a disability.

For more information, or to volunteer, please contact :

Anne Kusz on 01698 275431

Puffin Crossings

Love them or hate them?

The conversion of Pelican to Puffin crossings is taking place throughout Lanarkshire and rumblings suggest it is not a welcome change. Word is people prefer the Pelican crossing which shows the “green man” on the far side of the crossing to the Puffin crossing which shows the “green man” at the side.

The reason for the change, apart from a European directive, is that it will :

- ◆ Simplify displays to pedestrians and drivers
- ◆ Assist slow moving pedestrians to cross in safety
- ◆ Have little impact on or reduce traffic or pedestrian delays

Have you an opinion on this. If you have, contact North Lanarkshire Council Roads Department on 01236616441 and let them know.

Your Call



Your Counsellors

This is a counselling service first for Scotland and is open to all disabled people in Scotland over the age of 18 and immediate family members. The Counsellors are all disabled people themselves, providing them with an understanding of what it means to live as a disabled person in Scotland.

To contact the “Your Call” appointments line, call 08088 010362 between 11am and 3pm on Monday and Tuesdays and between 11am and 1pm on Wednesdays. Calls are free from home telephones and from some, not all, mobile networks. The number is withheld and so will not appear on phone bills.