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Connect
Autumn 2016

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Welcome!

WELCOME to the first edition of Merchant City Connect.

Our popular series of Connect magazines are brought to you by Newsquest Clyde and Forth and Herald and Times magazine, the publishers behind trusted titles such as The Evening Times and High Flyer.

Merchant City Connect is your community magazine, keeping you in the loop with news and events from the local area.

Our first issue is packed with stories. Inside we have an interview with a local artist ahead of their upcoming exhibition on page 6. There's also a Christmas feature keeping you up to speed with all the city's festive offerings on page 26 and a what's on guide on page 20, making sure you don't miss out on local events.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to everyone who has supported our first edition, we hope you enjoy.

**Until next time,
Team Connect**



Local artist Robert Miller is exhibiting his paintings in Merchant City. Find out more on page 6

Contacts

Editorial

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Glasgow City Council contacts

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Anti-fraud:

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Council tax/ housing benefit:

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Bridgeton Church

Assemblies of God:

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Painting exhibition comes to Merchant City



LOCAL artist Robert Miller is set to showcase his work in a brand new exhibition taking place in Merchant City.

Robert, 62, who hails from Bridgeton, has a flair for painting portraits that capture the detail, essence and complexities of the person painted. Whether it's a family portrait or a famous celebrity, his work has gained many appreciators, with paintings selling for up to £11,000 in charity auctions.

"Art has been in my blood since I was young. When I was a

blue-eyed boy at primary school I received the highest mark for my work and a love for painting has continued ever since," explained Robert.

Since discovering his talent at a young age, Robert took a stint at art school before turning to carpet design for a couple of years. Today he is a member of a band and paints commissions and other pieces for both work and pleasure.

"About ten years ago a friend of mine was managing an art space in East Kilbride and happened to see one of my paintings. He

insisted I exhibit my work and since then I've been painting a lot more frequently and putting on exhibitions whenever possible."

"I particularly love painting old men - and beautiful women! When painting older people, there's so much detail in their face and there's a story behind the eyes."

Catch Robert Miller's exhibition at Soho Restaurant, 84 Miller Street, Glasgow from 31 October and for the following three weeks.



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Plant based, vegan café opens for business

DESPITE being voted the most vegan friendly city in the UK in 2013, there are surprisingly few cafés in Glasgow offering healthy vegan cuisine.

This is about to change with a new café, Picnic, in Merchant City; the first 100% vegan, plant-based café of its kind opening its doors on Ingram Street. Focusing on healthy eating with an array of fresh salads, panini, cakes and muffins, Picnic is the go-to spot for guilt-free food that doesn't scrimp on taste.

An independent venture set up by owner Michelle Morrow, Picnic draws on inspiration from

her travels around the world, with internationally influenced flavours trickling into dishes. As well as cold lunchtime options, hot items such as soup and fresh curries will grace the menu for customers seeking a warming meal.

For those who struggle to find a nutritious, healthy lunch in the city centre to sit in or to go, Picnic is on hand to fill the gap. A mural painted by a local artist will add to the interior's contemporary feel.

Find nutritious, tasty food at Picnic, 103 Ingram Street, Glasgow, G1 1DX, tel 0141 552 8788.



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MUSIC ONCE AGAIN SET TO LIGHT UP SCOTTISH WINTER

THE 2017 Celtic Connections programme has launched and is back in dazzling form.

From Thursday 19 January to Sunday 5 February, 2,100 musicians from across the globe will take part in 300 events at venues throughout Glasgow for one of the leading annual festivals of world, folk and roots music.

18 days of concerts, ceilidhs, talks, art exhibitions, workshops, free events, late night sessions and a host of special one-off musical collaborations will once again light up the Scottish winter when Celtic Connections returns.

The Opening Concert will star award winning folk singer songwriter Laura Marling performing the world premiere of orchestrations of her songs by Kate St. John with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and special guests.

This concert begins Celtic Connections 2017's celebration of inspiring women artists, with performances by Roberta Sá, Olivia Newton John with Beth Neilson Chapman, Karine Polwart, and legendary singer Shirley Collins among the other highlights.

The festival also focuses this year on artists who have lived through times of intense personal hardships and found success through their music and strength, such as world music star Aziza Brahim who grew up in an Algerian refugee camp.

Other artists appearing include C Duncan, Pictish Trail, Fairport Convention, Liz Lochhead, Aidan Moffat, Seth Lakeman, Tom Paxton, King Creosote, Siobhan Miller, Orchestra Baobab, Robyn Stapleton, and Anna Meredith.

The festival is supported by Glasgow City Council and Creative Scotland, and delivered by Glasgow Life.

To find out more visit www.celticconnections.com.



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Whether you enjoy pottering in the garden, walking through Scotland's beautiful landscapes, cycling through the countryside or keeping up-to-date on current issues affecting families in Scotland, we have it covered.
Register for your free digital edition to our portfolio of magazines at the individual websites listed above.

HAVE A SAY IN THE FUTURE OF THE CITY



WHETHER you have an interest in architecture or want to take part in talks and debates concerning the future of your city, the Lighthouse are providing a platform.

Scotland's centre for Design and Architecture will be hosting The Liveable City seminars, alongside the Royal Danish Embassy and partners.

From 8 – 10 November the free talks, seminars and debates will centre on planning, urban infrastructure, climate change, housing, transport, communities and energy efficiency.

Asking the question 'How do we create beautiful cities with a more resilient economy, thriving communities and a better quality of life for everyone?' the programme seeks to inspire and

find more collaborative ways of making our cities become better to live, work and play in.

These free seminars are part of the Festival of Architecture 2016 and will see central and local government, businesses, politicians, professionals and the general public take part.

To find out more and register for the free seminars visit www.thelighthouse.co.uk.

A vibrant, colorful advertisement for 'The IRN-BRU Carnival at the SECC'. The background is dark with stars and colorful streamers. In the center is a large, multi-colored inflatable castle with a cartoon character jumping out of the top. Text elements include: 'FIZZING WHIZZING... DIZZING' in a bubbly font; 'THE IRN-BRU CARNIVAL' above the main title; 'CARNIVAL AT THE SECC' in large, colorful letters; '21st Dec - 15th Jan' below the title; 'INCLUDES INFLATABLE PLAY AREA' in a starburst; '21 DECEMBER – 15 JANUARY' in large white text; 'Europe's largest indoor funfair' and 'Book tickets now: www.irn-bru-carnival.com'; 'Entry price: £13 – includes 10 vouchers' and 'Free entry for kids aged 3 & under Closed Christmas Day'; and social media icons for Facebook and Twitter with handles '#TheIRNBRCarnival' and '#irnbrucarnival'.

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Joining Peggy's adventure is a bear necessity here

GLASGOW youngsters are being invited on a heart-warming journey guaranteed to leave them in the festive spirit.

Children aged between three and seven-years-old will join

Peggy the Polar Bear as she packs her bags in search of warmer climes in the Scottish Youth Theatre (SYT) production of *Starlight, Starbright*.

Tired of her chilly surroundings, Peggy leaves the Arctic Circle in a

bid to find a cosier home.

As her travels take her from place to place, with only the Northern Star as her companion, will she find a new home or will her adventure reveal something much more exciting?

Directed by SYT associate director Karen McGrady- Parker, the production is set to offer a charming reminder that sometimes there's no place like home.

Speaking to Connect, Karen said: "As the show is aimed at three to seven-year-olds we make it as interactive as possible to keep the little ones entertained and engaged.

"They won't just be watching the show – they will also be part of it."

Starlight, Starbright will run from December 3- 30 at the Scottish Youth Theatre in the heart of Merchant City.

Tickets are priced at £7.50, with family tickets also available.

For further information or to book call 0141 552 4267.

Alternatively visit www.scottishyouththeatre.org

Now in its 40th year, SYT has offered Scots youngsters the chance to let their artistic talents shine since 1977 with celebs including Gerard Butler and Karen Gillan once treading the boards at Scotland's national youth theatre.





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THE SPICE OF LIFE

SET in the heart of Merchant City, two Indian restaurants are serving up traditional and delicious flavours from India.

The Dhabba, established in 2002 brings tastes from Northern India, whilst Dakhin, established in 2004, serves up the true tastes of the South. Find the advert on page 5.

The Dhabba

In North India, roadside diners are commonly known as dhabbas. For generations these family run establishments have been captivating hungry travellers with their own menu of closely guarded recipes, passed on from father to son.

Since 2002, The Dhabba have endeavoured to bring the true essence of North Indian cuisine to Glasgow. This isn't your standard British curry. This is cuisine that has been refined over hundreds of years. Our chefs combine the freshest produce with an assortment of eclectic herbs and spices, all completely natural without any artificial ingredients. Using centuries old practices and authentic and traditional recipes, we are proud to present real North Indian cuisine in its finest form.

With a remarkable menu showcasing traditional dishes from all over the Northern frontier of India, dining at The Dhabba is an experience that has brought people back time and time again to discover dishes never before encountered in Scotland.



Dakhin

Between the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean lies a tropical expanse of endless beaches, mountain ranges and plateaus criss-crossed by a maze of rivers. The region is as diverse as it is breathtaking. This is South India.

It is a land with a unique cuisine. The food is light yet nourishing, subtle yet spicy and the combination of rice, coconut, lentils, and regional spices give South Indian food a distinctive taste easily differentiated from any other region of India.

The first authentic South Indian restaurant in Scotland, Dakhin is also the UK's first and only Indian restaurant serving 100% gluten-free food. Set amidst the centre of Glasgow's Merchant city district, they offer diners a vast array of speciality dishes from India's southern region. Their unique menu of chicken, lamb, seafood and vegetarian preparations have become favourites amongst the discerning customer.

Diners can also enjoy the views of an open plan kitchen where chefs prepare dishes and breads which are a sight to be enjoyed in their own right. This along with the relaxed, stylish interior has earned Dakhin its reputation as one of the best South Indian restaurants in the country.



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Bartenders shake up Glasgow



BAROCKER



AN evening of flaring, throwing and judging took place at Hard Rock Café Glasgow recently, as bartenders from as far as Berlin battled it out in the regional finals of the BARocker Championship.

An annual global competition, the championship sees Hard Rock scour 165 of its Cafes in 70 countries around the world to find the best at keeping the bar rocking. After heated head-to-heads in Cafes around the world, the Europe finals saw seven hopefuls mix it out for the chance to compete in the world finals in Panama City, Panama, at Hard Rock's annual Global Conference in January 2017.

The hottest bartenders from across Europe gathered in the restaurant on 28 October and put on a show for bartending experts and



cocktail fans alike. In a celebration of all things mixology, STV Glasgow's Laura Boyd and Gerry Cassidy reprised their role as judges.

Flying the flag for the Glasgow branch, bartender Matthew Lyle, 28, chatted to Merchant City Connect ahead of the competition.

"I've been flaring for years all over the world – in London, Greece, Spain and now Glasgow. It take a lot of practise and a real passion for flaring to succeed."

Brought to the big screen in 1988 in Tom Cruise's *Cocktail*, flaring is akin to performance art, with bartenders

entertaining people by manipulating bottles, shakers and bar tools in weird and wonderful ways.

"It takes years to get to the stage where you're not simply mimicking others, but bringing your own unique style to your routine. One of my signature moves involves using two tins, but where the real magic lies is the personality each bartender brings."

Whilst Merchant City Connect went to press before the competition results, more information about Hard Rock Cafe Glasgow's BARocker competition can be found at www.hardrock.com/glasgow.



With a network of more than 60 stores in villages, towns and cities across Scotland, Specsavers optometrists and audiologists are dedicated to keeping your eyes and ears in tip top condition.

The Specsavers stores in Trongate and Sauchiehall Street work closely together to provide a service to customers across Glasgow.

Every Specsavers store in Scotland offers free NHS-funded eye examinations and a Bring Your Own Prescription service.

Specsavers stores are now able to deliver additional eyecare services for minor eye health conditions, provided by qualified optometrists.

And in store, there's so much to choose from in terms of frames. Brands include Twiggy for Aurora, MAX&Co., Love Moshino, GANT and Cath Kidston – so there really is something for everyone.

Specsavers Sauchiehall Street and Trongate stores also offer home visits to customers across Glasgow providing eye health checks.

The visits are available for customers who are unable to visit Specsavers without assistance or support.

The service, provided by Specsavers Healthcall, is available for those who live in their own homes, residential or care homes. It includes an NHS-funded eye examination, a choice of fashionable frames, the dispensing of glasses and an aftercare service.

A qualified optician visits customers with a portable eye testing kit and a range of 180 glasses to choose from. Customers can also



take advantage of the same offers which are available in Specsavers stores.

Specsavers audiologists offer advice and conduct hearing assessments, providing people across Scotland with high quality, convenient and thorough hearing assessments, as well as hearing aid consultations and an aftercare service.

This service is also available for customers in their own homes.

Store director Dave Quigley says: 'The Specsavers

experience does not end at customers visiting the store, having their eyes examined and choosing glasses. The Trongate and Sauchiehall Street stores provide a comprehensive and wide ranging service which

includes Specsavers hearing services and home visits.

'We have invested significantly in our team and in our business in recent years, and we're very proud to be able to provide such a comprehensive service to customers living across Glasgow.'



To book an appointment at Specsavers Trongate call 0141 552 2776.

To book an appointment at Specsavers Sauchiehall Street call 0141 341 4940.

Contact Specsavers Hearcare on 0141 552 9060.

Contact Specsavers Healthcall on 0141 559 4320.

Merchant City Connect

What's on

Now that the chillier weather has kicked in and chunnies leaves scatter the pavement, thoughts turn to how best to enjoy the autumn season.

From a craft and design fair to stock up on Christmas gifts to an evening of music, there's lots on in the local and surrounding area. So grab your diaries and prepare to jot down some important dates, as we've rounded up some of the best upcoming events.

EVENT: Merchant Square Craft & Design Fair

Date: Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November

Location: Merchant Square

Time: Sat, 11am-6pm; Sun, 12-6pm

Cost: Free

What's on: Head along for the weekly Craft & Design Fair, which showcases the work of some of Glasgow's best crafters. Perfect for Christmas shopping, find handcrafted jewellery, candles, cards and cupcakes through to artwork, aromatherapy products, baby clothes and photography.

EVENT: James Dinnen Art Exhibition and Sale

Date: Sunday 4 December

Location: Merchant Square

Time: 10am-5pm

Cost: Free

What's on: Glasgow based and well known art colourist James Dinnen will be displaying a selection of his fantastic Glasgow cityscapes and landscapes at the Merchant Square Art and Craft fair. He will also have framed and mounted limited edition giclee prints for sale.

EVENT: The SSE Scottish Music Awards

Date: Saturday 26 November

Location: The Old Fruitmarket

Time: tbc

Cost: Standard, tbc; Table of 10, £1350; Platinum table, £3000

What's on: Enjoy an evening honouring musicians whilst raising funds for charity Nordoff Robbins.

EVENT: Bold Types

Date: Thursday 24 November

Location: Glasgow Women's Library

Time: 5.30 – 7.30pm

Cost: Free

What's on: Hear the shortlisted writers for the women's creative writing competition showcase read their stories in front of a supportive and encouraging panel of judges. Feminist poet and activist Nadine Aisha; acclaimed short story writer and novelist Anne Donovan; previous Bold Types winner and newly published novelist Ethyl Smith; and GWL's own librarian, Wendy Kirk. Winners will be announced on the night.

EVENT: Kathy Hinde 'Luminous Birds'

Date: Friday 9 December

Location: The Lighthouse

Time: 10.30am – 5pm

Cost: tbc

What's on: Explore the handcrafted origami-style birds in artist Kathy Hinde's 'Luminous Birds' exhibition. A sight and sound spectacular, it's an experience for all the family. The exhibition runs until 15 January 2017.



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Your community council needs you!

WOULD you like the opportunity to speak up for your community and have a say in important decisions that are being made?

The next Merchant City and Trongate Community Council meeting is on Tuesday 29 November and all residents from the area are welcome to attend.

Meetings take place on the last Tuesday of every month, expect December, at 7pm in the City Chambers (gatehouse entrance Cochrane Street). All meetings are well attended by the four Councillors, Police and relevant City Officials, as well as local residents.

A residents' forum and pressure group for the area, the committee are consulted officially by Glasgow City Council on planning and licensing applications and are the residents' representatives on outside bodies/committees.

For more information, email the committee on merchantcity.cc@gmail.com.



Merchant City & Trongate Community Council

At the heart of Glasgow



TEN talented school pupils got the trip of a lifetime when they visited NASA's Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas with the University of Strathclyde Faculty of Engineering's Scottish Space School.

The pupils from schools around Scotland, earned their places on the trip after attending the Space School - a week-long residential event at the University of Strathclyde aimed at inspiring young people to consider careers in engineering.

During the trip they were given a rare opportunity to meet astronauts, engineers and scientists working on the space programme.

Gordon McVie, Outreach Coordinator with Strathclyde's Faculty of Engineering, said: "The Scottish Space School has been attended by many young people who have since progressed to successful careers with links to their experiences with us.

"The trip to Houston is a fantastic opportunity for this year's pupils to see for themselves some of the world's leading professionals in science and engineering. They showed great promise at the Space School and will be shown the vast range of possible careers open to them."

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Merchant City Connect



Barking up the right tree

BREWDOG have opened a new, first-of-its-kind hub in Merchant City that's food-focused whilst still celebrating beer at every turn.

DogHouse, located on Hutcheson Street, majors in good old-time barbeque food and smoked meat. Alongside the dining options, DogHouse Merchant City has a fully stocked BrewDog bar with 25 taps of craft beer from the

independent brewery as well as curated guest breweries.

An outdoor seating area allows drinks to be enjoyed inside and outside and customers can also takeaway BottleDog beers from the shop.

Brewdog claimed: "Glasgow is a city that celebrates a night out like no other. It was the obvious choice for our first doghouse; a new hub for Merchant City."



MAKE ART, NOT WAR

THE creatively inclined are invited to drop in and make art and new friends at Trongate 103.

A weekly event organised by Project Ability, Thursday Social Nights run from 6.30-8pm and invite artists to enjoy being crafty in the company of like-minded people. The evening costs just £5 which is payable at the door.

Thanks to some funding from the Autism Innovation and Improvement Fund, this weekly event came about for and young people over 18 years old.

Whether you want to make art, learn new

techniques or just have a chat with other artists, the Thursday Night Social is the place to be. Regular outings to the cinema, theatre and concerts are also organised.

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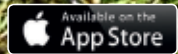
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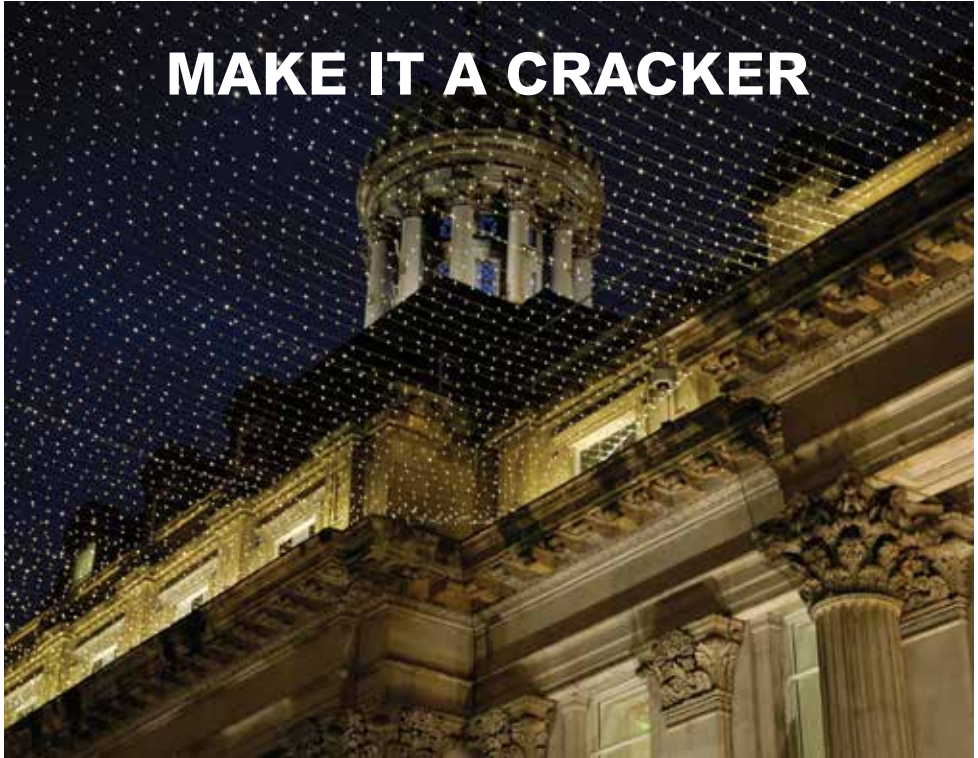
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MAKE IT A CRACKER



CELEBRATE the countdown to Christmas in the city with the festive treats on offer this year.

Christmas isn't Christmas without a visit to the traditional market for a gastronomic treat, a warming glass of festive cheer or a unique festive gift.

This year the Christmas Market returns to St Enoch Square as well as another market at George Square offering delicious foods and hand crafted gifts set beneath twinkling fairy lights and live entertainment to boot. The St Enoch Square market kicks off on 10 November and the George Square market opens on 26 November.

26 *Autumn 2016*

Come the festive season, Glasgow's shopping area really comes into its own. Boasting over 1,500 shops, the Style Mile is the ideal place to head for gifts and all the essential items that make this time of year special. From Buchanan Galleries to Princes Square, St Enoch Centre to Argyll Arcade, there is ample choice for the discerning shopper.

When it comes to entertainment, there's something for all the family to enjoy. Aladdin is this year's star studded pantomime (oh yes it is), taking place at the Clyde Auditorium SECC from 10-31 December. A production of Cinderella will hit the King's Theatre stage from 2

December – 8 January, whilst Elfie's Magical Adventure can be caught at the Pavilion Theatre from 24 November - 17 January.

If you could do with a spot of exercise to justify the Christmas indulgences then why not dust off your Santa boots and join thousands of others for the festive 5k? For the tenth anniversary of the Santa Dash they're welcoming adults, children and even dogs. This year's event takes place on Sunday 11 December with Beatson Cancer as the nominated charity. It'll be a sight to beho-ho-hold!

For a full list of shows and events, visit www.glasgowloveschristmas.com

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Nicola Park
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as The Growler

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Ewen Cameron
as Useless Ewen

Craig Glover
as The 'Manny'

Cat Harvey
as Smart Cat

24th November 2016 until 15th January 2017

HELP IS AT HAND



THE University of Strathclyde has become the first university in Scotland to pledge its support for students who are estranged from their families.

The University is working with charity Stand Alone, to help remove barriers to higher education and academic success.

Building on its reputation for exemplary support for care leavers, Strathclyde is

developing dedicated support for estranged students in key areas of need, including finance, accommodation, mental health and wellbeing.

Professor Sir Jim McDonald, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University, said: "Since we were founded more than 200 years ago during the Enlightenment, Strathclyde has established a proud track record of removing barriers to higher education. We want

to ensure ability – and not financial or social circumstance – determines participation.

"Today's news underlines our commitment to ensuring those studying without the support of a family network are not held back. We want to ensure all students have an equal chance of academic success, and we are delighted to be the first University in Scotland to sign up to the Stand Alone pledge."

A 400-room swish hotel set to be built in the area

A NEW luxury hotel is pipped to be built on a car park site in Merchant City.

Glasgow City Council's Executive Committee recently gave the green light for the sale of 69-97 Ingram Street to Merchant Hotel Glasgow Limited for the development of a hotel.

The proposed hotel will be of high quality, with almost 400 bedrooms, two restaurants, two entrances, a bar and coffee shop built on a site of 0.62 acres.

The aim of the creation is to provide a focal point for Merchant City, attracting both hotel guests and visitors to the area.

Merchant Hotel Glasgow Limited will pay Glasgow City Council - the owner of the site - a single payment of £6.75million on the date of entry.

Councillor Frank McAveety, Leader of Glasgow City Council, said: "The Merchant City is already a fantastically successful attraction in Glasgow, and the development of a high quality hotel such as one proposed for Ingram Street could help to take the area to another level.

"Buildings such as this can play a key role in Glasgow's day and night-time economies."

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Bridge gets royal recognition



One of Glasgow's landmark bridges was given the royal seal of approval after having a £3.4m restoration taking it back to its former glory.

GLASGOW'S historic Albert Bridge received the Royal seal of approval in October when HRH The Earl of Wessex paid a visit following the bridge's £3.4m restoration.

The Albert Bridge originally opened in June 1871 and cost £62,328. It is named after Prince Albert, The Earl of Wessex's Great, great, great grandfather.

It was the third road bridge built over the River Clyde in Glasgow, following the Victoria Bridge and Glasgow Bridge.

Glasgow City Council appointed Balfour Beatty to restore the 145 year old Category A listed Victorian structure and bring it back to its original form. Work began in May 2015 with completion earlier this year.

The £3.4m restoration included the complete refurbishment of the metalwork, restoring and repainting the Glasgow City and heraldic crests, replacing the damaged parapets and installing new ornate street lamps to match, as close as possible, the original gas lamp standards - a feature of the original construction.

A plaque commemorating its restoration was unveiled by HRH The Earl of Wessex, after meeting with and speaking to those directly involved in the project.

Baillie Elaine McDougall, the council's Executive Member for Transport, Environment and Sustainability, said: "The restoration of the Albert Bridge is remarkable.

"Glasgow is a city built on our reputation for engineering and we

are committed to protecting our heritage as much as we possibly can.

"This is a 145 year old structure of significant historical importance and I'm delighted that the multi-million pound investment by the city council to bring it back to its original form has been so successful.

"Restoring a bridge of this size, scale and age is no easy task and yet the results are amazing.

"Everyone involved in the project should be very, very proud."

There were four previous bridges at this site (the current bridge being number five).

The Albert Bridge links the Saltmarket in the city centre with Crown Street on the south side.

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