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# Welcome

**Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Newton Mearns Connect, brought to you in association with the Herald and Times Group Magazines.**

In this issue, we speak to the St Ninian's schoolgirl (pictured left) who has been impressing celebrity judges on primetime TV on The Voice.

We also have some positive news about the action the council is taking to tackle the pesky potholes that continue to blight roads in the Mearns.

Turn to page 22 to find out more.

This issue also shines a light on some of the best community events happening throughout Newton Mearns over the next few weeks, as well as plenty of gardening

and interiors advice.

And if you have any community news that you want us to share for our next issue, please get in touch via phone or email.

**Until next time,  
Team Connect**



*Holly in the spotlight,*  
**page 6**

## Contacts

### Editorial

If you have a story that you would like to be included in a future issue of Newton Mearns Connect contact: [connect.mags@newsquest.co.uk](mailto:connect.mags@newsquest.co.uk)

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Councillor Jim McLean

(Conservative):

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Councillor Jim Swift (Conservative):

07534515159

#### Newton Mearns North:

Councillor Tony Buchanan (SNP):

07976 360398

Councillor Charlie Gilbert

(Conservative):

0141 639 2948

Councillor Paul O'Kane (Labour):

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### Community

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#### 28<sup>th</sup> Glasgow (Giffnock) Scout Group:

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## Newton Mearns Connect

# Schoolgirl proves she has the voice

**Talented local schoolgirl Holly Scally has had a taste for fame after she made it through the first round of hit ITV reality show The Voice.**

Holly, 16, won over both Grammy Award-winning singer Meghan Trainor and X Factor runner-up Olly Murs, who turned their chairs during her rendition of Sam Smith's Lay Me Down.

The celebrity judges expressed their disbelief at Holly's ability to sing so skilfully at such a young age.

Meghan said: "I can't believe you're 16, that freaks me out. You're so talented. I feel like you've been singing for way longer than that, not only because you're so talented but because you're so cool and calm."

Olly added: "That was a fantastic performance, with such emotion. The way you sung that song, you sounded like you'd

experienced so much."

Holly's family, including twin brother Shea, who is a promising



footballer with St Mirren, have been supporting her since her first audition for the show last March.

Proud mum Gillian, 52, said:

"We are ecstatic for her. She has gone from singing behind a door to singing on a live show."

Holly comes from a musical family, with both Gillian and dad Gerry, 56, performing in tribute bands.

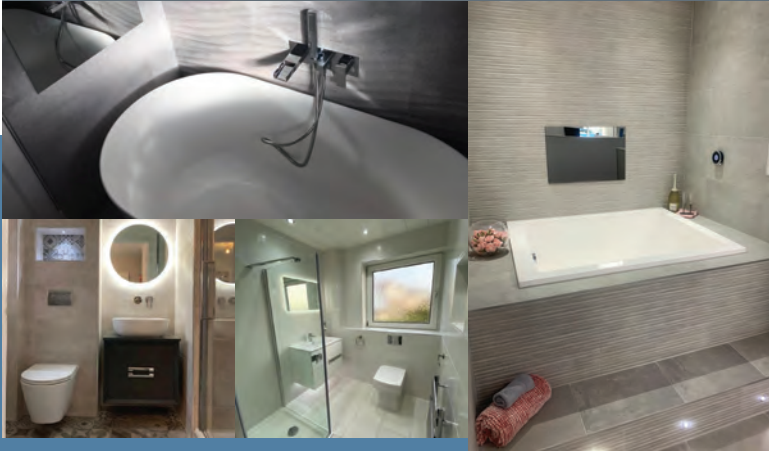
Gillian, who impersonated Cher on the TV show Stars in their Eyes in 1997, said: "Holly sang at an early age but she had no confidence. Then the school volunteered her for a few shows only last year, which she won, and that gave her a wee bit of confidence."

For the past year, Holly has juggled her studies with filming commitments for The Voice.

The St Ninian's High School pupil has also performed at an event for the late Celtic player Tommy Burns where she sang alongside former Pop Idol winner Michelle McManus.



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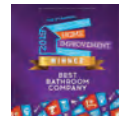
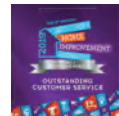
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# Newton Mearns Connect

## *The grass is greener with career that helps children*

**After experiencing life as a golf pro, a Newton Mearns man has swapped the putting green for the classroom as he takes on his new role as a nursery child development officer.**

Paul Morrison (pictured) worked as a golf professional for 13 years before deciding it was time to look for a new challenge.

The former St Ninian's High pupil successfully completed a Higher National Certificate (HNC) qualification in Early Childhood Practice and is sure he made the right call.

Paul, 44, told Connect's sister title the Barrhead News: "I realised a boyhood dream by

going into the golf trade but, after many years, I felt as though I wanted a change in career.

"I had always considered being a school teacher and, through working in schools doing golf coaching sessions, knew that I enjoyed being in the school environment, so I initially went onto the supply register for Pupil Support Assistants (PSA) and started at Isobel Mair School soon after. "From the very beginning I loved it and being in the Additional Support Needs (ASN) environment meant I was learning so many new skills all the time."

Having spent six years working as a PSA at Isobel Mair School, an opportunity arose for Paul to



go back to college to gain a new qualification.

East Renfrewshire Council provided the chance for a number of clerical staff and PSAs to enrol in a course at West College Scotland to complete a HNC in Early Childhood Practice.

## Beat the street returns...

**After valiant efforts last year, a new initiative aiming to boost health and wellbeing is being rolled out across the rest of East Renfrewshire.**

Beat the Street is a free challenge in which people are rewarded with points and prizes for exploring their town or village on foot or bicycle.

The game was a runaway success when it was staged in Barrhead and Newton Mearns last year as, within the first few days of its launch, residents had collectively travelled more than the distance to Australia.

Now organisers of Beat the Street are bringing the game to Neilston, Giffnock, Thornliebank, Clarkston, Busby, Eaglesham and Waterfoot in an effort to

encourage people to get out and about. Beeping and flashing sensors called Beat Boxes have been placed on lamp-posts around these areas.

Players can tap the Beat Boxes, spaced half a mile apart, using cards and fobs to track their journey and earn points for themselves and their team.

Last year, 17 schools and teams in the Barrhead and Newton Mearns areas competed against each other to see who could journey the furthest and win hundreds of pounds worth of prizes. The Beat the Street game is being delivered by Intelligent Health on behalf of East Renfrewshire Council, with support from Paths for All's Smarter Choices, Smarter



Places programme.

Councillor Tony Buchanan, leader of East Renfrewshire Council, said: "Beat the Street is a fun way to get active and we're delighted to bring the game back to East Renfrewshire."



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# Newton Mearns Connect

## Eastwood High results improve

**A Newton Mearns school's improving exam results has been attributed to the Scottish Government's building improvement scheme.**

Eastwood High saw the percentage of fifth year pupils achieving five or more Highers increase to 40 per cent, compared to 17 per cent before moving to its new site. Stuart Maxwell, the school's headteacher, said: "The new building and grounds have been a contributing factor to the success of Eastwood High's journey of improvement.

"We have a better environment for learning and teaching, which has benefited pupils, staff and the wider school community.

"This has led to higher levels of achievement, as demonstrated in improved SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority) results."

Eastwood High, in Newton Mearns, is one of 100 refurbished or replaced facilities to be completed through the Scottish Government's 'Schools for the Future' programme.

Education Secretary John Swinney praised Eastwood for their success.

He said: "This programme has not only high-quality school buildings that enhance pupils' learning experience, it has produced a concerted and collaborative blueprint for better schools that give generations to come the best possible start in life."



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# WHAT'S ON

Keep up to date with all the events going on in and around your area with our handy what's on guide.

## **EVENT: GREENBANK DAFFODIL FESTIVAL**

Date: Saturday 4 - Sunday 5 April  
Time: 11am-4pm  
Location: Greenbank Garden, Flanders Road  
Cost: Normal admission rates apply

**What's on:** Greenbank Garden, one of Newton Mearns' best hidden gems, is a beautiful place to visit in the springtime. Home to over 500 varieties of daffodil, Greenbank Garden is the perfect place to celebrate the arrival of this cheery spring bulb. Take part in workshops, daffodil tours and fun garden trails for the little ones.

## **EVENT: AN EVENING WITH DOUGLAS SKELTON & DENZIL MEYRICK**

Date: Wednesday 8 April  
Time: 7pm - 8pm  
Location: Waterstones, The Avenue, Newton Mearns  
Cost: Free (but booking required)

**What's on:** On Wednesday the 8th of April in the Primavera Bistro, Waterstones are hosting an evening with Douglas Skelton: with Douglas discussing his latest thriller 'The Blood Is Still'. Please don't hesitate to contact the shop on 0141 616 3933 to book your place at this free event, as previous events with Douglas & Denzil have filled up fast.

## **EVENT: BOOKBUG SESSIONS (0-4YRS)**

Date: Wednesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays  
Time: Thurs & Sat 10.30am, Wednesdays 2pm  
Location: Mearns Library  
Cost: Free

**What's on:** Designed to introduce reading and music from a young age, the Bookbug sessions are fun interactive and free for children and their carers. Babies up to the age of four years and their parent/guardian can enjoy stories through songs and rhymes among other like-minded people.

## **EVENT: WAVES AT EASTWOOD PARK THEATRE**

Date: Thursday 9 April  
Time: 6pm  
Location: Eastwood Park, Rouken Glen Road, Giffnock  
Cost: Standard £9 / Concession £7 / Child £4

**What's on:** Waves is the tale of Elizabeth Moncello and how, growing up on Gabo Island (Australia) in the 1930s, by emulating fish, penguins and dolphins to learn how to swim, she came to be the unofficial inventor of the butterfly stroke. Combining storytelling, movement and splashes of humour, 'Waves' is about having the courage, desire, and determination to swim against the tide of expectation.

## **EVENT: MEARNS KIRK HELPING HANDS: TAI CHI CLASSES**

Date: Monday mornings  
Time: 10am - 11am  
Location: Mearns Kirk  
Cost: £3

**What's on:** Led by a fully qualified tutor and suitable for all ages, these fun friendly classes are on a pay as you go basis. Tai Chi Chuan is an exercise for the body and mind, offering a way to achieve a state of natural relaxation. It promotes stress reduction and improves balance, flexibility and strength. To book a space, please email hello@mkhelpinghands, spaces are limited and will be allocated on





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# Newton Mearns Connect

## New high-tech retirement homes open in Mearns

**The latest phase of retirement homes has officially opened in Newton Mearns.**

The latest addition to the Hugh Fraser Retirement Estate, formerly the Crookfur Estate, has been hailed as a pioneering first.

The project has been operated by the retailTRUST charity, which provides safe and affordable supported living accommodation for former retail workers and their families, the 46 properties at Don McCarthy Court feature digitally-connected smart-home technology.

They are among the first in Scotland to use voice and motion-activated technology to provide round-the-clock assistance, security, reassurance and companionship.

This new phase of homes has been named after philanthropist and long-time retailTRUST ambassador Don McCarthy.

Rather than relying on traditional alarm-cord communications, the smart-home technology provides 24/7 active monitoring, with 'intelligent' software learning a resident's daily routine, tracking typical behaviour and then proactively alerting staff if part of that routine has been missed.

Residents can also enjoy increased access to the outside world. Keeping in touch with family and friends through video calls, turning on the radio or television, and accessing local online services.

The Hugh Fraser Retirement Estate, donated by the late Lord Fraser of Allander, has provided accommodation, care and support services to more than 1,400 retail retirees since 1967.

Richard Boland, retailTRUST chief executive, said: "We're really excited by the possibilities this new technology offers and the opportunity it provides to revolutionise the traditional supported living sector."



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# Newton Mearns Connect

## Funds raised for local running race event

**Thousands of pounds has been presented in a bid to encourage more residents to join one of the areas most popular running events.**

EventScotland has awarded Run the Blades £21,000 towards the dash around the UK's largest onshore windfarm, Whitelee, on the Eaglesham Moor.

Set for July 17 and 18, the 2020 event will expand beyond the current 10km, half-marathon and 50km ultra-marathon.

There will now also be a 'children's mile' after the half-marathon and a 'Ride the Blades' event that will introduce mountain biking on the route.

The cash will help support transport, marquee and equipment hire.

Lee Payton, director of Breaking Strain Events, which organises Run the Blades, said: "We're delighted to receive support from EventScotland for the third year in succession.

"Over the past two years, alongside EventScotland and headline sponsor ScottishPower, we're proud of the fact that Run the Blades has been an accessible



event for runners of all fitness and experience levels.

"In 2018 we had our first visually impaired runner and last year our first wheelchair competitor took on the 10K. This year our focus is on reducing our use of single-use plastic through innovative water supplies at checkpoints, increasing our recycling and eliminating our waste to landfill."

Gordon Smith, VisitScotland's regional director, added: "I am delighted that this popular East Renfrewshire event is to receive funding from EventScotland's National Programme Fund. This funding will enable the event to build on its success."

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# Newton Mearns Connect

## Council chiefs target pothole repairs...

**A list of streets in Newton Mearns have been added to East Renfrewshire Council's repairs programme in a bid to fix any hazardous roads in the area.**

The additions have been confirmed after Eastwood MSP Jackson Carlaw raised concerns over the condition of a number of roads in his constituency.

The draft repairs programme for the 2020/21 financial year now includes Alloway Drive, in Newton Mearns, as well as Mearns Road (from Hillview Drive to Clarkston Toll) and the section of Greenwood Road between Buccleuch Avenue and Richmond Avenue, in Clarkston.

Council chiefs also confirmed that the section of Broompark Drive from Sandringham Avenue to Lochbroom Road, in Newton Mearns, is set to undergo resurfacing work as early as this month.

Other roads the council intends to repair in Newton Mearns over the next financial year are Ayr Road, Broomfield Avenue, Broomvale Drive, Doune Crescent, Sandringham Avenue, Turnberry Drive, Humber Road, Eaglesham Road, Meadowhill, Teawell



Road, Warnock Road and Douglas Drive.

Mr Carlaw said: "The surfaces of many roads across Eastwood are in a dire state and they have been left in such condition for a long period of time.

"Potholes, uneven surfaces, ruts and cracks remain a huge problem for a very significant number of local roads.

"It is welcome that, in response to my recent representations, the council have confirmed their intention to carry out repair work on roads such as Alloway Drive, the section of Mearns Road from Hillview Drive to Clarkston Toll and part of Greenwood Road in the next financial year."

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# Newton Mearns Connect

## Residents in need are being urged to use welfare fund for support with living costs

**The local council is reminding any local residents who may find themselves with financial struggles at this time of year that they can apply to the Scottish Welfare Fund for help with essential living costs.**

The Scottish Welfare Fund is open to those on low income who need help with food or heating costs.

There are two grants within the fund – the Crisis Grant, which is available to those in a crisis situation such as a fire or flood in the home or unexpected financial hardship, and the Community Care Grant, which helps with costs to live in the community or keep a family together.



Once a Crisis Grant application has been made, the council will make a decision no later than the end of the next working day. The grant is tax free and doesn't need to be paid back.

Councillor Danny Devlin, East Renfrewshire's housing and maintenance services convener, said: "The festive period can be especially difficult for those on a low income or experiencing a crisis. However, the Scottish Welfare Fund is in place to help mitigate in these situations.

"I encourage anyone facing hardship to get in touch with our staff, who'll be able to explain the process and assist in making an application."

**For more details, visit [www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/scottishwelfare](http://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/scottishwelfare) or call 0141 577 3475.**



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# Newton Mearns Connect

## Pearl's interior lowedown...

**It's all about 'faded glamour' for Pearl Lowe and her designer friends. Gabrielle Fagan finds out how to get the look.**

Singer-turned-fashion designer Pearl Lowe is renowned for her quirky, individual style - so it's probably no surprise that she defiantly dances to her own tune when it comes to her decor choices too.

Her home - a rambling 11-bedroom Georgian mansion in Somerset - showcases her trademark blend of grand, romantic chic and cool rock 'n roll.

"Many people might regard my style as quite 'eclectic,'" observes London-born Lowe.

"That's fine by me, because I don't believe there should be any rules - unless you want your house to be a hotel," the 49-year-old declares with a smile.

She sums up her interior style as "faded glamour" - and this is also the title of her new book, which celebrates her approach to decor and creating spaces she loves.

Faded Glamour gives us a glimpse into not only Lowe's own home, but also the private spaces of her super-creative designer friends, including Solange Azagury-Partridge, Alice Temperley and Sera Hershman Loftus.

There are plenty of colourful living rooms, intimate bedrooms, and plush bathrooms which showcase the many different ways 'faded glamour' can be interpreted - from urban to rustic, and bohemian to vintage.

Find ways to incorporate the trend in your home.







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# Newton Mearns Connect

## Bring summertime into your garden

### **Plant lilies, red hot pokers and even summer hyacinths in spring for a burst of summer scent and colour.**

The majority produce their best blooms when planted in a sunny spot, although lilies and begonias bloom well in partial shade. There are many to choose from; here's some ideas and key points to keep in mind...

#### **Long, short and tall**

Hyacinths are generally known as highly-scented spring bulbs, but there is also a summer hyacinth, *Galtonia candicans*, which grows to 1m (3ft) high and makes big clumps of strap-like leaves, producing white, bell-shaped flowers in summer. They should be planted in late spring.

Long after your tulips have faded, foxtail lilies (*Eremurus* species) are producing towering spires of flowers as high as 3m (9ft), clumps of *Crinum x powellii* are producing beautiful pink blooms, while in August and September red hot pokers (*Kniphofias*) are among the most impressive border plants.

They prefer a sunny, sheltered spot and will need a good dry mulch come the autumn. Those in containers will benefit from being brought under cover into a cool, frost-free place.

#### **Luscious lilies**

Lilies are among the most popular summer bulbs. They perform well in pots and if you want their rich scent to pervade your patio, go for *L. longiflorum*, which will produce wonderful white flowers and fragrance on a sunny terrace.

They are best grown in large pots of John Innes compost in autumn or early spring, in a frost-free greenhouse or conservatory. Don't put them outside until the frosts have passed.

One of the easiest lilies to grow is the tiger lily (*Lilium tigrinum*), which grows to 1.25m (4ft) and produces striking orange-spotted flowers with petals which curve in to make a ball shape. Again, they can be planted in early spring in lime-free soil, which is well-drained.



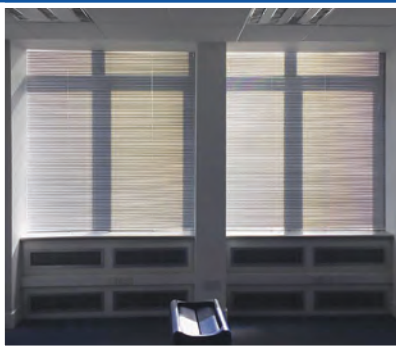
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## How to create a garden that will soothe the mind

**As focus on the wellbeing benefits of plants and nature grows, you might fancy creating a garden mindfulness corner of your own.** Here's how to do it...

### What should you include?

"Key elements of life, like shelter and water, are relevant to a mindfulness corner, which is trying to create a refuge but with an ability to view outside of that," says RHS scientist Alistair Griffiths.

### Where do you start?

"Create an area of seating where you can sit alone, or with friends and family," he suggests. Try to make room for plants which attract butterflies, bees and wildlife to distract you from everyday life.

### Think about water

It's good to have an element of water, where you have the ability to see and hear the water and look at its reflectiveness, he advises.

### And if you only have a balcony, or no outdoor space at all?

"Bring nature indoors," says Griffiths. "You can make a mindfulness corner in your house, bringing greenery into those spaces, which will be more critical

in relation to the future.

### Focus on fragrance

"Scent is critical," says Griffiths. "Choose things which are fragrant. There's scientific evidence linking lavender to calm and sleep. The



beauty of lavender is that it attracts bees and other distractions [too]."

### Consider colour

"A mindfulness corner is about trying to surround yourself with different types of greens, because green

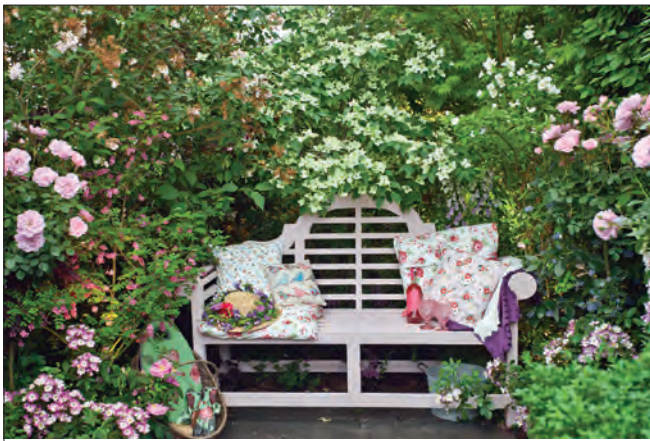
is a colour that seems to be universally liked by people across the world, as is blue."

### Wildlife is important

"Even if you live in a high-rise flats, have bird feeders. Bees also get up there and other wildlife will find it. Having things that attract wildlife is a key aspect," says Griffiths.

### Have elements of touch

"Include plants around touch, such as soft ornamental grasses, the sort of plants that you want to run your hand through when you walk past," suggests Griffiths.



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