



February 2017

Welcome

Flintshire's commitment to apprentices

Flintshire County Council is pleased that four apprentices are now working with local contractors, thanks to the "Apprentice Academy" developed with Futureworks Flintshire.



Council construction contracts always place a requirement on the contractor to provide apprentice opportunities and to recruit local labour, however it is often difficult to complete the apprenticeships owing to the nature of the contracts. The creation of this Academy will ensure that full apprenticeships can be made and delivered. The type of job roles needed include plumbing, joinery, plastering, gas and electrical, bricklayers, but also other roles such as tenant liaison officers and quantity surveyors will be required.

The apprentices are working with council-appointed contractors – three with Wates Residential in Flint – Nathan Bloor, Jamie Hayward and Beth Mclellan and Harvey Appleby is with Keepmoat in Mold.

Multi Skilled Trade Operative Apprentice, Beth Mclellan, said:

"I applied for this apprenticeship so that I could understand and try different trades available within the industry. I was so pleased that I was successful in my application. I'm enjoying it as each day is completely different and you have different jobs or tasks to do, which enables me to broaden my skills and gives me new experiences."

And another apprentice in Business Administration, Harvey Appleby, said:

"I applied for an apprenticeship as I wanted to get experience in a real office environment whilst studying a college course. I have already learnt a lot of new skills and I am enjoying it very much."

Futureworks Director, Mark Scott, said:

"We are passionate about providing sustainable futures for diverse ranges of talented young people. We are proud to be working in partnership with Flintshire Council to create additional opportunities on projects where they are difficult to achieve or often lost."

Futureworks Flintshire is a community interest company which has the relevant experience, the right culture and values to be a close partner to the Council and working with a third party reduces significantly the cost of scheme administration for the Council. For more information about apprenticeship opportunities please contact Amy Dutton on 01352 703453 or amy@futureworks.wales (<mailto:amy@futureworks.wales>).

Doing things differently - Flintshire's successes

Flintshire has been going through a big period of change. Due to financial pressures, where reductions in budgets mean hard choices and the possible loss or reduction of services, alternate delivery models (ADMs) have proved to be a solution to keeping services alive whilst managing the budget.

As an innovative and forward-thinking local authority - Flintshire continues to lead the way by encouraging its professional teams to break new ground with innovative ideas.

We have worked with a number of community groups on several successful Community Asset Transfers (CATs). Public assets transferred from Council ownership to community or charitable groups to be run for the benefit of the community have so far included a community centre, libraries, leisure centres and a swimming pool.

In March 2016, Gwernymynydd Village Centre was taken over by the Village Centre Management Committee on behalf of the community following the completion of a formal agreement with the Council.



Other former Council facilities which had already transferred to community groups under the CAT scheme include Carmel Village Hall and Caerwys public conveniences.

Since May last year, Castell Alun High School and the Friends of Hope Community Library have operated a community run library and school library in Hope Library at Castell Alun High School.

In May last year, Connah's Quay Swimming Pool was taken over by the social enterprise, Cambrian Aquatics. The swimming pool has operated successfully and new swimming programmes and other initiatives have been introduced and take-up has been positive.



Flintshire continues to break new ground with the latest and most ambitious alternate delivery model announced recently. This involves a new way of providing leisure and library services through an employee-led Community Benefit Society. This was given a massive 'thumbs-up' from the workforce following a landslide vote in the workforce ballot.

Turnout was 92.5% among leisure and library employees with a resounding 90% yes vote for the proposal to set up a Community Benefit Society to run from 1 July 2017. This employee-led Community Benefit Society is the first of its kind to run leisure and library services in the UK.

The business plan shows that in the first full year over £500,000 of savings can be made to the service operation while Flintshire County Council is making a capital investment of almost £1m to improve leisure and library buildings, play areas and artificial pitches in the county.

The overall model aims to provide savings of 10% year on year while maintaining and improving existing service levels and protecting jobs. Employees will be represented on the Board of the organisation.

The new organisation and the Council will work openly and transparently together with co-operative values and will meet twice a year through a partnership board.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Aaron Shotton, said:



"This organisation will be one of the few employee-led organisations operating leisure and library services in the United Kingdom and the level of employee support shown by the recent vote is unique. The Community Benefit Society will be able to demonstrate the value of employees being at the heart of an organisation and help shape models of public service delivery for the future that show how services at risk can be protected while



achieving financial and service requirements and retaining accountability to the public and the workforce."

Mike Welch, the Managing Director of the employee-led organisation, said:

"Everyone has worked so hard over the past few months to achieve this historic result and I am immensely proud to be leading this new organisation. We believe our colleagues will rise to the challenge. No-one is better placed than them to be able to identify improvements and innovations in service delivery for the benefit of our customers. We will work together and concentrate on our core business and our vision "More people, more active minds and bodies, more often." The future looks bright and exciting for leisure and libraries in Flintshire."

Investing in housing



The first tenants have moved into a new council housing development at the former Custom House Lane School site on Mold Road, Connah's Quay.



The development of 12 council properties is the first site to be completed as part of Flintshire County Council's Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP) and are the first new council homes to be built in Wales for over 20 years. Wates Residential has worked closely with the council to ensure that the properties have been built to a high quality standard with features that are both modern and energy efficient to keep running costs at a manageable level.

Councillor Aaron Shotton, Leader of Flintshire County Council said;

"I am delighted at the fantastic progress made on this site since work began in May 2016. I felt very proud to meet some of the new tenants as they saw their new homes for the first time and I was so pleased to hear the new tenants speak of 'a new chapter in their lives' and how excited they were to be moving into the Custom House development."

More developments are in the pipeline over the next few months with work on building 40 new Council homes scheduled to begin at Leeswood, Mold and Connah's Quay.

Spotlight on...

Expansion of Universal Credit



What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit has been operating in Flintshire since April 2014, providing financial support for low-income households who would normally have claimed Job Seekers Allowance.

From April 2017, Universal Credit is being expanded to all new claimants which is known as 'full service' Universal Credit and is replacing the following six benefits:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit.

How can I claim Universal Credit?

The government expects almost everyone to claim and manage their Universal Credit online.

To claim Universal Credit you must set up a Universal Credit account online. You will manage your ongoing claim online through this account, so you'll need regular online access to keep your circumstances up-to-date and ensure you are paid correctly.

Universal Credit accounts are designed to work equally on desktop PCs, laptops, tablets and smartphones.

Help with rent

The housing costs element of Universal Credit which replaces Housing Benefit for tenants, will be paid directly to you, rather than being paid to your landlord as is the case for many existing Housing Benefit claimants. However, those tenants who need budgeting support or who get into rent arrears after a month or two, can have their rent element and rent arrears paid directly to the landlord, for a temporary period.

How do I receive my Universal Credit?

To receive Universal Credit you will need an account with a bank, a building society or a credit union. Post Office card accounts may be too limited for Universal Credit.

Extra help and support

The Government recognises that the move to a single monthly household payment will be a significant change to the way most benefits are currently paid and has introduced the "alternative payment arrangements" scheme which provides the following help on a temporary basis if you are identified as needing additional support:

- Paying the housing element of Universal Credit as a "managed payment" directly to the landlord.
- More frequent payments than just once a month.
- A split payment of an award between partners.

Personal budgeting support will also be offered to you if you are deemed vulnerable and needing money advice to help you to cope with managing your money on a monthly basis and paying your bills on time.

For any further information, please visit the [Universal Credit website](https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit) (https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit).

If you need help or have any questions, you can also contact Local Connects offices which are located in Buckley, Connah's Quay, Flint, Holywell and Mold. They can offer help on how to make an online claim. There are PCs available to use free of charge.

More information on Flintshire Connects offices can be found [here](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Contact-Us/Flintshire-Connects.aspx) (http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Contact-Us/Flintshire-Connects.aspx).



Extra care housing schemes moving forward

The new Extra Care Housing Scheme for older people in Flint, Llys Raddington is now under construction and is progressing well.

The scheme is located on the corner of Coleshill Street and Earl Street, opposite the Jade Jones Pavilion. The new development will open in spring 2018 with 73 apartments, offering one-bed and two-bed accommodation, with provision for people living with dementia.

Tŷ Glas, a subsidiary of Pennaf Housing Group, is managing the development of the scheme, with Anwyl carrying out the construction. They have received more than 50 enquiries to date, from local residents and potential tenants.



In Holywell, our Social Services and Housing teams have been working closely with Wales & West Housing Association to identify a viable site for the Holywell Extra Care scheme.

Following consultation and planning permission, the scheme will provide at least 50 units, including facilities and support for people living with dementia. Wales & West Housing Association is progressing with internal development and planning activities, in preparation for an outline planning application early in 2017.



The proposed site is the former Ysgol Perth Y Terfyn primary school on Halkyn Road, Holywell, targeting a 2019 opening date. A public information event was held in the town recently which was well attended.

Breathing Space

“Sometimes the questions are complicated and the answers are simple” Dr. Seuss

Beth Cameron-Lyle has been teaching English at the Alun School in Mold for 13 years. Last year, after approaching the headteacher, Jane Cooper, she looked into introducing breathing strategies to some of her GCSE students.

The idea behind this was to help them manage difficulties with anxiety about their forthcoming exams. Young people were talking about their challenges with sleep, attachment to technology and the stresses and pressures of modern life.

Beth wanted to investigate how the school could offer students opportunities to learn some mindful methods to help themselves, not just for today, or even tomorrow- but as the first step in maintaining wellbeing and learning healthy coping strategies.

A suitable space was designed and equipped so that the young people could be taught meditation. And so the Breathing Space - Y Seibiant was created.

Ann Roberts, Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) Manager, has been very supportive. She understood the aims and ideas of the project and thought of the name as she was walking her dog, enjoying her own "breathing space". And so, a positive and supportive relationship between FIYP and

Breathing Space began.



Breathing Space applied for the National Lottery's "Awards For All Grant" and were awarded a grant of £5,000. FIYP continue to support the project and are now accessing staff training support at Breathing Space and hope to apply to host a part-time staff member within the Breathing Space unit soon. They have also committed to continue their strategic support and further access to the youth support grant. The grant has paid for training, art work and support. The group is also grateful to support from two businesses based in Mold – Howdens donated a kitchen and Travis Perkins donated materials to improve and plaster the walls.



Beth said:

"The space and our courses offer our young people ways of giving themselves a pause, a pocket of peace, the opportunity to create a calm within the storm of their busy day."

FIYP funded Breathing Space's artwork by local artist Wendi Shiel-Williams who worked with many of the teenagers to design the logo and the welcome hallway of the building. What was once a garage, a Pupil Referral Unit, an exam room- and is now a place where young people know that they can give themselves what they need - self-care: time, space, opportunities to learn about themselves – the physiology of the brain, its connection with the body – a human's tendency to ruminate, catastrophise and our minds to story tell.

The Breathing Space received funding from FIYP to attend the National Eisteddfod and joined FIYP in their marquee at the event in Flint where they enjoyed spending time with families, creating calm jars and learning ways of being with difficult emotions.



The Alun School has written an "Introduction to Mindfulness" course into the Year 10 PE Curriculum. Through this course, students are empowered with information about their brain, minds, body – and learn practical ways to centre themselves and find their focus.

Beth added:

"The positive feedback has been overwhelming. We also linked with Ysgol Bryn Coch in 2016 and taught the whole of the Year 6 cohort a "Mindfulness in School" course - again, teaching 11 year olds about the functions of the brain that trigger our stress response. Children learnt about how to using soothing methods to allow themselves to concentrate, make good decisions and be their best. Children learnt about how we all have wobbles - just like Weebles! - but with methods of centring ourselves we can enjoy all parts of our life. We are currently teaching this course to the Year 6 classes at Mountain Lane, Buckley."

The courses taught through the Breathing Space are appropriate for raising the attainment of students, building emotional and mental resilience, improving self-compassion and compassion to others. In the face of a social media dominated culture, young people have the chance to be with the simplicity of their breath.

The group has created a smaller, private room within the Breathing Space, funded by FIYP. This will enable them to work in a one to one setting, and allow other support groups, such as SORTED, deliver sessions which are in keeping with the Breathing Space's ethos.

Beth continued:

"We have recently secured £10,000 Tesco Bags of Help funding to create mindful outdoor spaces around the building.

"Added to this, we were successful in our National Lottery Celebration Grant bid and are currently working with local primaries, charities and organisations to offer workshops and taster sessions."

The Breathing Space is starting to be used as a community building - by local yoga and Breathing Space teacher Jill Blandford.

I am a certified 'Relax Kids' coach and will be looking to introduce these sessions soon."

All in all, 2016 has been a very exciting year for the Breathing Space and there is so much more to come as they link wider in the community. Their [Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/breathingspaceflintshire) (<https://www.facebook.com/breathingspaceflintshire>) shares relevant articles, recommendations and videos to support in their learning and development of mindfulness and meditation.



Council news

Foster for Flintshire



Fostering Information Evening

If you want more information on becoming a foster carer, why not come along to an information evening being held on **Tuesday 7 February, 7pm at Springfield Hotel** near Holywell?

You'll have the chance to listen to foster carers' stories and learn more about how to become a foster carer. Please email fostering@flintshire.gov.uk (<mailto:fostering@flintshire.gov.uk>) to register to attend.

If you can't make this date, information sessions are held every month, so visit [our website](https://www.flintshirefostering.org.uk/) (<https://www.flintshirefostering.org.uk/>) for upcoming dates and venues.

Fostering Friendly

Flintshire County Council has become the first local authority in Wales to achieve "fostering friendly" status with the Fostering Network, offering its employees flexibility to combine working and fostering with the Council. The Council is also encouraging more local businesses to adopt a flexible and supportive working arrangement for any staff who foster through the local Council.

There are currently 64,000 children in care in the UK, with a child coming in to care every 20 minutes in need of a fostering family, more new foster carers are needed.

The "fostering friendly" status policy, developed by the Fostering Network, encourages employers to provide flexibility and time off for employees who are prospective foster carers and are going through the application process to become a foster carer. It also supports those foster carers already providing care to looked after children, to cover any training, attendance at panels and hearings and to respond to any emergencies which may arise.

Could your business be "fostering friendly" and encourage your employees to foster? Contact fostering@flintshire.gov.uk (<mailto:fostering@flintshire.gov.uk>) for more information and advice.

Do you have the experience to help a child in Flintshire by becoming a foster carer?

There are many local children who need stability and security to help them stay on the right path and flourish.

If you have experience and skills that you can bring to fostering, we want to hear from you.

Are your own children now teenagers or left home, or do you have experience of working or volunteering with children over age 10?

Flintshire fostering service really needs foster carers for older children. Can you give another child a chance at a positive future?

Why foster with your local council?

Fostering with your local Council gives you the chance to help local children – help them to stay in their local area and local schools.

Support and training is right on your doorstep and there is an experienced team on hand to help you every step of the way. Come and join over 100 local families who already foster with us.

How long does it take?

The process to become a foster carer takes about 12 months from your first enquiry.

What support will I get?

We give you lots of information and training to become a foster carer, and lots of support along the way. Our team has lots of experience and some of them have been foster carers themselves.

Want to help make a difference in your community in 2017, but not sure of you are eligible?

Here are some of the things you'll need:

- A spare bedroom, not shared
- Spare time
- Healthy active lifestyle
- Able to transport children to school and activities
- Stable home life
- Supportive family and friends
- Flexible school-friendly working hours (if you work)

We believe that everyone has something different to offer. Find out if it's the right time for you to foster, request an information pack today – fostering@flintshire.gov.uk (<mailto:fostering@flintshire.gov.uk>)

Visit [our website](https://www.flintshirefostering.org.uk/) (<https://www.flintshirefostering.org.uk/>) to read foster carers' stories and find the answers to your questions.

Dementia Friendly Flintshire

Flintshire continues to march forward with its commitment to people with dementia and their carers.

There are already six dementia cafes throughout the county - Holywell, Sealand, Flint, Mold, Buckley and Mostyn and three towns are now "Dementia Friendly" towns – Buckley, Flint and Mold.

Two of the cafés, in Sealand and Flint, recently held a sessions called "Never Ending Story" run by RMD Memory Matters, an intergenerational project using imagination and reminiscence and works with people living with dementia, their carers and school children.

Donna Redgrave from RMD- Memory Matters, who worked with pupils from Flint High School and Sealand CP School, said:

“RMD – Memory Matters believes that the arts can help everyone affected by dementia to live well. They can also be a vehicle to enhance peoples’ awareness and understanding of the condition and bring communities together.

“Pupils, teachers and support staff from each school have completed a “Dementia Friends” session which introduces them to the challenges of living with dementia. Following this, a group of students worked with me on a “Never Ending Story” session.”

Dementia Cafés provide a safe, comfortable and supportive environment for people with dementia and their carers to socialise.

At the recent Sealand meeting, a wonderful reunion took place. Richard Benyon (left), who attends the café with his wife, Gill, met up with an old friend he had not seen for 66 years.

Gill said: “Whenever Richard talks about the old days, he always mentions a childhood friend Peter Sumner, who he was desperate to re-connect with. He used to go over to Bee’s Nurseries on the ferry boat which linked England and Wales, before the footbridge was built, and Peter lived on Thornleigh Farm and they went to school together until they were eleven. I was amazed to meet another couple at a recent Dementia Café session who said they knew a person called Peter Sumner, so I got in touch with him and it was the same person, so I invited him along today and here they are. I feel really emotional that Richard has been able to meet up with such an old friend after so long and it’s down to this group – I am so grateful to them all.”



As well as offering a range of fun and engaging activities, Dementia Cafés give both carers and people with dementia a chance to get information and advice and talk to others with similar problems.

And more work is planned for 2017 including:

- Creating an additional Dementia Friendly Community (Hope, Caergwre and Cymau)
- Opening a Memory Café in Connah's Quay
- Delivering the Intergenerational Projects in Mold and Buckley
- Investing in Flintshire Care Homes with our Bangor University Creative Conversation Research Project
- Delivering an Intergenerational Project in Deeside Community Hospital in partnership with Communities First and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Accrediting businesses in Mold, Flint and Buckley with ‘Working Towards Becoming Dementia Friendly’ Status following completion of pledges and action
- Accrediting three Council departments with the above status following completion of pledges and actions.

For more information about Dementia Cafés, call Luke Pickering-Jones at Flintshire County Council on 01352 702655.

21st century schools

Flintshire County Council remains committed to investing in the future of education to provide the best opportunities for young people.

21st Century schools programme projects, part funded by Welsh Government, have been successfully completed at the Holywell Learning Campus (Ysgol Treffynnon and Ysgol Maes y Felin) and Deeside 6th in partnership with Coleg Cambria at Connah’s Quay. Both have been delivered on time and within budget.



There are further two major projects in the pipeline within this programme.

A contractor has been engaged and will work collaboratively on a project to modernise Connah’s Quay High School.

Wrexham based Kier Construction will work on the replacement of the existing Design and Technology (D&T) block and Art and Food Technology block. The block will be replaced with a new two storey building comprising Administration, D&T, Food Tech, Art and Design and room for additional teaching provision, office space, toilets, lift, stairs and a plant room. It is anticipated that construction work will start during summer 2017, with a planned completion date of early 2019.



The Council has invited tenders to engage a contractor through the North Wales Construction framework for a project in Penyffordd. The proposed scheme at Penyffordd will amalgamate the current split-site school arrangement, bringing all primary provision on one site. Construction is anticipated to start early in early 2018, with a phased completion of buildings and external areas during 2019.

In addition to this programme, further key investments have been outlined in the Council's Capital Fund Programme. Castell Alun High School and Glan Aber primary school have been identified as having the most pressing needs, requiring extension and remodelling of current buildings. A total investment of £4.6m has been allocated for work at Castell Allun and Glan Aber will benefit from an investment of almost £1m.

Castell Alun High School is to be extended with the provision of a new two storey Art and Design Technology block and remodelled in other areas. Anticipated start date 2018/19 financial year.

Glan Aber primary school, Bagillt will see the conversion of the existing hall to provide two suitable teaching spaces and the construction of a new hall, appropriate for the number of pupils on roll, together with minor extensions to three classrooms. Anticipated start date 2017/18 financial year.

What does your well-being look like?

In our last Your Council in September, we reported on how, last year, the Local Service Board became a Public Services Board (PSB) under a new Wales Act called the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

This new law challenges public sector partners to work together to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by thinking more about the long-term and taking a more 'joined-up' approach to getting things done. The national goal is to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

Flintshire's Board concentrates energy, effort and resources on some of the big social issues of today. These have included improving service provision around domestic abuse, keeping young people in work, training or education, and improving health and social care integration to provide better opportunities for independent living.

The Board has four statutory partners:

- Flintshire County Council
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
- Natural Resources Wales
- North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Other partners include, amongst others, North Wales Police, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, Welsh Government and local colleges.

Together these organisations are responsible for developing and overseeing a Well-being Plan for Flintshire.

To inform this plan, the Board is currently producing an Assessment of Wellbeing for the Flintshire area and we'll be seeking your views on this later in February; so look out for how and where to take part on our website.

Changes to Services

Community Transport Pilot Scheme

Flintshire County Council is launching a Community Travel Pilot scheme on 6 February.

The pilot scheme in the Higher Kinnerton area will operate to a fixed route and timetable and will enable residents to access and connect with key services at Broughton.

Further schemes are being developed across Flintshire linking into the core transport network and allowing access to employment, health facilities and other services. These schemes will be rolled out in the coming months.



In addition, a Taxishare service will also operate, providing a demand responsive style service for people who are unable to access or use conventional public transport services in Flintshire.

For more information, visit [our website](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Community-Transport-in-Flintshire.aspx) (<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Streetscene/Community-Transport-in-Flintshire.aspx>).

Register Now

Flintshire County Council and Town and Community Council Elections – Thursday, 4 May 2017

On Thursday, 4 May, elections are being held for the County Council and Town and Community Councils in Flintshire.

If you are not currently registered, or may have recently moved, you will need to register by the deadline of Thursday, 13 April.

Use your vote! Voting gives you the power to decide how your local council is run. Have your say on how the budget is spent. Your vote counts and really can influence local decisions on how the ever decreasing pot of money is spent in your local area - everything from roads and recycling to education and social care.

You can register quickly and easily on line at [Register to Vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) (<http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>).

If you need a paper copy of a registration form please e-mail vote2017@flintshire.gov.uk (<mailto:vote2017@flintshire.gov.uk>) or phone 01352 702412.

You will need your date of birth and national insurance number to complete your registration. If you cannot find your national insurance number you can use the [HMRC enquiry service](https://www.gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number) (<https://www.gov.uk/lost-national-insurance-number>) or ring 0300 200 3502.

If you are already registered to vote, you will receive a voting card at your home address in the usual way.

The deadline for applying for a postal vote is Tuesday, 18 April.

For more information visit the [Elections section](http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Elections-and-Electoral-Registration/Home.aspx) (<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Elections-and-Electoral-Registration/Home.aspx>) of the Flintshire County Council website.

If you are interested in standing for election you can visit the [Electoral Commission website](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/) (<http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/>).

[Taylorfitch](http://www.taylorfitch.com/) (<http://www.taylorfitch.com/>). Bringing Newsletters to life