

Woodlands project to boost local employment and skills

A WOODLANDS project between a Maybole training organisation and a local estate could boost social enterprise in the town.

A partnership with Cassillis Estate and May-Tag Ltd is being proposed to create a woodlands project to increase local employment and training opportunities.

Maybole Community Council's David Kiltie feels the scheme will benefit the town.

He said: "A project which brings new employment and training opportunities to the town and district is to be encouraged and supported."

The Cassillis Estate has a large area of woodland where it is proposed to look at the feasibility of setting up a training and development initiative.

The scheme would look at woodland management and arboricultural skills; this could see benefits in terms of employment, skills development and biodiversity.

Through the project, May-Tag will work with the community and provide training skills in woodland management, conservation, including dry stone dyking, hedge and wildlife conservation, and estate maintenance.

It is also planned that craft skills, such as making walking sticks, willow fencing and products, charcoal production and wood bowl turning will be taught.

May-Tag is also looking at the possibility of stone masonry training and Dry stone dyke skills, in conjunction with Cassillis Estate, Culzean Country Park and the Maybole Castle project.

The proposed partnership is with Cassillis Estate, May-Tag Ltd, Scottish

Woodlands and the Forestry Commission. May-Tag has over 16 years of experience in the management of horticultural training, and community involvement.

The Cassillis estate factor said the trustees were pleased to be working in partnership with the community and May-Tag on these projects.

May-Tag are members of the Community Woodlands Association and the Community Recycling Network Scotland and is currently working with both to gain European and National funding for the Social Enterprise projects. Now, £25,000 has been secured from Communities Scotland toward a dedicated development team to move these innovative projects forward.

A Social Enterprise is a relatively new term for the type of business that May-Tag has been involved in for the last 16 years.

"A Social Enterprise is an organisation that trades in goods or services and links that trade to a social mission," explained Maybole Resource Centre's Peter Walker. "It is a not-for-profit organisation that uses its income and benefits to reinvest and create community and social benefits."

One of the benefits from the woodlands project will be a woodchip and log scheme which would work in conjunction with the Fuel Poverty scheme, the project would also provide logs for local disadvantaged people.

Maybole Castle's heating system is currently an oil fuelled boiler; by changing it to a modern wood fired boiler the woodland project will provide the fuel which brings environmental and economic ben-

efits.

The proposed community-composting scheme is a windrow system, which will compost green waste from

local business and the community.

"All the Social Enterprise projects have the possibility of bringing new employment and training opportunities



CHRIS Savage and Peter Walker plan the new woodland project at Cassillis Estate.

Forum looks to improve health

MAYBOLE Men's Health Forum has been running for over three years now and exists to give all local men the opportunity to improve their health.

Members exercise at their own level, on a regular basis at Carrick Academy from 7.30pm - 8.30pm on Thursday evenings.

Fluid levels are then 'stabilised' by some members locally from 9.00pm until later!

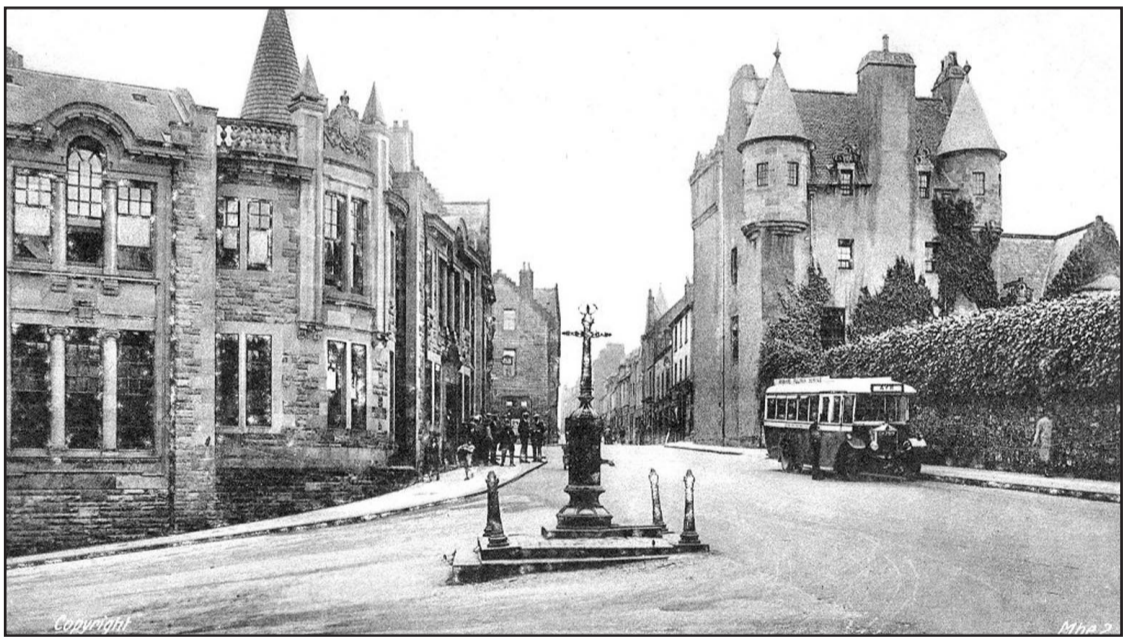
A fully qualified instructor runs the sessions and members range in age from 'fairly young' to 'fairly old'!!

Members get free health checks throughout the year and once a month a guest instructor provides a 'taste' of a different activity. In the past members have had free golf lessons, swimming and aqua aerobics, hill walking and a variety of other activities.

Discount cards issued by South Ayrshire will be distributed for use within the next couple of weeks.

The Men's Health Forum started back on January 12 and, following on the success of last year's 'guest activities', will be trying Tai chi, yoga and pilates as well as the regular Thursday evening circuit and aerobics training. The group had a very successful 'Games Night' in December when members and guests took part in table-tennis, darts, pool and dominoes. The next 'Games Night' will be held on Monday, April 3 at the Carrick Sports Club at 7.30pm.

New members are always welcome so why not come along and join the Maybole Men's Health Forum either at a 'Games Night' or any Thursday at 7.30pm at Carrick Academy gym.



THE Old Pump in Maybole could make a return in the form of a replica as part of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund being planned by the Community Council, Community Association and the Historical Society.

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