

Autumn/Winter 2008 Newsletter

Dear Panel Member

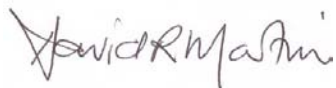
Welcome to the Autumn/Winter issue of the Public Services Panel newsletter. We have recently changed the way we organise the Panel which is why this newsletter has been sent out to you a bit later than usual.

You will notice that this newsletter has not been designed the way you would normally expect to see it. The reason for this is that we want to make sure that our new design will be acceptable to most people. We are trying out a few designs just now and we are going to trial some of these with Panel members to see which one they prefer. The new newsletter design will be ready in time for the spring 2009 panel.

Over the coming months you will notice some exciting changes to the Panel and we are keen to involve you in these changes and help us decide on the way forward. In particular, we want to give people the choice to fill in the questionnaire using the internet. We are also looking at changing how we organise the prize draws for panel members to offer you more choice in prizes.

Congratulations go to Mr Lockhart from Paisley who was selected at random for the prize draw and won £100. If you want to be in with a chance of winning our next prize draw please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire.

We look forward to receiving your completed survey form. Your views and opinions help to improve public services for people in Renfrewshire – thank you.



David Martin
Chief Executive

Anti-litter campaign

What you told us....

54% recognised that the name of this campaign was “Clean Renfrewshire”. 24% thought it was “Keep Renfrewshire Tidy” and 19% did not know what the campaign was called.

Panel members were asked to open a sealed envelope with an example of an anti-litter campaign poster. 64% said they had seen the image before. Most people (70%) had seen the image on council vehicles, followed by council magazines and newsletters (48%) and buses (36%).

What we are doing

- Feedback from Panel members is being used to help plan future anti-litter publicity. The information on the types of advertising that panel members had seen was particularly helpful.
- The second phase of the Clean Renfrewshire campaign started in November and focuses on the enforcement of anti-litter laws. The types of advertising in the first phase will play a key role in this publicity: bus advertising, features in Renfrewshire Magazine and panels on the sides of refuse vehicles.

Revenues and Benefits service

What you told us....

6% of people who returned their questionnaires had made a complaint about housing and council tax benefits, 8% said they had made a complaint about council tax. The main reasons why people had made a complaint were “delay in processing an exemption or discount” (26%), “delay in issuing a council tax notice” (23%), and “unable to award exemption” (11%).

Most people (62%) said that they would like the council to include information on discounts and exemptions with next year’s council tax notice.

What we are doing

- Based on feedback, the council will improve its publicity on council tax discounts and exemptions. In particular, adverts will be taken out in local papers, the Renfrewshire Magazine and more information and application forms will be placed on the community website.
- We are creating a leaflet which will explain how and when you can apply for a discount/exemption from council tax. This will be included with weekly council tax notices.

Arts and Museums service

What you told us....

82% said they had visited the Paisley Museum. Of those, 12% said that they had visited only once. The majority of people (66%) said that they do not visit often.

The most popular subject for additional exhibitions is local heritage and social history (57%). This is followed by popular cultural exhibitions (17%) and paintings (12%).

What we are doing

- Renfrewshire Arts and Museums are using feedback to help with their marketing work. We organise local poster and press campaigns for each exhibition at Paisley Museum.
- We are planning more customer consultation to help us find out what publications we should be targeting to help increase the awareness of the Museum.
- We are planning a number of “local” exhibitions for 2009. These include a history of the Kibble project, an exhibition of the “Paisley Magic Circle” and a look at the Paisley division of the Boys Brigade.

Environmental services

What you told us....

46% said that they knew new menus were recently introduced in primary schools. 53% said that they were aware that the school catering service provides meals for children and young people that have special dietary requirements.

88% said that they knew what days their recycling bins are emptied. 91% said that they knew what materials can and cannot be recycled.

The three environmental services which respondents are most satisfied with are refuse collection service (86%), household waste and recycling centre facilities (70%) and kerbside recycling (68%).

What we are doing

- The school catering service will continue to work with schools to promote the benefits of healthy eating, to improve the dining experience for pupils and to keep pupils and parents informed about the school menu choices available.
- Integrated waste and recycling services have now been introduced to Langbank. The rollout to the remaining areas within Linwood, Erskine, Dykebar and Paisley Town Centre will be implemented over the next few months. This means that all Renfrewshire residents will be able to access convenient recycling services.
- Information on the website is regularly reviewed. Based on panel members' comments, more information on recycling will be put on the Council website.
- The Renfrewshire Wardens service was launched in November 2008 to work with the community as part of the Clean Renfrewshire campaign. The wardens are able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for dog fouling and littering offences to help make Renfrewshire a cleaner and safer place to live, work, play in and visit.

Libraries

What you told us....

58% said that they are a member of a library. 30% said that they used to be a member of a library and 12% have never been a member of a library.

The main things that would encourage people to join or rejoin the library are: libraries being open at weekends and public holidays (38%), access to more consumer services such as coffee and seating areas (31%), and up to date library environment with contemporary seating, decor and lighting (29%).

88% said that they were aware that libraries in Renfrewshire provided free internet access. 42% were aware that libraries could provide access to other council and community services.

What we are doing

- The Libraries Service is piloting the use of coffee machines. A machine has been installed at Johnstone library and there is the possibility of this being extended to other libraries.
- Library refurbishment is high on the agenda and the Libraries Service are continuing to refurbish libraries within available budgets. Currently Central and Erskine libraries are about to have updated junior areas fitted.

Comments

Many of you took the time to add additional comments in the spaces provided in the last questionnaire. We would like to take the opportunity to give some feedback on these and to show how we have used your comments to help improve services.

Your comments....

"Less small print in council tax notice"

"Typeset is rather small and difficult to read"

Our reply

Much of the content of our council tax notices is set by national legislation. We are, though, reviewing our notices to make them more user friendly and we intend to set up a focus group with members of the public to look at the issues raised by members of the Panel.

Your comments....

"You have to advertise any exhibitions that are on so people are aware of the museum and what it has to offer"

"More 'Paisley' based exhibitions – our heritage is extensive and praiseworthy..."

Our reply

All our exhibitions are listed in the Renfrewshire Arts and Museums brochure. This is sent out to over 7000 homes and venues across Renfrewshire. We also distribute promotional items like posters and leaflets to arts and community venues.

An exhibition celebrating 200 years of the Paisley Philosophical Institution has just finished, we currently have an exhibition called "In the Limelight" tracing the history of theatre in Paisley and will be hosting "Landscapes" – an exhibition featuring paintings of the Scottish landscape that are part of Paisley Museum collection.

Your comments....

"The questionnaire was well laid out; not everything applied to me personally but was a good range"

"Questionnaire was interesting it made me think and I might pay a visit to the library, have not been in years..."

Our reply

We try to make the questionnaire relevant to as many people as possible but sometimes the questions will not apply to everyone. Questionnaires are sent out to about 2000 people to help ensure that the information we get back can be used and is as representative as possible to the population of Renfrewshire.

We often get comments from panel members thanking us for making them aware of local services. We hope that you find the questionnaires and newsletters informative and that they show how we are using your important feedback.