

# Five things you need to know today



Eco learning at Holy Rood High School

Willow wins COSLA Gold award

Green Gym at the Calder

Poetry for Maggie's

Cycling event at Ingliston today



Connor Murdoch, chair of the Eco Committee at Holy Rood High School, tells us about an interesting initiative at the school.

“To improve the biodiversity within the school grounds of Holy Rood High School, we decided to install four bird boxes and two bat boxes. Two members of the Eco Group surveyed the school grounds and identified the trees that could be used for the bird and bat boxes.

“By installing these boxes we hope to attract birds such as the Spotted Flycatcher and the Song Thrush and improve the bat population in the local area too. We hope that by involving our pupils in this project it will encourage them to become more ‘nature friendly’ as they will be more aware of how they can support the natural environment around them.”

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Willow – a ground breaking partnership that provides support to women in the criminal justice system – has been awarded the prestigious [COSLA Gold Award](#).

The [Willow Centre](#) is run by the City of Edinburgh Council and NHS Lothian along with third sector partners. It aims to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of women offenders by addressing some of the inequalities they face.

The female prison population in Scotland has doubled in the past decade and national data shows that over half report having suffered domestic violence, with one in three having experienced sexual abuse. Many are frequent re-offenders, with complex needs related to mental ill-health and addiction problems.

Willow works with women who have been marginalised within society to help address these specific issues and provide specialist support services. These services are delivered by criminal justice social workers, support workers, nurses, psychologists and an occupational therapist.

Health and Social Care Convener, Councillor Ricky Henderson, said: "A background of offending can permanently stigmatise people and Willow is doing vital work to challenge this.

"By addressing the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system, we can help reduce reoffending and help them build better futures."

Director of Health and Social Care, Peter Gabbitas, added: "This is a fantastic achievement and I would like to congratulate all of the staff at the Willow Centre."

Some of the services provided at the Centre include:

- mental health support, psychological therapies and trauma interventions
- a physical health programme, including support with substance use
- mentoring support, welfare rights and benefits advice
- sexual health and sex worker support services
- social opportunities, recovery support and links to

community activities

- education, training and employability sessions

The COSLA Excellence Awards honour Scottish councils and their partners for outstanding quality of service to the public. The Willow partnership was awarded Gold in the category of Tackling Inequalities and Improving Health.

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Angus Ogilvy and Andrew Anderson

A new book of poetry by Angus Ogilvy shines a light on his experience of living with cancer. Money raised from sales of the book is to go to Maggie's Edinburgh, the charity which provides free practical, emotional and social support for people with cancer and their family and friends, where Angus is a regular visitor.

Angus Ogilvy was working in Africa when he was diagnosed with cancer in 2008. He returned to Edinburgh and during the year of treatment that followed, while he did not have the energy for sustained reading, he found that he "always managed to enjoy a poem or two!" This prompted him to write his own poetry to record his experiences. Angus shared his poems with staff and visitors at Maggie's, where he had joined the Centre's creative writing group, just one part of the programme of support offered at the Centre.

Angus' first collection of poems, Lights in the Constellation of the Crab, was published in 2012. The book proved immensely popular and helpful not only among people experiencing cancer but also health professionals: the anthology has been used for staff-training purposes and Angus has presented at conferences

as far afield as France and Sweden.

Angus' new collection, *House Clearing by Moonlight*, was launched at Maggie's Edinburgh yesterday (12 March). Most of the poems have been written while living with cancer but Angus is keen to stress that they are accessible to everyone. There is a thread connecting the poems so the anthology can be read as a whole, but it can equally well be enjoyed by dipping in at random.

Angus commented: "In many respects there is something here for almost everyone which, coincidentally, is just like Maggie's! It is a win-win project for me. The poems reach people who benefit from them, and any money raised from the book sales goes to Maggie's to assist in their wonderful and deeply important work."

Andy Anderson Centre Head at Maggie's Edinburgh said: "Angus's poetry doesn't shy away from the difficult aspects of living with cancer, but there is also lightness and humour that his many readers and listeners enjoy. His readings and books are always popular and we are hugely grateful to Angus for the funds he raises and for his contribution to our programme here at Maggie's Edinburgh."

Built in the grounds of Western General Hospital, Maggie's Edinburgh is a warm and welcoming place, with qualified professionals on hand to offer an evidence-based core programme of support that has been shown to improve physical and emotional wellbeing.

Maggie's Edinburgh relies on voluntary donations to support and grow its network of Centres and to develop its unique, high quality programme of support. The charity's aim is to make the biggest difference possible to people living with cancer and their family and friends.

**Copies of *House Clearing by Moonlight* are available for to buy at Maggie's, or by contacting [amy.robertson@maggiescentres.org](mailto:amy.robertson@maggiescentres.org)**

To find out more about Maggie's Edinburgh and to see how the Centre supports people with cancer across the region please visit the Centre at Western General Hospital or get in touch on 0131 537 3131 or at [Edinburgh@maggiescentres.org](mailto:Edinburgh@maggiescentres.org).

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The best young cyclists in Scotland will begin the long pedal for medals today when the 2015 ScottishPower National Youth Racing Series gets underway in Ingliston.

This weekend's ERC season starter at the Royal Highland Showground is the first of 28 events which will run between March and October, showcasing Scottish Cycling's most exciting, emerging talent.

[Read more here](#)

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