

# **Local Dragon's Den with social enterprise to the fore**

## **ENTERPRISING YOUNG PEOPLE PITCH SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS IDEAS TO LOCAL DRAGONS**

The annual Dragon's Den event has taken place at the Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline, welcoming both Primary and Secondary Schools from across the Kingdom, who pitched social enterprise ideas to a panel of local dragons. Participating schools were also required to think about a cause close to their hearts to support, as part of the social enterprise's success.

Taking part this year on the Dragon's panel were Geoffrey Proudlock from Fife College, Claire Fraser from the Social Enterprise Academy, Dot Smith from Fife Council's Economic Development Team, and John Penman from Glenrothes-based Fife Fabrications Ltd.

Dragon's Den is part of The Culture of Enterprise programme, delivered in partnership with Social Enterprise Academy, Fife College, and Developing The Young Workforce (DYW) Fife. It allows pupils to showcase their learning on running a social enterprise and helps build communities of the future. It also aligns with the Scottish Government's ambition for a school-based sustainable social enterprise to be part of every school curriculum.

Carrie Lindsay, Executive Director of Education for Fife Council, was delighted to open the event.

She said: "The Dragons' Den experience for our children and

young people was a great opportunity for them to use real life skills in real life situations. The event built on many weeks of planning and well thought out work that showed the skills and talents of our young people. There is no doubt that this programme encouraging social enterprise work is an asset to any school. Well done to all who took part.”



The Social Enterprise Academy’s social entrepreneurs supported the pupils to design, create and launch their social enterprises. The young entrepreneurs pitched for investment in the Den in front of the Dragons. A comprehensive pitch from the General Manager and Business Secretary of Pop Shop from Balwearie High School impressed the dragons. Pop Shops’ study packs and stationery, with key motivational messages, a business idea already making a profit, impressed the dragons and encouraged them to part with their cash, and invest in the duo from Balwearie High School.

Simone Purves, Business Education teacher from Balwearie High School, said: “Working with Social Enterprise Academy has been extremely beneficial for our young people to understand the impact social enterprises have in our society. The initiative

is so well run and the resources are extremely helpful in getting the young people engaged and using their skills. They loved the initial workshop with Gina Alexander who came into school to introduce social enterprises and got them thinking about issues that impact them. Throughout the year they have worked so hard to set up and run their social enterprise and have produced some amazing products. We look forward to working with Social Enterprise Academy again.”

Leading the way for Fife’s Primary Schools was Torbain Primary School in Kirkcaldy who impressed the judges with their eco-friendly garden idea. Taking a whole school approach to looking after their playground and encouraging biodiversity, they held a gardening sale to earn funds to buy plants, develop eco-habitats, and more.

Tulliallan Primary School’s pitch inspired Glenrothes-based business, Fife Fabrications who supported the school’s business idea by contributing £50 towards a new smoothie machine to help production.

John Penman from Fife Fabrications Ltd said: “The team at Fife Fabrications is hugely supportive of giving back to local people and communities, taking every opportunity to bring in new ideas or take on challenges that generate donations for good causes they believe in.”

“We are delighted to support Tulliallan Primary School’s quest to provide healthy food sources to local families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. We hope our donation will enable them to purchase an additional smoother maker to increase production for this great cause.”

Commenting on the project, Alison Sinclair from Fife Council’s Culture of Enterprise said:

“It was great to be back at the Dragon’s Den this year, bringing together Primary and Secondary pupils to share their innovative ideas and promote a sustainable enterprise with a

clear social and community purpose, fostering a culture of enterprise in Fife's Schools."

"I was impressed with the level of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial skills the young people showed; their confidence level was inspiring. I look forward to seeing the social enterprises flourish over the coming months. Thanks to the Dragons, partners, local businesses, and schools for participating and making the event successful."

All participating schools were awarded £50 seed money as a surprise at the end of the event to encourage them to grow their social enterprises and realise the benefit of doing so.

