

**Press release for
Immediate use**

**East Ayrshire
Coalfield Environment Initiative**

April 8 2005

****Media photo and interview opportunity****

CHILDREN HIT THE BOTTLE TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Village gulps through 3,000 litres of drinks to build special recycled greenhouse

A unique project involving Muirkirk schoolchildren building a greenhouse from over a thousand recycled plastic bottles will be officially opened by Robin Harper, MSP, on Wednesday 13 April.

The "Creative Waste Plastic Bottle Greenhouse" will be opened in a ceremony to take place in the garden to the rear of Garan House, 28 Main Street, Muirkirk at 1.30pm and is a chance for the entire local community to celebrate this innovative recycling project.

Enthusiasm for the project has come from all sections of the local community since it began in November 2004, capturing the hearts of an entire village and involving local people drinking their way through nearly twenty average baths worth of drinks (2800 litres) to provide the 1400 bottles required to build the amazing structure.

Built during the week beginning 14th March 2005, the greenhouse has a wooden frame but instead of glass the walls, roof and door are made out of plastic bottles – with the local community taking just two months to gulp their way to enough bottles to create the perfect place for juicy tomatoes and other greenhouse favourites.

Paul Sutherland from the Coalfield Environment Initiative said:

"It literally took a lot of bottle for the people of Muirkirk to complete this project and the community spirit from all involved including the supporting partners has been incredible, and now those thousands of drinks will be able to provide a great place to grow local produce for everyone to enjoy"

To prepare the eco-friendly building materials, two volunteering evenings were held in the village community hall to cut the bottoms off all of the plastic bottles with volunteers from Muirkirk Enterprise Group and East Ayrshire Council Criminal Justice Community Service Scheme helping to erect the all-important wooden frame.

A day-long community volunteering event was then organised to complete the construction of the greenhouse with 72 Pupils (in 6 groups of 12) from Muirkirk Primary School volunteering their time to stack the bottles and place them within the wooden frame along with Cathy Jamieson, MSP, who was also there to lend a hand in the afternoon.

The greenhouse will now become a community resource and will be used by Muirkirk Primary School Gardening Club to grow vegetables and propagate plants for the Muirkirk Heritage Park.

The project team are grateful for the kind support of Coalfield Environment Initiative, Muirkirk Enterprise Group, Muirkirk Primary School and the East Ayrshire Council Criminal Justice Community Service Scheme; and financial support from the Co-op Community Dividend Scheme, CSV Action Earth and the Cumnock & Doon Valley Minerals Trust.

Ends

For further information about the CEI please contact Paul Sutherland or visit our website – <http://www.ea-cei.org.uk>

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Notes:

Coalfield Environment Initiative

The Coalfield Environment Initiative (CEI) has been formed to enhance, conserve, and promote the environment in East Ayrshire. Our work is driven by a belief that:

- East Ayrshire is a fantastic place for wildlife
- restored open cast coal sites offer great opportunities for creating new wildlife habitats
- community participation in wildlife conservation enhances people's lives
- young people are the decision makers of tomorrow and should be given every opportunity to discover the value of their environment today

The CEI believes that a high quality environment, rich in biodiversity, will make East Ayrshire a valuable and attractive place for people to live, work and play.

The 3 aims of the CEI are :

- *Environment* – to enhance the natural environment and landscape within the CEI project area
- *Understanding* – to increase understanding and appreciation of East Ayrshire’s wildlife and it’s value, providing and developing opportunities for learning about and experiencing wildlife
- *Engagement* – to increase community participation in wildlife conservation, enabling local people to contribute to environmental improvements and develop new skills

The CEI is a partnership supported by:

