

The Micron



The staff newsletter of AJ Engineering and NEWCo

LOCAL SCHOOL SCORES NEW GOALS

Pupils at Applegrove Primary School are now custodians of a new set of goal posts thanks to AJ Engineering and Highland Galvanisers in Elgin.

The goal posts which were installed at the start of the new term in August, are part of a bigger Playground Improvement Project being led by the school and Parent Council in partnership.

Alan James, said: "We are thrilled to be able to donate these goal posts to Applegrove Primary School and that Highland Galvanisers who we regularly work with, also donated their service for free. We are delighted the goals were in place for the start of the new academic year and we hope, with the goal posts in place, that the Applegrove boys and girls get a lot of competitive pleasure out of them."

Arlene Hunter, Depute Head Teacher at the school said: "We were delighted to accept with thanks the kind donation from AJ Engineering and Highland Galvanisers. The pupils are over the moon and it will make a huge difference to them and I'm sure the wider community."

The Parent Council is using a significant proportion of its funds raised over the years towards the project which will cost up to £50K for the first phase. Last year, members of the school's Parent Council, working with pupils, parents and school staff focused on the planning and improvements for the playground.

This year, most of these plans will come to fruition with the goal posts being one of the first pieces of equipment to be installed.

Parent Fiona Hepburn who is leading on the Playground Improvement Project from the Parent Council said: "The project has involved a lot of consultation and planning and it is great to see the plans finally coming together. It was a real boost to get the goal posts in place for the start of the new term.

"This is going to be a big year for changes in the school grounds at Applegrove. Last year, we worked with outdoor learning and play specialists 'Learning Through Landscapes' to consult with parents, school staff and of course the pupils on what it is they would like to see as part of the playground improvements. We then followed this up with weekly playground meetings and each class came up with their own designs which we used to create a master vision for the playground, football goals being a key part of that!

"The support from local businesses has been amazing and still to be installed this term is an outdoor learning gazebo, playground markings, portable football goals and storage, a natural play area including mud kitchen and tyres for climbing. We have also applied for funding to install seating and agility equipment so it's a huge project, but one that will benefit the pupils at the school for years to come and also people in the community."



Alan James, Applegrove depute headteacher Arlene Hunter and Fiona Hepburn of the school parent council with the pupils who are pleased with their new goalposts.



CABINET SEC VISIT FOR WATERFORD

AJE's site at Waterford has been visited by Neil Gray the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Fair Work and Energy.

Mr Gray was hosted at the site by Alan James. The visit had been arranged by Highlands and Islands Enterprise who invested £300,000 in the development.

AJ Engineering bought the site in 2000. Over and above they then they made a £1.7 million investment in refurbishing the site and buildings and then purchased a structural steel Cut and Drill Line with HIE assistance.

The facility which expanded the company's manufacturing sites by 4.7 acres has allowed AJE to more than double its production capabilities and employ more staff. The former sawmill site had previously been owned by Moray Council.

Following his visit, Mr Gray said: "I was delighted to visit AJ Engineering's facility at Waterford and I thank Alan for his hospitality. Getting to experience first-hand the fabrication site was a real pleasure and I was glad to hear about

the vital role that HIE played in the development.

"AJ Engineering typify the strong manufacturing and engineering sector we need to help drive Scotland's economic recovery and future prosperity. Our ambition is for Scotland to become the home of manufacturing and engineering innovation, to be seen as an inventor and producer, not just a consumer of goods - innovative, thriving and international looking, while working towards our target of net zero by 2045. I wish all at AJ Engineering the best with their future expansion plans and look forward to hearing more of their successes in the future."

Alan James said: "It was brilliant to have Mr Gray, here in Forres to see the significant investment we have made with support from Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The whole development to what was unused land and a derelict building has been a huge success and has allowed us to increase our output and employ more people."

David Reid the area manager for Highlands and Islands Enterprise added:



Alan James with Neil Gray

"Over the years AJE has become a local flagship company that has taken a consistent approach to investment, innovation and people. HIE has been able to work with the company on many occasions over the past two decades and are encouraged by the growth and employment created which in turn supports the area's manufacturing sector and increasing contribution towards the green and net zero agenda."

The new facility at Waterford was officially opened in 2021 by The Princess Royal.

Welder forges forward in rugby world cup

A NEWCo fabricator welder has swapped his boilersuit for his rugby kit to take up a front row position representing Scotland in the Amateur Rugby World Cup.

Conor Taylor who plays for Oban Lorne is currently in France for the tournament which brings together 16 amateur clubs from around the world. NEWCo has sponsored Conor for the trip.

Speaking from France, he said: "I've played rugby since I was in primary three. I never thought I'd be part of a World Cup, it's such an experience and a great opportunity."

He added: "I've played in the pool stages which we finished yesterday (Sep 24). We won against Romania and got beaten by Tonga and South Africa. They were all really hard games.

Hopefully as we progress we will get a few more wins."

NEWCo manager Neil Worsdall said: "Conor is one of our longest serving welder/fabricators who specialises in bespoke fabrications. NEWCo were delighted to sponsor Conor. This will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Conor and we hope he enjoys every second of the experience."

Like the professional world cup, clubs play group matches spread over two days. The best two of each group will be able to access the final stages while the unqualified teams will be able to participate in a great new ranking tournament.



Conor is currently in France with his Oban Lorne teammates

Survival training ahead of Antarctica



Steve Huebler doing his survival training

Steel erector and cladder Steve Huebler is the latest AJ Engineering worker to complete his survival training ahead of a trip to Antarctica.

AJ Engineering has been sending teams to the remote Rothera Research Station, where temperatures can plunge as low as -34C, since November 2021.

The company has been working on behalf of client BAM Nuttall who have an ongoing relationship with the British Antarctic Survey and secured a 10-year, £500m contract to upgrade and extend their polar research stations.

The crew leave AJE next month and are expected to return next spring.