

SGN press releases (archive)

January – December 2017

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SGN
Your gas. Our network.

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Top performing apprentices recognised by SGN in annual awards

3 January 2016



Tom (left) and Stuart proudly display their awards



John (left) and Kris, flanked by their managers and mentors, after being presented with their awards by SGN's Director of Corporate Services, Gary Barnes (far right).

SGN has recognised four of its trainee engineers for their outstanding performance in its annual Apprentice of the Year Awards.

John Brady, 24, who works at SGN's Edinburgh depot, fought off competition from almost 130 of his peers to be named as the company's Apprentice of the Year 2016. He also carried off the award for Best Depot Apprentice in Scotland.

Three other trainees were also recognised in the awards: first-year apprentice Stuart Reynolds, 20, carried off the company's award for Best Maintenance Apprentice in SGN's southern region; and final year apprentices

Tom Storey, 26, and Kris Duff, 23, won the awards for Best Depot Apprentice in SGN's southern region; and Best Maintenance Apprentice in Scotland respectively.

John tried his hand at a variety of jobs before deciding he wanted to get a trade that would offer him opportunities for progression. He said: "I'd heard of SGN and knew they had a good reputation. I've loved every minute of my training so far and it's given me really good experience."

His mentor, John Roberts, said he was delighted his efforts had been rewarded: "John is a confident and valuable member of staff, and is happy to help with any task given to him. Earlier this year, he travelled to Germany to help work on SGN's iCore project, which uses new 'keyhole' technology to minimise disruption to road users."

In deciding who should win the four awards on offer, SGN's Training team took into account the views of the apprentices' mentors, their line managers and those who oversee the apprenticeship programme. They were also judged on the progress they had made and the personal skills demonstrated over the past year.

Neil Snell, SGN Head of Training and Development, explained that it wasn't simply about which apprentice performed best academically, it was more of a broad judgement about their attitude, behaviour, performance and how they got on with other people.

He said: "All four of our prize-winning apprentices have been all-round excellent performers, both in their formal training and when they work alongside more experienced colleagues. In the relatively short time they have been with us, they have already made a real and significant contribution to the company and should be very proud of their achievements."

Since launching its apprenticeship programme in 2008, SGN has recruited 90 apprentices for its six depots in Scotland and a further 164 for the South of England. It invests between £90,000 and £140,000 in each apprentice and that investment has been rewarded by the fact that the programme has a 97% retention rate.

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for St Helens Parade, Southsea

9 January 2016

Gas distribution company SGN will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in in Southsea, Portsmouth.

As part of a £116,000 investment to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Portsmouth City Council, our project will start on Monday 9 January and last approximately 13 weeks.

We will have two teams working in Helena Road and St Helens Parade at the same time to finish the project as quickly as possible, with our first team of engineers starting work in Helena Road on Monday 9 January. We'll maintain traffic in both directions along Helena Road during this six-week phase, however, we will need to suspend some parking bays around our work area as we move along the road.

On Monday 16 January, we'll begin our second phase of work in St Helens Parade at its junction with Festing Road. To ensure everyone's safety around our work area, we'll have temporary three-way traffic lights in place at the junction for 12 weeks.

SGN Engineering Manager Karl Durham said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to minimise disruption during our essential project.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed Southsea homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Youngsters encouraged to get creative in promoting carbon monoxide awareness.

11 January 2017

Young potential Picassos and other budding creative types with an eye for safety are being invited to take part in an annual competition warning of the dangers of Carbon Monoxide (CO).

Open to all school children in key stages 1 and 2 (ages 5 to 11) the competition asks pupils to produce an eye-catching poster, cartoon, video, poem or entry in another medium which is both informative and accurate and warns of the dangers of CO poisoning and how to avoid them.

The competition has been officially launched today by the companies which are responsible for running the gas networks across Great Britain, including SGN, National Grid Distribution, Northern Gas Networks, and Wales & West Utilities. SGN manages the network across the south of England and Scotland.

CO, known as the silent killer, is responsible for deaths, illness and hospitalisations each year.

First launched in 2007 the competition was previously run by charity CO-Gas Safety in partnership with the gas distribution network companies but this year the GDNs, including SGN, have taken over the running of the competition.

Entrants stand a chance of winning the following prizes:

- National winner: £300 for themselves and £600 for their school or organisation.*
- Area winner: £150 each and £300 for their school or organisation.

(*National prize will be in addition to the area prize).

SGN Head of Community Pamela Goe said: "Sadly each year lives are lost and many other people have to be admitted to hospital and suffer health problems because of carbon monoxide poisoning.

"However this could be avoided if awareness of the dangers of CO were better known and people took some simple precautions such as getting their gas appliances checked each year by a Gas Safe registered engineer and having a carbon monoxide alarm. SGN and the other gas networks companies are committed to raising awareness of CO and this competition is an important part of our strategy."

She added: "We hope the competition will be an enjoyable way to improve carbon monoxide awareness and I would encourage as many children as possible to enter.

"It's a fantastic opportunity for them to have some fun, exercise their creative talents and have a chance of winning some great prizes while relaying an important safety message."

The competition timetable is as follows:

- Friday 5 May 2017 – closing date for entries
- Weeks commencing Monday 15 May and Monday 22 May 2017 – regional judging in each gas network area
- Weeks commencing Monday 29 May and Monday 5 June 2017 – national judging
- Weeks commencing Monday 19 June and Monday 26 June – prize-giving event at the Palace of Westminster. Winners from each region will be invited to the ceremony, where the national winner will be announced.

Entries should be emailed to COschoolcompetition@energynetworks.org.

For more details on the competition please visit the [ENA website](#).

For more information on carbon monoxide safety, visit our [carbon monoxide page](#).

SGN time capsule to give future Southfields students a glimpse of the past

12 January 2017



Everything you ever needed to know about gas! The team from SGN's London West depot, (L-R) Nikki Bradford, Tony Hollis and Joe Daniels, explain about gas safety.

Employees at gas distribution company SGN's London West depot have helped a Southfields primary school preserve its heritage for future generations by constructing a time capsule and burying it outside the school gates.

Pupils and teachers gathered outside St Michael's Church of England Primary School in Southfields to watch the time capsule, constructed by gas engineers from a 250mm plastic gas pipe, being buried in one of SGN's excavations.

The capsule was filled with keepsakes chosen by the pupils themselves, including family photos with background about their families, national newspapers, pens, pencils and rulers, as well as a DVD and CD about the school.

SGN Engineering Manager, Patrick Hyndman, explained: "Last October, we began a project to replace the existing metal gas main down Granville Road with new plastic pipe to ensure a continued safe and reliable supply to the area. The excavation route ran right past the school gates, so we met with Mrs Grant, the headteacher, to discuss our project before work began.

At the school's request, a team from the depot in South Godstone gave a presentation to the pupils explaining what the project would involve, emphasising the need to be careful around construction sites, and also the importance of gas safety. While they were there, the team were asked for their help in making a time capsule that could be buried in the excavation outside the school gates.

The official ceremony to bury the capsule took place on 21 December. For safety reasons, the capsule was buried by members of the SGN project team. SGN Project Manager Tony Hollis said: "The children all gathered in the playground to watch and it was great to see their excitement as the capsule was lowered into the ground.

"It's fascinating to think that in years to come, it will be opened by future pupils, who will be able to find out more about the children who go to the school today, what school life was like in 2016 and the sort of equipment pupils used."

Mrs Grant, headteacher at St Michael's Primary School, said: "The team from SGN have been so accommodating during the whole gas works process. From coming in to meet me before the process had begun, to helping over 400 children across the road for a theatre trip in Wimbledon.

"They have been professional, kind and in getting to know me so quickly they have put my children before any possible disruptions or difficulties. It has been comforting to know that they see the importance of people's safety and wellbeing."

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Caterham as part of £100,000 project

12 January 2017

Gas distribution company SGN will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in Money Road, Caterham.

As part of a £100,000 investment project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Surrey County Council, our project will start on Monday 16 January 2017 and last approximately 13 weeks

We'll start work in Money Road and to ensure the safety of motorists and our engineers, the road will become one-way southbound during our project. Motorists wishing to travel northbound along Money Road from Westway will be diverted via Livingstone Road and Banstead Road.

Our work will progress along Money Road in 50-metre sections, starting at the Banstead Road junction. We will need to suspend some parking bays around the work area as we move along the road, however we'll make every effort to minimise disruption.

SGN Project Manager Andy Lambert said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, Caterham homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Specific details and a map showing the location of the work can be found on SGN's website.

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for Easthampstead Road area of Wokingham

16 January 2017

Gas distribution company SGN will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in the Easthampstead Road area of Wokingham.

The existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe. The work is one of three upgrade projects we're undertaking in the local area this year with our contractor, GPL, at a cost of approximately £2.2 million.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Wokingham Borough Council, work for this project started before Christmas in Starmead Drive, Duncan Drive and Andrew Close.

We're about to start the next phase of our work. From Monday 23 January, Gipsy Lane will be closed at the junction of Murdoch Road, although access will be maintained from Southlands Road.

Four-way temporary traffic lights will be in place at the junction of Easthampstead Road, Murdoch Road and Pages Croft. This is necessary to allow us to complete the mains replacement and connections required at this junction.

Following the removal of the four-way lights, Easthampstead Road will then be closed between Waterloo Road (south of the junction) and Heathlands Road from Monday 20 February until Sunday 12 March. While the closure of Easthampstead Road is in place, two-way temporary lights south of Murdoch Road to the junction of Waterloo Road will be required. Access to and from Waterloo Road will be maintained. Signed diversions will be in place and our work at this location is due for completion by the end of April this year.

SGN Construction Manager Garry Percival said: "We're aware there is currently a lot of development and highway improvement work in the borough of Wokingham, and that more is scheduled to take place over the coming months. This includes two other essential upgrade projects being undertaken by us. Therefore, we have worked closely with the borough council in an attempt to co-ordinate all works with the minimum of disruption and will continue to do so throughout this project.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, local homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Shore Street area, Gourock

3 February 2017

SGN is investing £245,000 to upgrade its network in Gourock. As part of this project, the first phase of work will start soon in the Shore Street area, including Kempock Place and Bath Street.

This essential work involves replacing old, metal gas mains with new plastic pipe, which has a minimum lifespan of 80 years, to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply for the local area. The work forms part of an ongoing gas mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive.

Following discussions with Inverclyde Council, work will start on Monday 6 February and take approximately six weeks to complete. Our work has been planned to ensure the gas main is replaced before resurfacing work by the local authority takes place, and minimise long term disruption.

We will continue to work with the local authority and community throughout the course of this project.

During our work it will be necessary to put some parking restrictions in place in Kempock Place and Shore Street. There will be marked by no waiting/no loading cones.

While we are working in Shore Street, for everyone's safety, it will be necessary for us to temporarily control the flow of traffic, between 9.30am and 4pm. Temporary traffic lights or stop/go boards will be in place.

Bath Street will be closed between Kempock Place and Adelaide Street from 20 February until 19 March. A diversion will be in place. We will be working in the rest of Bath Street prior to this road closure. Once our work is complete there, the road closure will be put in place. There will be access available to properties in this street during our work.

This first phase of our work will be completed by 19 March. Inverclyde Council will begin resurfacing work immediately after our work has finished.

Our wider project in Gourock will continue in residential streets – Barrhill Road and Albert Street – after this first phase of our work has been completed.

All businesses in the local area will remain open as usual.

We'll be working five days a week, 8am to 4pm, with weekend work as required. Our engineers are mindful of those people who live in the area and will try to minimise noisy activities where possible.

SGN Team Manager Graham Otto said: "We would like to thank road users and the local community for their patience while we complete our essential upgrade work.

"We understand that road works can be frustrating and are sorry for inconvenience caused. I would like to reassure everyone that we will be working hard to complete our work as soon as possible."

Volunteers lend a helping hand to Edinburgh tool library

6 February 2017



The Edinburgh team, (L-R: Gordon McMillan and Nathan McKenzie from SGN, Charlie Traylor, a mentor with Edinburgh Tool Library (ETL)'s Tools for Life programme, Stuart Forrest from SGN, Andrei Yafimchyk from the Baranovichyi Tool Library in Belarus, Cecile Levavasseur and Chris Hellawell from ETL with Danny Johnstone, an ETL Trainee, Natalia Yafimchyk and Aliaksandr Miroshnik from the Baranovichyi Tool Library. Holding the sign: Simon Harkins and VJ Okpara from SGN) 'down tools' for a moment to pose for a photograph.

Almost 30 employees from gas distribution company SGN in Edinburgh have helped the Edinburgh tool library transform a disused building in Leith into new workshops for its members.

The Edinburgh Tool Library is the first of its kind in the UK. Launched in 2015, it gives low income families access to tools they couldn't otherwise afford. It also operates a 'Tools for Life' scheme, pairing unemployed young people with older mentors to help them learn a trade and find work.

Previously operating out of an old police box on Leith Walk, the tool library was recently offered workshop space in a building at the back of Leith's historic Custom House, and relocated to its new premises last October.

Four groups of seven employees from SGN's Edinburgh depot in Newbridge spent a day at the building, helping to restore the tool library's new workshop, as well as parts of the historic building itself.

SGN Design Manager Jonathan Findlay explained how he and his Edinburgh depot colleagues heard that the work was needed: "I play cricket with Chris Hellawell, who started the tool library, so I've followed its progress from day one. When he mentioned there was quite a bit of work needed to get their new premises up to scratch, it sounded like great opportunity to get involved.

"Our company runs a community scheme (CAP) in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to help out in their local community, so I asked around the depot and the response was overwhelming", he added.

Working in their teams, the volunteers clad and decorated the building's fascia, sanded down floors, removed partition walls, installed lights across the courtyard, as well as painted the workshops themselves.

Jonathan said: "It was a fantastic day. There was lots of physical work to do, so it was quite exhausting, but by the end of the four days you could really see a difference, which gave us a tremendous feeling of satisfaction."

Chris Hellowell said: "The SGN volunteers really bought into the ethos of the tool library, and attacked every job we gave them with great gusto. After all four groups had been, you could really see the difference they had made. We're hopeful some of them might even come back and volunteer with us as Tool Librarians!"

SGN encourages charities with innovative ideas to apply to CO fund

9 February 2017

SGN has joined with the other companies responsible for running the UK's gas networks to launch a charitable fund geared towards promoting innovative ways of raising awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

Charities and projects which support CO-related initiatives across SGN's networks in the south of England and Scotland, are invited to apply for funding under the Carbon Monoxide CO Charity Fund.

The four gas distribution networks (GDNs), which include SGN, National Grid Gas Distribution, Northern Gas Networks and Wales & West Utilities, will consider applications on an annual basis and award one-off grants up to the value of £2,000.

Known as the silent killer because it cannot be seen, smelled or tasted, CO is the most common type of accidental poisoning and can lead to breathing, neuropsychological and cardiovascular problems, and potentially death.

Robbie Stevenson, SGN's Social Strategy Manager, said: "We hope that in setting up the fund we will encourage new, more creative ideas for raising awareness of the dangers and symptoms of CO and, in doing so, prevent further CO poisoning cases in the UK.

"The Department of Health estimates around 4,000 people attending Accident and Emergency departments in the UK every year are diagnosed with CO poisoning, although it is hard to determine the accuracy of these numbers as the symptoms are very similar to other common illnesses and so can often be misdiagnosed."

Phil Burrows, Chair of the GDN CO Best Practice Group, said: "We are pleased that GDNs across the UK have collaborated to set up this important fund, providing support to charities who already work on CO related initiatives and engaging new charities with fresh ideas to get involved. We look forward to receiving and considering all applications over the next few months."

The deadline for applications to the fund is 5pm on Wednesday 8 March, 2017. The GDNs will meet to consider all the applications in April, after which they will inform applicants by post whether they have been successful. The application form plus terms and conditions are available [here](#).

Anyone who smells gas or suspects carbon monoxide should call the National Gas Emergency helpline on 0800 111 999. This line is in operation 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

SGN volunteers clear the way for primary school's furry friends

13 February 2017



The SGN team taking a break from their work at St Stephen's.

Pupils at a Surrey primary school are eagerly anticipating the arrival of some furry (and feathered) friends this term, after employees from gas distribution company SGN cleared part of the school's grounds to make way for their new homes.

St Stephen's is a small Church of England primary school in South Godstone that also includes a specially-resourced centre catering for visually-impaired pupils. Later this term it will become home to some baby chicks and rabbits that, with the help of teaching staff, will be looked after by the pupils.

In preparation for the animals' arrival, a team of nine volunteers, all from SGN's Surrey Maintenance team, spent the day clearing dead trees, brambles and wild rose bushes from a courtyard in the centre of the school, making the area safe for the children and making room for new hutches and a chicken coop.

The work was arranged by Maintenance Team Manager Steve Cole from SGN's Surrey depot in Epsom, whose daughter Sarah works at the school as a teaching assistant. He said: "She told me about their plans to bring the animals in, but said the area they had set aside for them was very overgrown and needed quite a bit of work to get it ready.

"SGN runs a scheme in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to help out in their local community. Helping clear the area ready for the animals seemed like an ideal use of our time.

"We had a great day," added Steve. "All the lads really got something out of it and the children and teachers were over the moon with what we'd done."

Amanda Blackburn, Headteacher of St Stephen's, said: "Caring for animals is a great way to introduce children to the idea of taking responsibility, and research has shown that it has calming effects on children with behavioural or emotional vulnerabilities.

"Our Reception class will take delivery of an incubator full of chickens' eggs next month, and the children will be able to watch them hatch and grow into baby chicks. Once old enough they will be transferred to the outdoor area, to be joined later in the term by two rabbits.

“We were extremely grateful to Steve and his colleagues, who braved freezing temperatures to tackle our outdoor space and get it ready for the chickens and rabbits when they join us later this term.”

Winchester residents get free energy advice at community event

15 February 2017

Residents in and around Winchester were able to get free energy advice from gas distribution company SGN at a community energy café held in the city today.

Representatives from SGN joined colleagues from Scottish and Southern Energy Networks for the collaborative event at Kings Worthy Primary School. It was held as part of the Ofgem-supported Solent Achieving Valve from Efficiency (SAVE) project, which is trialling different initiatives to understand how, through community engagement, energy is consumed and can be used more efficiently.

In addition to advising residents about their energy usage, representatives from SGN were also on hand to raise awareness about the company's initiatives for vulnerable customers. These include the company's Help to Heat scheme, which offers free or discounted gas connections to low-income households, as well as its free locking cooker valve initiative, which helps vulnerable people, such as those with Alzheimer's or autism, retain their independence and stay gas safe in their own homes.

SGN Stakeholder Engagement Manager Susan Day said: "Today's energy café provided a great opportunity for us to talk directly to local residents, school governors and council officials about how we support local communities, particularly our most vulnerable customers."

Visit our [vulnerable customer page](#) for more information about our Help to Heat scheme and locking cooker valve initiative.

SGN employees test their fuel poverty knowledge in charity quiz

17 February 2017

Gas distribution company SGN is supporting National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day today [17 February] by challenging its employees' knowledge of fuel poverty issues while raising money for charity.

We have published a quiz about our own fuel poverty programme, Help to Heat, on our in-house smartphone app and company intranet. We will donate five pounds to National Energy Action (NEA), the national charity seeking to end fuel poverty, for every employee who takes part in the quiz.

We're committed to helping make homes warmer by improving the energy affordability of thousands of homes every year. Our Help to Heat scheme is helping to lift over 27,000 homes out of fuel poverty before 2021. Through the scheme, thousands of low-income and vulnerable households across Scotland and southern England can qualify for free or discounted gas connections. More details, including the scheme criteria, can be found on our [Help to Heat](#) page.

SGN Social Strategy Manager Robbie Stevenson said the company was delighted to once again be supporting NEA by taking part in National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day. "With fuel poverty levels across England still at over 14% – and even higher in major cities – the question of heating or eating is still very much an issue for many households. By taking part in National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, we hope to raise awareness of this, not just among our own employees, but also in the wider community."

To further demonstrate our commitment to reducing fuel poverty, we've hosted two community events this week. We attended a community energy café near Winchester on Wednesday, along with industry partner Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks, where we answered questions from residents about their energy issues. On the same day in Scotland, colleagues attended a Royal Voluntary Service event in Peebles to promote awareness of fuel poverty and explaining how SGN is supporting vulnerable communities.

SGN highlights its help for vulnerable customers at Scottish Parliament reception

23 February 2017

A team from gas distribution network company SGN has staged a reception at the Scottish Parliament to explain more about their ongoing work to help vulnerable customers with future energy solutions.

The 'Keeping Scotland's local communities safe and warm' event, on Wednesday night, provided a golden opportunity for senior managers to meet with MSPs and other key stakeholders to discuss topics such as tackling fuel poverty, and how extra services can help vulnerable customers. These include dementia awareness training for staff, explaining more about the risks from carbon monoxide and promoting the company's pioneering locking cooker valve initiative.

SGN distributes natural and green gas to nearly two million homes and businesses across Scotland. In his introductory speech, Managing Director for Scotland and Northern Ireland, John Lobban, explained that SGN has a big role to play in supporting a future lower carbon Scottish economy. He said: "It is fantastic to be able to engage with so many MSPs and key stakeholders. We're passionate about SGN's role for future energy solutions, and exploring how we can continue to keep our customers safe and warm through innovation and new initiatives."

SGN Social Strategy Manager Robbie Stevenson shared details of the 'Help to Heat' strategy, which supports low-income and vulnerable people by offering free or discounted connections to the gas network. Head of Stakeholder Engagement Margaret Hunter went on to highlight the role of SGN in supporting local communities and vulnerable people. Focusing on to the extra services the gas network company provides for vulnerable customers, the newly launched locking cooker valve initiative was hailed particularly cutting edge as it helps those in need retain their independence at home, providing reassurance to family, friends and carers.

The simple safety device is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on, and gives peace of mind to the carer or relative that the cooker can't be used when they leave the house or the room. The carer or relative can easily turn the valve on using the key when the cooker is required, enabling the vulnerable person to continue to use their gas cooker safely.

Clare Adamson MSP, who hosted the event for SGN, said: "It was a pleasure to host SGN at the Scottish Parliament and hear about the work they're doing in tackling fuel poverty and making homes safer for vulnerable households. I look forward to working further with them in promoting safety, particularly in carbon monoxide poisoning awareness."

MSP hears about SGN's plans for tackling fuel poverty on Paisley depot visit

24 February 2017



SGN Repair Team Leader Derek Winton (far right) demonstrates how to inspect the condition of the inside of a gas main using a tiny camera, watched by (L-R): Stephen Campbell, Maurice Golden MSP, Stakeholder Strategy Manager Caroline Lawrie, Researcher Paul Smith, Innovation Project Manager Jamie McCainsh and Business Performance Manager Scot Dougall.



Maurice Golden MSP visits SGN's Paisley depot. L-R: SGN Apprentice Craig McInnes, General Manager Stephen Campbell, Maurice Golden MSP and apprentice Max Robinson.

SGN welcomed Maurice Golden MSP to its Paisley depot recently, where he met with some of the company's employees to find out more about its plans to future-proof its network, and how it is tackling fuel poverty.

SGN's Paisley depot manages the network that delivers gas to 260,000 customers across an area stretching from Paisley and Girvan in the south, to Garelochhead in the north, as well as the Cowal Peninsula and the Isle of Bute. The depot has almost 200 employees who provide emergency, maintenance and gas repair services, as well as new gas connections.

During his visit, Mr Golden, who is MSP for West Scotland, met with Stephen Campbell, General Manager of SGN's Paisley depot, as well as Business Performance Manager Scot Dougall. He also met the company's Innovation team to find out about its investment in 'green' gas.

While there, Repair Team Leader Derek Winton gave Mr Golden a demonstration of live main insertion, a technique in which a new pipe is inserted inside an existing main without the need to turn off the gas supply. Apprentices Craig McInnes and Max Robinson then showed him how to inspect the condition of a gas main remotely using a tiny camera to look inside the pipe.

Speaking after his visit, Mr Golden said: "With almost 200 jobs located in their Paisley depot, not to mention an apprenticeship scheme to be proud of, the contribution SGN makes to the local economy cannot be underestimated.

"It was great to see how the company is helping to tackle fuel poverty in the West of Scotland with its Help to Heat scheme, as well as finding out more about valuable vulnerable customer initiatives such as its free locking cooker valve installation service and training its customer-facing teams to recognise the symptoms of dementia.

"Going forward, new advancements in technology that SGN is developing, such as biomethane and hydrogen, have the potential to offer a cheap, low-carbon way of heating our homes. This will tackle fuel poverty as well as helping to meet our climate change targets."

SGN's General Manager Stephen Campbell said: "We were delighted to show Mr Golden around our Paisley depot. He told us he'd found his visit very informative and that it gave him a much clearer picture of SGN's role in the gas industry, so from our perspective it was very worthwhile."

SGN employees test their fuel poverty knowledge to raise funds for charity

27 February 2017

Employees of gas distribution company SGN have raised £1,000 for the charity National Energy Action (NEA) – and demonstrated their commitment to ending fuel poverty – by entering a quiz run by the company on National Fuel Poverty Awareness Day.

The annual initiative started by NEA, the charity seeking to end fuel poverty, is designed to highlight the problems faced by those struggling to keep warm in their homes, as well as the excellent work being undertaken to tackle the issue.

Two hundred SGN employees entered the quiz, which tested their knowledge about the company's own fuel poverty scheme, called Help to Heat, when it was published on its in-house smartphone app and company intranet. As a result, SGN donated £5 for every entry received to the charity.

SGN Social Strategy Manager Robbie Stevenson said: "We are delighted to be able to make this donation to NEA on behalf of our employees. Whether to heat or eat is still a major issue for too many households, so it's vital our employees are aware of exactly how we, as a company, can help.

"Our Help to Heat scheme is aiming to lift more than 27,000 homes out of fuel poverty before 2021. Through the scheme, thousands of low-income and vulnerable households across Scotland and southern England can qualify for free or discounted gas connections."

Residents thank gas team for going the extra mile

28 February 2017

Residents at a Gravesend retirement development have thanked SGN and its contractor JDT for going out of their way to make sure they didn't go without heating during a recent mains replacement project.

While in the planning stages of an essential project to replace the cast iron gas main in Northfleet with modern plastic pipeline, SGN's London East Replacement project team found that the residents of Huggens College, most of whom are elderly and potentially vulnerable, would be affected by the work.

Replacing the existing gas main supplying the retirement development would have involved turning off the gas supply to all 32 properties, meaning that residents would be without heating and cooking facilities for the whole day at one of the coldest times of the year.

To minimise the impact to all those involved, SGN arranged to do the work in two phases; first replacing 120m of gas main supplying six properties and the college's community centre, and then moving on to the main supplying the remaining 26 bungalows. This meant that the majority of the residents could be relocated to the warmth of the retirement development's community centre while their gas supply was turned off.

Helped by JDT customer liaison officers, Huggens College staff made sure that drinks and activities were laid on throughout the day and the contractor also provided a fish and chip lunch for the residents.

By mid-afternoon all the remaining pipes had been replaced and gas supplies tested and restored to individual properties so that residents were free to return to their homes.

In an email to the project team, one of the residents, David Ward, thanked SGN and JDT for the efficient and courteous way they had carried out the mains replacement, adding that residents were also grateful for the fish and chips, which were 'thoroughly enjoyed by all of us'.

Chris Hamper, Resident Lodge Keeper at the college, said: "The team were absolutely brilliant. They were cheerful, polite and courteous and knew exactly what they were doing. They bent over backwards to accommodate the needs of the residents. I really couldn't fault them."

SGN warns locals about con men operating in Dartford

28 February 2017

SGN is warning Dartford residents of unscrupulous individuals preying on elderly or vulnerable people in the local area.

In one case this weekend a resident handed over hundreds of pounds in cash to a man saying he was part of the gas mains replacement work going-on in the area. The resident was told he had to pay for work on his garden wall and other excavation work, to allow the gas mains to be replaced. This is now being investigated by the Police.

SGN's Head of Replacement Tracey McIntyre commented: "This is an appalling thing to happen to someone and it's important the local community is made aware of what this despicable person or persons have done before it happens to others. Please be aware our own people and our contractors working on the gas mains on our behalf, would never ask anyone to hand over cash in this way. This is a horrible scam by an unscrupulous person preying on the local community."

Mrs McIntyre added: "I'd ask everyone to be extra vigilant while the Police carry out their investigations. Please also consider warning any elderly or vulnerable neighbours just to ensure they're aware of what's happened. If anyone does approach you asking for money for anything to do with our works, or for any other reason, then please do report it immediately to the Police."

All genuine SGN operatives and contractors working on the company's behalf wear a visible picture ID badge. On that there's a freephone number to call 24/7 to check they're genuine. If you have any concerns or have already been approached by someone please do report it to the Police.

Visit our [safety page](#) for info on combatting a bogus caller.

Finally please remember, if in doubt, keep them out!

Being bold is celebrated as SGN pledges its support for International Women's Day

8 March 2017

SGN is celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) today by taking time to share some of the bold steps its own inspirational female employees have made to help them progress in their careers.

IWD is an event held annually on 8 March to inspire women across the world and celebrate their social, economic, cultural and political achievements throughout history and today. This year's theme, #BeBoldForChange, is about declaring the bold actions individuals will take to help progress the gender agenda and accelerate gender parity.

In recent years SGN has taken its own steps to close the gender gap and promote engineering careers to young girls and women by working in partnership with Girlguiding and award-winning STEM and sustainability programme Solutions for the Planet. The company has also recently reviewed its recruitment practices and diversity data to ensure they continue to be inclusive.

Kirsty Richardson, SGN's Head of Employee Engagement and Change, said: "Events such as International Women's Day are vital to focus people's attention on the importance of gender equality. It also gives us, as a company, the opportunity to reflect on what else we can do to develop an inclusive and flexible culture and challenge workplace bias.

"Women have so much to offer in the workplace, but often get overlooked because they are, by nature, reluctant to push themselves forward. As women, we need to make sure we're not the ones holding ourselves back. We make up 50% of the population after all, so why are we lagging so far behind?

"My advice would be to think about what the next step in your career might be and to consider who could help you achieve that, whether it is your manager or another colleague. Most importantly, don't be ignored. Change starts with all of us, so make sure you are the catalyst for change."

In celebration of IWD, SGN is sharing the views and comments of just a few of its own inspirational women, talking about the lengths to which they have gone to succeed in what is, undeniably, a male-dominated industry:

Beverley, Gas Engineer

Beverley joined SGN in 2006 as an Operations Controller, but over time realised she wanted to become an engineer. As she not only wanted to move into an operational role from an office-based position, but also into a male-dominated environment, she knew a bold statement would be needed to prove how serious she was. She took the brave step of booking a month's annual leave and spent this time shadowing operational staff working at different SGN depots, as well as talking to engineers to gain more knowledge about the role.



It was a move that clearly paid off, as Beverley explains: "The 'magic' call came in 2016 when our Oxford operations manager offered me a post as a trainee engineer. I relocated to Buckingham and have since qualified. I've still got a lot to learn, but I love what I'm doing and I'm so grateful to my colleagues and managers who believed in me."

Helen, Director of Stakeholder Relations

"Early in my career I was given the opportunity to manage one of my company's overseas sites for two months while the existing manager was on leave.

"I was in at the deep end - the base was in West Africa and I was responsible for eight offshore oil supply vessels and the company's contractors on an oil rig. It was a pretty daunting prospect for a 24-year-old, but also an incredible opportunity. I learned a lot, made a few mistakes along the way, but also managed to find some new commercial opportunities for the business."

**Apple, Business Intelligence Analyst**

"In 2016 I was asked by SGN to take part in a STEM programme with Solutions for the Planet, which would involve working closely with local school children to find solutions to key environmental, social and economic challenges.

"I believe strongly that every child should be given equal opportunities to learn and study and that with knowledge and confidence they can make a difference in society, so I jumped at the chance to take part. I found it incredibly rewarding, so when I was invited to join a new SGN community programme this year aimed at raising awareness among school children about the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning, I didn't hesitate.

"I'm very grateful to SGN for giving me the opportunity to get involved in these educational programmes and give something back to the community at the same time. Although it's been challenging at times to achieve the right work-life balance, I hope I have 'done my bit' to inspire the younger generation."

**Faye, Environment Manager**

Faye joined SGN as a Facilities Assistant in 2009, and from day one was determined to stretch herself and get on in her career. Alongside her day-to-day work as an Environment Manager, she embarked on an Open University degree and is now just months away from finishing a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Management.

Faye said: "Studying towards a degree in my spare time has been tough, but I felt it was important to further my knowledge and to be able to challenge and work alongside my colleagues in the industry."



Susie, Administration Team Supervisor

"I was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 33 and had a mastectomy in 2014. It made a huge difference to how I felt as a woman. In 2016 I decided to sign up for a charity boxing event to raise awareness and funds for Cancer Research UK.

"I'd never boxed in my life before, so I was completely out of my comfort zone. "Completing the fight was such a massive achievement. I felt my male colleagues viewed me differently and with new respect. It's helped me feel better about myself and accept the way I look. I know now that I am no less a woman just because of my surgery."

**Margaret, Stakeholder Engagement Support Manager**

"I'd been working in a small to medium-sized company in the communications industry for 25 years when I decided I wanted a complete change.

"I was bold enough to look for a new career that would use the skills I had gained through experience, rather than through education and applying to a large company, with the benefits that offers, helped me improve my family's personal circumstances."

**Eileen, Safety, Health and Environment Support Assistant**

"I am determined to be a good role model for my eight-year-old daughter and to make sure her aspirations are not limited by any kind of gender bias.

"Her toys and activities are all based around the acronym 'STEAM', as I think the 'A' for Art and Creativity is equally important as Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. As well as having lots of fun together I've learned to be aware that, where children are concerned, the words you use, and the actions you take every day make a difference."

**Kirsty, Head of Employee Engagement and Change**

"Early on in my career, in offering me a promotion, my manager posed a dilemma; did I want to be an assistant accountant for a large division or a Finance Manager for a smaller division. Even though I was relatively inexperienced, something told me to take the challenge.

"I spent the next three years as Finance Manager, travelling the world, challenging myself and generally feeling out of my comfort zone, but it taught me an important lesson: to always push myself and look for new opportunities."



Kate, HR and Services Director

"After taking voluntary redundancy from British Gas, I decided to set up my own training business. Shortly afterwards I was offered a position as Head of Training and Development in a local company. It was a role I was keen to take on, but only on a part-time basis so I could continue to run my business. The personnel director would not agree to this, but I managed to persuade the company's CEO that it could work.



"I continued successfully running the two roles simultaneously for two years. It also gave me the flexibility to spend school holidays with my children when they were small. In time I was offered the HR Director's role, which I continued to do on a part-time basis until I wound up my company. The flexibility the CEO gave me was very unusual 20+ years ago, and I am still grateful to him for his forward thinking pragmatism. Anyone (female or male) interested in pursuing a career with SGN can visit the '[Working for Us](#)' section of our website."

Tara, Safety Ambassador

"I have a passion for people and making a positive influence in their lives. I shall take this attitude into my new role as Safety Ambassador, I feel so lucky to be able to support and influence all different areas of the business in the name of safety.



"I will continue to help and inspire others whenever and however I can."

Kirsty, Network Support Officer

"I champion diversity, diversity is our strength, and in diversity there is knowledge.

"I challenge the norm, and champion the view of women in the workplace."

**Stephanie, Resource Manager**

"Starting off as a temporary worker aged 17, the thought of securing a permanent role for myself in the team seemed like a challenge, but after a lot of hard work and commitment I got a permanent job in admin in Hillington. "With an ambitious and positive approach to work I was promoted to Team Supervisor then shortly after that promoted to the Admin Team Manager. At this point I went on maternity leave for six months to have my son – my job was kept open even though I was on secondment – which I was very grateful for.



"I thought I had completed my goals, but I soon realised I wanted to go even further in the company and after going on a lot of management courses, training and a lot of preparation I applied for the Resource Manager's job at our Glasgow

depot. After a successful interview I now find myself working as a Team Manager aged 27.”

MSPs learn how SGN is helping their vulnerable customers in Dundee

14 March 2017



Ms Robison and Mr FitzPatrick meeting at SGN's Dundee depot with General Manager Alan Farquhar (2nd from right) and SGN's Head of Stakeholder Engagement Margaret Hunter (far left).

Employees of SGN welcomed MSPs Joe FitzPatrick and Shona Robison to their Dundee depot recently to tell them more about the steps the company is taking to help vulnerable customers in the region.

During their visit, Mr FitzPatrick, who is MSP for Dundee City West, and Ms Robison, who is Cabinet Secretary for Health, Wellbeing and Sport and member for Dundee City East, met with the depot's senior management team to discuss SGN's work in the region and, in particular, how it engages with the local community.

They also met with Margaret Hunter, SGN's Head of Stakeholder Engagement, to talk about the company's initiatives to help vulnerable customers, such as its Help to Heat scheme, which is helping to lift thousands of low-income and vulnerable households across Scotland out of fuel poverty. They are training their customer-facing teams to help them recognise the symptoms of dementia; plus provide its free locking cooker valve installation service to safeguard against gas leaks and fires.

SGN's Dundee depot, based on the Dryburgh Industrial Estate, is responsible for transporting gas to over 325,000 customers across an area stretching from Inverness, through Elgin to Fraserburgh, down the east coast through Aberdeen to Dundee, west to Perth and north up to Pitlochry.

The depot supports almost 150 employees across the area, and provides gas emergency, mains and service repairs operations, as well as new gas connections, alterations and diversions. It is responsible for almost 5,000 kilometres of gas main, of which 71% is now new plastic pipe, which has a lifespan of at least 80 years.

After her visit, Ms Robison commented: "I was delighted to visit SGN's depot today with Joe, where we learned of the fantastic work they do in Dundee as well as across the whole of Scotland.

“I was particularly interested in the locking cooking valves they trialled in Dundee, which are now being used throughout Scotland. These valves help customers who need extra safeguarding, such as people with Alzheimer’s or autism, to retain their independence at home for longer.”

Alan Farquhar, General Manager of SGN’s Dundee depot said: “It was a pleasure to show Mr FitzPatrick and Ms Robison around the depot and to give them a flavour of our work here. They were both particularly interested to hear about the steps we are taking to protect elderly and vulnerable groups in the region.”

Sweet treats help SGN employees fund guide dog puppy's training

14 March 2017



Irvine's fellow trainee guide dog Clodagh with SGN's Heather Blackburn



Clodagh captivates employees at SGN's Kent depot (pictured L-R are: Emily Hearne, Heather Blackburn, Denise Grant and Kate Atherall)

Employees at SGN's depot in Ashford, Kent, now have the perfect excuse for indulging their sweet tooth, after sales of sweets and drinks in reception raised enough money to help sponsor a guide dog puppy through his training.

Administrator Heather Blackburn and her team began buying sweets, snacks and drinks to sell at reception, so they could donate any profits from their sales to charity.

Heather explained: "We initially started buying snacks to provide a service to staff, but then realised that it was also an effective way of giving to charity. Over the years we've given the proceeds to several local hospices and last year we did a food collection for the Salvation Army.

"I came up with the idea of sponsoring a guide dog puppy because of my late father. He went blind at quite an early age and was always hopeful of having a guide dog, but unfortunately it was not possible. Another person in the UK goes blind every hour, so more guide dogs are urgently needed and it's very rewarding to be able to do our bit, however small.

"Our puppy is called Irvine. He is only a matter of weeks old and is described by the charity as a 'confident and adventurous pup' who likes nothing more than playing in the garden with his sister Immie. Our donation will help to sponsor him through his first two years of training and during this time, the charity will send us regular 'Pupdates' about his progress on his journey to become a fully-fledged guide dog."

Speaking on his visit to SGN's Kent depot, Stephen Fryer, Branch Organiser for Guide Dogs for the Blind in Ashford said: 'When someone loses their sight, Guide Dogs is on hand to make sure they don't lose their freedom as well. By sponsoring Irvine, SGN are helping to train life-changing guide dogs and provide independence. Irvine will go on to do some amazing things.'

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Edinburgh's Old Town

14 March 2017

SGN will soon start work in Edinburgh's Old Town to upgrade the local gas network in the High Street, Blackfriars Street, Cowgate, Holyrood Road and St John Street.

Following consultation with the local authority, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and local bus companies, our work will start on Monday 20 March and take approximately 28 weeks.

This essential project involves replacing old metal pipework with modern plastic pipe. This will ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply for the local community for many years to come. The modern plastic pipe has a lifespan of around 80 years.

Our work will be carried out in phases to minimise inconvenience and keep traffic flowing. It has also been planned to ensure high profile events taking place in the area events will be unaffected by our work.

At times during the project there will be some diversions and road closures. Advance notice signage will be put in place.

Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times, while all businesses in the local area will remain open as usual.

We will be working 7am -7pm, six days a week with Sunday working as and when required. We will be mindful of those people who live in the area, and will aim to keep noise to a minimum.

Our work will continue during Edinburgh Festival and Fringe, however, we will be working away from the main festival area during this time. All being well, our work should be completed in October 2017.

To explain more about our work we are holding a drop-in session at the Radisson Blu Hotel, 80 High Street, The Royal Mile, Edinburgh, EH1 1TH, on Wednesday 15 March between 4pm and 7.30pm. All local residents and businesses are welcome to drop in to speak to us if they have any questions about the project.

SGN Team Manager Matt Ferguson said: "We're sorry about any inconvenience our work causes. This is a complex engineering project, however we'll do everything we can to minimise disruption.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating and would like to thank road users, local businesses and residents for their patience while we carry out our essential work."

SGN volunteers riding high after successful community day

20 March 2017



The SGN team 'road test' the new pathways.



A tree-mendous effort – SGN's Stuart Cotton, Andy Swaffer, Phil Cates, Luke Church and Charlie Cotton clear debris from one of the existing pathways.

A team of employees from SGN have done their bit to make getting out in the countryside safer for disabled riders at a Kent therapeutic riding centre, after helping to extend the centre's woodland walk.

The [Alkham Valley Community Project](#) (AVCP) is an inclusive riding school which provides therapeutic activities such as horse riding, carriage driving and horticulture for disabled and disadvantaged adults and children to promote their health and wellbeing.

The project runs regular activity sessions from its 40-acre riding centre in the Alkham Valley between Folkestone and Dover in Kent, which benefit participants with conditions such as autism, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities, acquired brain injury and Down's syndrome.

With help from landscape partnership scheme Up on the Downs, the riding school had already begun creating a woodland walk around the centre to give riders and carriage drivers a safe route away from traffic, but their goal was to extend the walk further and create new pathways through the woodland.

Thirteen employees from SGN's East Kent Network Maintenance team spent the day at the riding centre recently, helping to create the new pathway and also clear debris, brambles and small trees from the existing route.

The group offered their support as part of SGN's Community Action Programme (CAP), in which every employee is given one day each year on company time to help out in their local community.

The idea of helping out at the riding centre came from Governor Craftsman Richard Crutchfield, whose son Ryan benefits from its facilities. He said: "Ryan has autism and severe learning disability. He attends the centre twice a week and it's no exaggeration to say that when he rides he just comes alive.

"My wife and I have witnessed at first hand the fantastic work done at Alkham Valley. The benefits for disabled people of being able to get out in the countryside and experience nature are tremendous and we were keen to do anything we could to make this easier for them.

"We had a fantastic day. Everyone came along – managers, skilled workers and apprentices alike – and we all mucked in together to get the job done. It was especially rewarding to see the smiles on the faces of the children when they were able to ride along the path unhindered by brambles and other debris."

Apprentices demonstrate innovative technology on MSP depot visit

21 March 2017



Final-year SGN apprentices Max Robinson, Craig Mcinnes and Thomas Allan demonstrate how to stop the flow of gas in a pipeline, on a visit to the company's Paisley depot by Ken Macintosh MSP.

A demonstration of an operation to stop gas flow in a pipeline, given by three SGN apprentices, was one of the highlights of a visit by Ken Macintosh MSP to the Paisley depot of SGN on Friday 10 March.

Mr Macintosh, the Scottish Parliament's Presiding Officer, was at the depot to find out more about how SGN serves the local area, as well as to discuss the steps the company is taking to help vulnerable customers in and around Paisley.

While he was there, three final-year apprentices, Max Robinson, 20, from Paisley, Craig Mcinnes, 25, from Erskine, and 20-year-old Thomas Allan from Dumbarton, showed Mr Macintosh how they are able to stop the flow of gas within a main that is to be abandoned, by inserting and inflating a bag inside the main.

During his visit Mr Macintosh also took the opportunity to meet with Stephen Campbell, General Manager of SGN's Paisley depot, as well as Business Performance Manager Scot Dougall to hear more about the Paisley depot's business and how it engages with the local community.

Caroline Lawrie and Margaret Hamilton, from SGN's Stakeholder Engagement team, discussed with Mr Macintosh the company's initiatives to help vulnerable customers, such as its Help to Heat scheme and its free locking cooker valve installation service to safeguard against gas leaks and fires.

Speaking after his visit, Mr Macintosh said: "As one of the millions of people in Scotland relying on gas for heating and cooking, I was very pleased to hear directly from SGN about the work they do to keep our gas network safe, secure and reliable. As well as connecting thousands of new customers every year and responding to every emergency call, the company is engaged in the major task of replacing miles of old cast iron pipework running beneath our streets and pavements.

"It was particularly reassuring to meet Stephen and his team covering the West of Scotland. From the senior management to the newest apprentices, I could see for myself the pride they took in their work, the attention they paid to safety and the importance they attached to serving the public. I would like to thank everyone at the depot for their commitment and time."

Residents' help needed with pioneering project aiming to make gas more secure and affordable

21 March 2017



SGN is asking residents across the south east of England to support a pioneering project which is aiming to make gas more secure and affordable.

SGN manages the network that distributes natural and green gas to 5.9 million homes and businesses across the south of England and Scotland. We're carrying out vital research which will enable the Great Britain (GB) gas network to meet future energy needs. To do this, we need the help of 1,200 customers who are eligible to have a small logger attached to their meter. Selected participants will receive a £40 shopping voucher and free carbon monoxide alarm as thanks for taking part.

SGN Innovation Manager Alex Webb explained: "Our Real-Time Networks (RTN) project aims to demonstrate a gas network that will meet the needs of our rapidly changing gas industry in Great Britain. This would allow the use of new renewable technologies, such as heat pumps and solar panels, and result in the more efficient delivery of gas to customers. It will be a major step towards a future network that could support the removal of expensive gas quality processing, increase our ability to adapt for the future energy needs of Great Britain and create the potential for cheaper gas bills for customers."

The project is being overseen and funded by regulator Ofgem.

Alex said: "To deliver gas more efficiently and cost effectively, we need to establish the current gas consumer demand in Great Britain. We are collecting gas consumption data for two years from a mix of property types in south east England, for results that are statistically representative of GB. To measure the gas demand, we need to install data loggers at customers' meters. Not only this, sensors installed along our gas pipe network will also collect vital information about our network's performance today, such as gas quality, flow and pressure sensors in the network, and the impact of renewable technologies on the network.

"The efficient management of our network could reduce costs across Great Britain. However, to make this trial possible, we need to collect information about gas usage from 1,200 customer meters in south east England.

"So we're appealing to anyone who lives in the south east and uses gas to see whether they're eligible with helping us towards our data collection."

To take part in our Real-Time Networks project, customers can participate through our quick online questionnaire available at sgn.co.uk/real-time-networks. If you're eligible, our meter logger expert will install a discrete logger to your meter. After the logger has collected data for up to two years, it will be removed.

Alex added: "All customers who qualify to take part will receive a £40 Love2Shop voucher and free carbon monoxide alarm to thank them for taking part. We hope our customers will get involved in what is a truly pioneering project that could ultimately help gas become more secure and affordable."

SGN Smart to provide implementation and operational services to MapleCo, a new smart meter provider

24 March 2017

We are pleased to announce the launch of two new companies; MapleCo, an independent Meter Asset Provider ('MAP') supporting the GB energy market, and SGN Smart, a subsidiary of SGN Ltd ('SGN').

- MapleCo will contribute to GB's smart meter roll out programme as a meter asset provider, which will fund the purchase and installation of smart gas and electricity meters.
- MapleCo is backed by Borealis Infrastructure, the infrastructure investment manager of OMERS ('Borealis'), Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan ('Ontario Teachers') and SSE plc ('SSE').
- SGN Smart will provide management services and resources to MapleCo for implementation and its on-going operation.

Making a successful start, MapleCo has reached an agreement to fund the purchase and installation of 2.7 million SSE smart meters which will be deployed from March 2017 onwards.

MapleCo looks forward to its partnership with SGN Smart, which builds on SGN's strong track record of operational expertise. This first tranche of 2.7 million smart meters is a strong foundation to grow the MapleCo platform, in anticipation of working with multiple energy suppliers across Great Britain in the future.

Derrick Allan, Director, SGN Smart commented: "We're very much looking forward to working with our partners to support the government's smart meter roll out plan which will bring many benefits to GB energy customers. Going forward, we'll be looking to attract additional meter portfolios with other energy suppliers as the market develops."

Smart meters are part of the UK Government's plan to update and modernise our energy system. This new generation of smart gas and electric meters will give customers greater control of their energy consumption by providing accurate and near real-time information on energy use and costs. This should help householders to lower their energy bills by becoming more energy efficient and contribute to greater security and affordability of GB energy supplies.

Dundee team raises funds to help send colleague's daughter to Disney

3 April 2017



Zoe with 'princess' Mollie Docherty, who held the winning ticket.

Employees from gas distribution company SGN in Dundee have raised almost £750 to help send a colleague's daughter, who suffers from cystic fibrosis, on the holiday of a lifetime.

Two-year-old Zoe Doogan was diagnosed with the disease when she was a baby. The life-limiting condition causes thick, sticky mucus to accumulate in the lungs, digestive system and other organs. Zoe already has to use a breathing tube, and even an infection as minor as a cold can be a big problem for her.

When not looking after Zoe, her mother Elaine and father Daniel, a Maintenance Engineer at SGN's Dundee depot, devote a lot of time to fundraising for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust. Recently, a family friend, who felt they were in need of a break, set up a fund to send them to Walt Disney World, Florida, for a special holiday.

When colleagues from Daniel's depot in Dundee heard about the fund, they wanted to do what they could to help. SGN Maintenance Team Manager Katie Stewart explained: "We decided to hold a bake sale and raffle and asked colleagues to provide donations. The response was fantastic; there were delicious homemade breads, cakes and tray bakes, all of which were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

"On the same day, we also ran a raffle to win seven Thorntons Easter eggs and two Easter bunnies which had been kindly donated by a colleague," she added. "We invited Zoe along with her mum and dad to draw the raffle and she told us beforehand that she wanted the prize to be won by a princess, so she was delighted when the winning ticket was held by 23-year-old Administration Assistant Mollie Docherty."

To date, the family's fund is standing at £2,147, putting them over halfway towards their target of £4,000. A colleague from SGN's sister company SSE, which shares their offices in Dundee, has also pledged to do a sponsored cycle ride to boost their fundraising efforts.

SGN daredevils ride the rapids for Scottish health charity

6 April 2017



The SGN Dunfermline team: Stuart Russell (far left), Fiona Laird (2nd from left), Gavin Stuart (3rd from left), Jordan Beatson (far right), Darius Wisniewski (2nd from right), Emma Kelly (3rd from right) and their friends, prepare to 'shoot the rapids' for the charity.

Three intrepid teams from gas distribution company SGN have raised £3,000 for Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS) after taking part in a white water rafting event organised by the charity.

CHSS's White Water Rafting (WWR) Challenge is an annual event which begins with a three-mile flat water race and ends with the exhilarating experience of 'shooting the rapids' on the River Tay. It is one of many events organised by the health charity to help raise funds to improve the quality of life for people in Scotland affected by chest, heart and stroke illness.

Three teams of eight from SGN, mostly made up of employees from the company's Dunfermline depot, but also from its Edinburgh Finance team, competed along with four other groups to win the coveted WWR Trophy. All the money raised through sponsorship from friends, colleagues and family will be donated to the charity.

To boost their fundraising efforts, the Dunfermline depot also hosted a charity quiz and raffle on 3 March for employees, their families and friends. Ticket sales from the event, coupled with sales of raffle tickets and donations, raised a further £1,100 for the charity. A £750 donation from SGN's Into Action fund, which supports employees who give up their spare time to help charities or their local community, brought the total to an impressive £3,000.

It is the fifth consecutive year that SGN has participated in the event, as Emma Kelly, Connections Team Manager at the company's Dunfermline depot, explained: "We were first contacted by CHSS in 2012 to ask whether we'd be interested in taking part. It sounded like great fun and as it was for a good cause I decided to see if I could get a team together.

"The response was fantastic and since then, we've entered every year and even had colleagues travelling down from Wick, Thurso and Oban to join us."

James Mooney, General Manager of SGN's Dunfermline depot, was one of those taking part in the event. He said: "There's nothing better than jumping into a dinghy in a choppy river on a cold dreich Scottish Highlands

morning to blow the cobwebs away. It was genuinely tough going, but great people and teamwork made for a satisfying and fun day. The fact that we made money for a worthy cause was a huge bonus.”

Paul Corrigan, CHSS Regional Fundraising Manager North, said: “We are delighted to have the support of the SGN staff teams once again. They have been brilliant supporters of the white water rafting event over a number of years and have raised vital funds to support people living with chest, heart and stroke conditions across Scotland.

“Every single penny raised from their efforts (and there were efforts) will go to help people recovering from life threatening illnesses and will help improve their quality of life.”

Stakeholders asked for their thoughts on how SGN runs its business

6 April 2017



Guests divide into discussion groups to help SGN decided on its future priorities.

Gas distribution company SGN is giving its stakeholders the opportunity to have their say about how it runs key parts of its business, by holding a series of seven stakeholder workshops across the south of England and Scotland.

SGN manages the network that distributes natural and green gas to 5.9 million homes and businesses across the south of England and Scotland. As energy suppliers, other network operators, local authorities and highway authorities, housing associations, emergency services and charities all have a vested interest in how it runs its business, the company is asking for their thoughts on how it can further enhance its services to all its stakeholders.

After an update about how SGN has acted on last year's feedback, guests at each event split into groups for a series of round-table discussions aimed at helping the company prioritise its objectives for the coming year. They are also asked to vote on key areas for discussion, such as keeping the gas flowing safely, and initiatives to support vulnerable customers.

Helen Bray, SGN's Director of Stakeholder Relations, said: "This is the fourth year we have held the workshops as a means of seeking feedback from our stakeholders. They have always generated lots of pertinent and thought-provoking contributions, which are invaluable in helping shape the way we move forward together.

"A good example of this came out of last year's workshops; our stakeholders told us we needed to work more closely with trusted partners to support customers effectively during gas outages. In response to this, we held two mock incidents in partnership with local resilience forums to get a better understanding of how we could improve our response. We've since been praised for our handling of two actual emergencies and for the support we provided to local communities.

Richard Hayden, Managing Director of Rayden Engineering, attended one of the first workshops this year which was held at Action Stations in Portsmouth's Historic Dockyard. He said: "Our group enjoyed some very open discussions. SGN is seen as a trailblazer for some of the future developments in the gas industry, so it was no surprise that innovation was high on the agenda for the day.

“I was particularly interested to hear about its locking cooker valve service, which can help to make homes safer for the elderly and particularly those with Alzheimer’s and other conditions. I put forward my own suggestions for how that provision could be enhanced, which I’m pleased to say were taken on board.

“It’s great that SGN is prepared to put its ideas out to its stakeholders to gather their feedback. I’ve been to several of these events in the past and the company really does act on the feedback it is given.”

Underground robot upgrades Western Road gas main as part of £525,000 project

20 April 2017

Gas distribution company SGN will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in Western Road, Brighton.

As part of a £525,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, we're using an innovative robotic system called CISBOT to upgrade our gas main in Western Road.

The innovative robot will work underground to seal the joints in the pipe. CISBOT can travel approximately 170 metres in each direction from a single excavation, so we don't require long trenches in the road to access our pipes. This means we're able to upgrade the section of our network between Crown Street and North Street from just one excavation, reducing the impact of our essential work on the city's residents and road users.

Following discussions with Brighton and Hove City Council, our Western Road project will begin on Monday 24 April and last approximately six weeks. We'll set up our site in the westbound bus stop outside Churchill Square Shopping Centre. We'll need to temporarily suspend the two bus stops closest to our work area on either side of the road. Details of alternative bus stops will be advertised on the affected stops by the bus company.

We'll also need to install temporary traffic lights in Western Road at its junction with Regent Hill to ensure everyone's safety around our work area. We'll be manually controlling these lights at peak times.

SGN Engineering Manager Casey Everitt said: "By using our innovative CISBOT robot to seal the joints along the inside of our gas main, we're able to minimise disruption for road users and residents while we upgrade our network.

"The robot works underground and upgrades the gas main from the inside, which means we don't require long trenches along the road to access the pipe. Instead, we can upgrade a large section of our network from just one excavation. Less digging means we can complete this essential work more quickly. What's more, the robot works inside the live gas pipe, so there's no need to interrupt gas supplies as we work."

Councillor Gill Mitchell, Chair of the Transport Committee at Brighton and Hove City Council, said: "Reducing the impact of roadworks is a priority for us. So our traffic team have been liaising closely with SGN. The robot looks like a smart way of working in our busiest streets. This is extra important this year as Southern Water will also be relaying the surface of North Street next autumn so we must make every effort to keep transport systems moving during these essential works."

SGN's Matt wins Scottish heat of IGEN's Young Persons Paper Competition

21 April 2017



SGN Maintenance Operations, Team Manager, Matt Skeoch, Scottish heat winner.

A Provan-based team manager from gas distribution company SGN has won the Scottish heat of a prestigious gas industry competition.

Matt Skeoch, 27, came first in the regional heat of the Institution of Gas Engineers & Managers' (IGEM) Young Persons Paper Competition. The event was held last week at SGN's office in Edinburgh, with the competition aiming to encourage entries from young professionals and students that demonstrate their potential to make a valuable and meaningful contribution to the gas industry.

Matt, who joined SGN on its graduate trainee team manager programme in 2015, was one of three entrants representing his company in the Scottish section. There was additional competition from three non-SGN entrants.

Matt, from Troon in Ayrshire, secured his place in the national final by delivering a presentation on his paper, a case study into the failure of a Mokveld Volumetric Flow Control Valve. The case study investigated a unique failure that he identified during a standard maintenance check of a Mokveld Valve during a breakdown. The paper explores what further improvements can be developed to enhance maintenance strategies for gas distribution networks moving forward and ultimately how these improvements can be part of ensuring gas customers have a secure supply for years to come.

Matt will now travel to London to represent Scotland in the final later this year. He said he was delighted to win: "This was the first time I had prepared and delivered a professional presentation so it was a huge personal achievement for me and something I'm very proud of. The experience I gained from winning my regional heat has given me a real determination to go out and win the final and I'm very grateful that I'll have the opportunity to do so while representing SGN."

Several years of hard work have paid off for 47 SGN apprentices, who completed their training and qualified as gas engineers this week.

3 May 2017



SGN's qualified apprentices from Scotland.

Time spent putting the theory and skills learnt at college into practice under supervision on-site has equipped all 47 with the expertise they need to start work in SGN's business. While the majority now have the range of skills they need to be able to work in the company's local depots, others have the specific knowledge needed to maintain the equipment that controls the pressure of gas in the network.



Case Study: Matthew Bartlett, Poole depot.

Matthew Bartlett from New Milton in Hampshire was one of those who qualified in the south of England. He has already taken up a position as an emergency engineer, or First Call Operative (FCO), at SGN's Poole depot.

Matthew, 26, went to university after leaving school, but left after becoming disillusioned with his course. He got a job at Sainsbury's in Christchurch and worked his way up to a Team Leader role. Although he enjoyed his work there, he realised he would prefer to do something more hands-on.

"I wasn't that familiar with SGN's business before I applied, but was impressed by what I saw of the structure of the apprenticeship – there was a lot of variety and I liked the idea of earning a wage at the same time as learning a trade."

Matthew did his Network Construction Operations training in his first year, to allow him to lay gas services and make repairs to the network. In the second and third years of his apprenticeship he did gas emergency services training, which led to his Gas Safe Registration.

One of the highlights of the apprenticeship for Matthew was the Outward Bound course that all SGN apprentices complete as part of their training. "It was more challenging than I'd expected, but really good fun. It brought out qualities in me that I hadn't really realised I had, for instance I really enjoyed spurring other people on and motivating them to finish the tasks we'd been set. I'd recommend it to anyone.

"Overall the apprenticeship was great. I enjoyed the company of the people I was training with and being mentored by, and felt confident that by the end of it I knew enough to go out and do the job. Collecting my certificate yesterday was the icing on the cake. It made all the hard work worthwhile and I realised it was actually a pretty big achievement."



Case Study: Frasier Connachen, Edinburgh depot

Frasier Connachen from Edinburgh has now taken up a position as an FCO at SGN's Edinburgh Depot and is looking forward to starting work now he has completed his apprenticeship.

Frasier, 25, came to SGN with previous experience of working in the gas industry, but in an office-based role. He was keen to move into the operational side of the business, so when he saw the apprenticeship scheme with SGN, it seemed like the perfect match.

On his next steps with the company, Frasier said: “It’s been a great opportunity to learn new skills and develop myself as a person. I am looking to gain as much experience as I can in my current role and then hopefully progress my career further with the company.

“I’ve really enjoyed learning lots of new skills in the classroom and then going out and putting them into practice. I am looking forward to starting work with the Edinburgh team and taking the next step in my career with SGN.”

Fraser and the other 25 apprentices in Scotland were presented with their certificates by SGN HR and Services Director, Kate Naylor, at a ceremony held at the Edinburgh Indoor Climbing Arena on Friday 28 April. Their 21 colleagues in the south of England attended a similar ceremony held on Tuesday 25 April at the Holiday Inn, Gatwick.

Also picking up their certificates were 23 SGN graduate trainees and a further six employees who had been studying towards Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) qualifications.

“Everyone presented with their certificates this week should be extremely proud of their achievements,” said Neil Snell, SGN’s Head of Training and Development. “But far from being the end of their professional development, this is just the beginning. If they continue in the same vein, they will have every opportunity to progress through the company and enjoy a long-term career with SGN.”

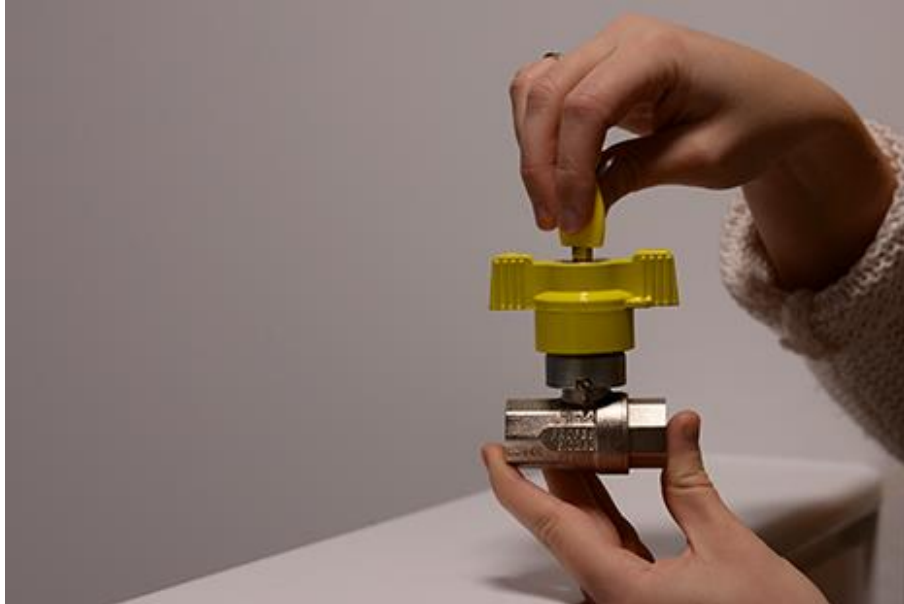
To find out more about SGN’s apprenticeship programme, visit our [Apprenticeship](#) page.



SGN's qualified apprentices from southern England.

Triple triumph for SGN as gas safety initiative scores award hat trick.

4 May 2017



Gas distribution company SGN has scooped three awards in a week for its locking cooker valve initiative, which keeps vulnerable people gas safe at home.

We know that vulnerable people, such as those with Alzheimer's or autism, need extra safeguarding to stay safe at home. Our free locking cooker valve helps vulnerable people retain their independence in their own home and provides reassurance to family, friends and carers.

SGN's Head of Community Pamela Goeë said: "The simple safety device is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework to help prevent gas leaks and fires. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on, and gives peace of mind to the carer or relative that the cooker can't be used when they leave the house or the room. The carer or relative can easily turn the valve on using the key when the cooker is required, enabling the vulnerable person to continue to use their gas cooker safely."

Last Wednesday evening, our locking cooker valve claimed the title of Gas Safety Initiative of the Year at the Association of Gas Safety Managers (AGSM) Gas Safety Awards 2017. These awards recognise outstanding safety initiatives, as well as exceptional personal and organisational contributions to gas safety. At the Sustainability First Innovation Day just two days later, judges from Age UK, Citizens Advice, RNIB and Rica named our initiative as the Gold Award winner in the Safety and Peace of Mind category



The SGN team at the AGSM Gas Safety Awards

At a ceremony at Glasgow's Scottish Event Campus yesterday, we were awarded the Silver Punch Bowl by the Scottish Chamber of Safety. This award celebrates the success of organisations in improving health, safety and environmental issues across Scotland.

Mrs Goe added: "We are absolutely thrilled our locking cooker valve has been recognised by three such prestigious organisations. We're committed to supporting the most vulnerable members of our community and our free locking cooker valve is just one of the ways we're safeguarding those people who need extra support. We're extremely proud to offer this service free of charge.

"We work with community safeguarding groups including social services, occupational therapists and emergency services to identify customers who could benefit from the safety device. Since our pilot began in 2015, our engineers have fitted locking cooker valves in homes across Scotland and the south of England. Following our successful roll-out of this simple safety solution, we've also now partnered up with the UK's three other distribution networks to offer this free service nationwide."

For more details about our locking cooker valve or to refer a vulnerable person for this free service, [click here](#).

SGN recognised for campaigns to raise awareness of CO poisoning

5 May 2017

SGN has been recognised for its work to raise awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning, along with the other gas distribution network (GDN) companies and the charity Co-Gas Safety, by the Heating and Ventilation News Safety Initiative of the Year Award.

The award, which was presented at the Heating and Ventilation News Awards 2017 at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London, recognises individuals or organisations which have introduced specific initiatives that have had a significant contribution to health and safety.

SGN, together with the charity and its GDN partners, Cadent (formerly National Grid Gas Distribution, Northern Gas Networks and Wales and West Utilities, were recognised for their tireless campaigning over the last 20 years to alert people to the dangers of the killer gas.

Key initiatives have included a training programme for gas engineers and a CO competition for schools, which encourages primary school pupils to submit creative and informative cartoons, videos, posters, models, short stories or poems about the dangers of CO poisoning. The competition is now called the GDN CO School Safety Competition and is promoted by the GDNs.

SGN Head of Community Pamela Goe said: "We are thrilled to have played a part in winning this award. We are totally committed to raising awareness of the dangers of CO and it plays a key role in our company strategy.

"Sadly, each year, lives are lost and many people are admitted to hospital and suffer health problems because of this silent killer. This could be easily avoided if the dangers of CO were better known and people took some simple precautions such as owning an audible CO alarm and getting their gas appliances checked each year by a Gas Safe Registered engineer."

SGN secures five awards at prestigious gas industry event

11 May 2017



Pictured from left are Chris Bielby, Terry Carroll, Maureen McIntosh, Angus McIntosh and Andy Musgrave

Gas network company SGN is celebrating a successful year at the 2017 Gas Industry Awards after securing five awards.

In partnership with ULC Robotics, SGN carried off the Innovation Product Award for CIRRIIS, a cast iron robotic repair inspection system which is capable of inspecting and repairing older gas mains from inside the pipe. Judges praised the two companies for developing the ‘groundbreaking technology’, adding that it had been welcomed with open arms by local authorities and highway agencies, who were delighted because it minimised traffic disruption.

SGN’s Head of Property and Support Services Terry Carroll and Head of Network Strategy Andrew Musgrave triumphed in their individual categories, with awards for Manager of the Year and Engineer of the Year respectively.

Judges described Terry as a “very worthy winner”, adding that he “effectively manages one of the most wide and diverse portfolios of activity” for SGN. Andy was praised for his “truly collaborative” approach to engineering. Judges said the pioneering technology and predictive analytics he had produced were improving gas networks and resulting in excellent business performance, not to mention exceeding customer and stakeholder expectations.

Also recognised on the night were SGN’s Head of Customer Experience Maureen McIntosh and Director of Industry Liaison Chris Bielby, who received Special Recognition awards for their outstanding performance in their field. Judges said they had chosen Maureen for the award as she had introduced numerous customer satisfaction initiatives which had produced outstanding results.

SGN’s Director of Industry Liaison Chris Bielby, who is also chairman of the Gas Industry Safety Group (GISG), received a special recognition award for leadership.

The Gas Industry Awards are organised by the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM) and The Energy and Utilities Alliance (EUA). They are the largest and most prestigious event in the gas industry

calendar. Over 600 people attended this year's event which was held at the Hilton Park Lane in London, with the awards presented by well-known English broadcaster John Inverdale.

Commenting on the wins, SGN CEO John Morea said: "These annual awards recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of individuals and businesses across our industry.

"Winning no less than five award is a fantastic achievement and testament to the highly skilled and dedicated people we have at SGN. We can all be very proud of our success."

Mental Health Awareness Week at SGN

11 May 2017

At SGN, we've been doing our bit to support Mental Health Awareness Week, which has been running since Monday.

Run by mental health charity Mental Health Foundation, this initiative is so important in today's society, where up to one in four of us may experience mental health problems.

In previous years, the week has focused on different elements of mental health like anxiety, mindfulness and relationships. But this year, the theme is surviving or thriving.

Many of us only think about mental health when there is a real problem. But you don't need to wait until things are at breaking point before you start making positive changes to your life.

Throughout this week, we've explored the difference between surviving and thriving, and how our staff can get past survival mode and really thrive.

We've used our award-winning employee app to:

- Provide top 10 tips to help colleagues thrive
- Share a 'personal experience with mental health' blog
- Promote the 'I had a black dog' film by Matthew Johnstone
- We also asked our staff to share their stories about what they do to get back on top when life gets tough.

The advice includes:

- Recognise that tiredness can be a factor in low mood
- Exercise, from walks and runs to bike rides and weights training
- Group therapy with a focus on mindfulness via meditation
- Taking time out to think about your passions in life
- Self-help books
- Having a tidy-up / de-clutter
- Cut back on social media
- Appreciate when your brain is frazzled and slow down

SGN 'Oscars' celebrate employees who have gone the extra mile

19 May 2017



SGN employees who have excelled in their roles this year were recognised at the gas network company's Outstanding People Awards, held on Thursday 18 May at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.

Now in their fifth year, SGN's Outstanding People Awards recognise exceptional performance and dedication among its employees. This year, over 500 nominations were received from colleagues across Scotland and southern England. These were whittled down to a shortlist of 24 finalists made up of both teams and individuals, from which judges had the tough job of choosing the award winners.

A total of eight awards were presented during the evening by actor Stephen Mangan. They covered a range of categories including Emerging Talent, Unsung Hero, Bringing out the Best, Customer Experience, Team Achievement, Different Thinker, Community Impact and Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) Excellence.

[continued]



Network Support Officer Kirsty Steel was presented with the company's 'Emerging Talent' award. Kirsty was nominated for the award by her manager Stuart Forrest and Project Manager Billy Stewart. Speaking on the night, her manager Billy Stewart said: "Kirsty has demonstrated a level of ability beyond her years which, if developed and nurtured properly, could see her become a future leader within the company."



The Unsung Hero award went to Jonathan Wan, a Project Officer from SGN's Edinburgh office. He was described by judges as 'a true unsung hero, going about his business without any fuss and always delivering a quality of work which is a credit to him'.

Industry Codes and Investigations Support Manager Carol Glasier was successful in winning the 'Bringing out the Best' award. Employee Development Manager Grant Taylor, who nominated her for the award, said: "Carol is excellent at promoting a development culture in her team. She understands that people have skills and, when they are given an opportunity, can shine.



Emergency Team Leader Andy McGuire was presented with the company's 'Customer Experience' award. Andy was nominated by Emergency Team Manager Ian Waddell, who said: "It would be hard to see how anyone could fail to be inspired by Andy. His approach to customer service has encouraged hundreds of customers to score him 10 out of 10 for customer service."



The Team Achievement award went to SGN's Gas to the West/SGN Natural Gas teams for their work on a major infrastructure to extend the gas network to the west of Northern Ireland. Stakeholder Engagement Support Manager, Margaret Hamilton, who nominated them, said: "Their carefully planned and effective approach, together with a 'can do' attitude from every member of the team, succeeded in delivering gas to the first customer in Northern Ireland in a timely manner."



Business Relationship Manager, Peter Philips, was presented with the 'Different Thinker' award for his ability to think 'outside the box'. Peter was nominated by Katy Axtell, SGN's Head of Business Relationships and Change. She said: "Having Peter on board means I don't have to worry – I can always trust him to do the right thing and to challenge old ways of working wherever necessary."



Resource Team Manager, Chris Rose, was presented with the company's 'Community Impact' award. Communications Manager Chloe Boyce, who nominated him, said: "Chris has worked his socks off for good causes ever since I've known him. He's a big-hearted, charismatic individual, whose zest for life and helping others shines through in everything he does."



Repair Team Manager Mark Booker was presented with the company's SHE Excellence certificate for being a safety role model for his colleagues. Mark was nominated for the award by Glenn Norman, SGN's Head of Operations (South), who said: "Mark has proactively engaged with other colleagues because he has a genuine

passion for safety. He has also successfully developed and implemented a cable awareness course that is now being rolled out across the company.”

Describing the OPAs as “the highlight of my year”, SGN CEO John Morea said: “The awards are a chance to recognise some of the amazing work that goes on in our depots and offices across Scotland and the south of England every day. I would like to congratulate all our finalists, who really do epitomise what SGN is all about.”

And addressing everyone present on the night, he added: “Against the current backdrop of political change, the one constant is your unwavering commitment. It is you that’s driving our success, and your professionalism and dedication has made us the company we are today.”

Community partnership creates a buzz at Trinity High School in Rutherglen

23 May 2017



Left to right: SGN's Andy Breckenridge, BBC's Ellie Harrison, Plan Bee's Warren Bader, and Colin McIntyre from Trinity High School with the pupils

Pupils from a secondary school in Rutherglen, Glasgow, have been inspired to help restore bees to the environment through its partnership with gas distribution company SGN.

The bees landed at Trinity High School's new eco-garden earlier this month, and with the help of beehive management company Plan Bee, the project will aim to educate the students about the plight of the honeybee and their importance in our environment. Over the next academic year and long into the future, beekeeping will be thoroughly integrated into the school's teaching programme. In science, the pupils will learn about bee behaviour, their anatomy and habitat, and subsequently, it will be incorporated into home economics, business education, maths and graphic design.

BBC's Countryfile programme took a great interest in the project and came along on the day to capture the event. Filming took place at the high school, and at SGN's Glasgow depot, where there are also two bee hives in the grounds. The Countryfile programme aired on BBC One at 6.30pm on Sunday 21 May.

The pupils have already set up a beekeeping club and will learn the skills they need to look after the bees through Plan Bee's beekeeping programme. Colin McIntyre, Trinity High School's Eco Group Chair and Teacher of Mathematics, introduced the school to the idea of keeping bees. He said: "The opportunity Trinity High School has been given by SGN to keep bees has been an exciting and unique process. Honey bees will now play a major part of the whole school curriculum and it is a first within South Lanarkshire council. Staff and students are very excited about the prospect of receiving training to enable them to look after our new residents and it is hoped that some students will now look at bee keeping as a future career."



Bees land at Trinity High School

The idea for the community partnership came from SGN's Environment and Sustainability Manager, Andy Breckenridge. He said: "Honeybees play a crucial role in agriculture and food production, yet the British bee population is declining at such an alarming rate they have now been placed on the endangered species list.

"Embarking on this innovative project is allowing us to 'do our bit' to sustain the UK's bee population for future generations, while at the same time giving us the opportunity to work with young people and build our relationship within the local community. It's also a great way to show how important it is that we all care for our environment and how we can volunteer our time and skills to benefit charities and good causes."

Warren Bader, CEO and founder of Plan Bee, said: "We are delighted that SGN has embraced the project with such verve and passion, and shown incredible commitment to highlighting the problems surrounding honey bees and insect pollinators."

The initiative was officially launched last September by naturalist and television presenter Chris Packham. Speaking at the event, which was held at SGN's Glasgow depot, Chris said he was genuinely proud to be involved in the project, describing it as a tremendous initiative. He told those in the audience it represented significant progress to see a large corporation like SGN taking a proactive stance to minimise its impact on the environment. "You are teaming up with Plan Bee to take a well thought-out concept into a place of learning so that the pupils can get real value out of it."

And he urged pupils to throw themselves into the project because it was "about their future", telling them "a future without bees would be a very bleak one".

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Fordington as part of £370,000 project

24 May 2017

Gas distribution company SGN will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in the Fordington area of Dorchester.

As part of a £370,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Dorset County Council, our project will start on Tuesday 30 May and last approximately 17 weeks.

We'll be working in High Street Fordington, South Walks Road and Culliford Road North in four phases.

As the road is so narrow, we need to temporarily close High Street Fordington for four weeks from Tuesday 20 May to ensure everyone's safety around our work area. Signed diversions will be in place for through traffic, with access maintained for residents.

Our engineers will be progressing through South Walks Road and Culliford Road North over the following 13 weeks using temporary traffic lights and parking restrictions while we upgrade our gas pipes in these roads.

SGN Engineering Manager Karl Durham said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project."

SGN commits to becoming a dementia-friendly organisation

26 May 2017

Last week, Alzheimer's Society encouraged people to unite against dementia to mark Dementia Awareness Week. Although Dementia Awareness Week may be over, gas distribution company SGN's long-term commitment to becoming a dementia-friendly organisation is only just beginning.

Pamela Goe, Head of Community, said: "Dementia is set to be the 21st century's biggest killer according to Alzheimer's Society, so it's likely to affect us all in some way. At SGN, we're committed to improving our understanding of dementia in order to not only provide an even better service to our customers with the condition, but their friends and family as well.

"We have a number of initiatives in place to help safeguard vulnerable members of the community, particularly those with dementia. These include our locking cooker valve, which is a simple safety device fitted to existing cooker pipework which can keep people with dementia gas safe in their own home.

"Last year, we offered e-learning dementia awareness training to our people accredited by the Care Quality Commission. But we still wanted to do more to support people in our community with dementia, so that's why we've committed to working with Alzheimer's Society to become a dementia-friendly organisation.

Mrs Goe explained: "We recently joined Alzheimer's Society at the launch of its Dementia Friendly Business Guide in London. In the coming months, we'll be rolling out further training to all our employees – both front-line and office-based – to remind them of the symptoms of dementia and how we can all make their experience of our organisation as positive as possible. We'll also be creating a network of 'dementia champions' within our offices and depots to help support our employees as we strive to become a dementia-friendly organisation."

SGN team brings outdoor learning to life for Swanley pupils

1 June 2017



The SGN team show some of the High Firs pupils the shelter in their new outdoor classroom.

Pupils at High Firs, a primary school in Swanley, are enjoying the benefits of outdoor learning this term, thanks to a team of volunteers from SGN who helped create an outdoor classroom for them.

Seven employees from SGN's London East depot in St Mary Cray spent the day at the school, clearing undergrowth and ivy, as well as pruning trees. They also chopped logs to make seating for the children, built a shelter for their bags and coats, built a den and even created a 'bug hotel' from old wooden pallets, straw, moss and leaves. One of the company's contractors, JDT Utilities, supplied a pick-up truck for transporting the materials.

An image showing High Firs pupils in their new outdoor classroom The SGN team show some of the High Firs pupils the shelter in their new outdoor classroom.

The idea of helping out at the school came from Andrew Miles, whose wife Emma works there as a teaching assistant. He said: "Teachers had the idea for an outdoor classroom last September, and had been trying to clear the area themselves after lessons finished, but it was taking a long time.

"SGN runs a Community Action Programme, in which every employee gets one day on company time to help out in their local community. When I mentioned this to my wife, she told the school and the rest is history.

"We had a great day and even had school dinners with the children at lunchtime. After we'd finished, the headteacher came down to the garden with some of the children and they were delighted with what we'd managed to achieve."

Reception Class teacher, Emily Allen, said: "The benefits for children of doing practical activities in an outdoor learning environment are well-documented. In particular, it allows them to develop their ability to communicate and co-operate with their peers, as well as giving them the foundations for increasing their independence and self-belief in their own abilities.

"The SGN team's help meant we were able to achieve our aim of creating an outdoor classroom within a much shorter time-frame than expected. Not only did they make sure the end result closely matched our original concept, they also built on the initial designs and transformed the area into an amazing learning space for the children. They were an absolute credit to their company."

Daredevil Edinburgh employee abseils down Forth Bridge for charity

2 June 2017



James abseils down the Forth Rail Bridge for charity.

A courageous SGN employee has raised over £700 for Scottish health charity Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland (CHSS) by abseiling 165ft down Edinburgh's iconic Forth Rail Bridge.

James Thomson, who works as a Stakeholder Relations Assistant at SGN's Axis House offices in Newbridge, took on the challenge as a way of helping people like his father, Jim, 69, who suffers from Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and emphysema.

James, 43, who lives in Newtongrange, explained: "My father's illnesses have left him unable to walk more than a few paces without stopping to regain his breath. It's distressing to see him – you feel very helpless – so I wanted to do something positive to help him and other people in his position."

CHSS's Forth Rail Bridge Abseil is one of many events organised by the Scottish health charity to help raise funds to improve the quality of life for people in Scotland affected by chest, heart and stroke illness.

More than 200 CHSS supporters took part in the Forth Rail Bridge abseil on Sunday 21 May, raising more than £99,000 for vital local community services.

According to James, the reality of what he was about to do didn't hit home until he and the rest of his group were being led up onto the bridge. He said: "That was when I began to wonder what on earth I was doing. The scariest moment was when they tell you to step over the safety fence – I was doing my very best not to look down at this point!

"It was probably only three or four minutes before I landed on the beach below, but it felt like a lifetime. Then I felt a real buzz. I would definitely do it again, but next time I might try a different way of getting my adrenalin fix, such as a sky dive or a bungee jump!"

James raised over £350 in sponsorship from friends, family and colleagues, which has been matched by a donation from SGN's Into Action fund that supports colleagues who give up their time for charity, giving him a grand total of over £700 to pass on to CHSS

CHSS Event Manager Rachel Morrison explained: “We had a brilliant day. The amount raised is absolutely phenomenal and will help improve the quality of life for people in Scotland after a stroke or a diagnosis of a chest or heart condition ensuring that they get the support and services they badly need.

“We are always overwhelmed at how much people raise for us and the motivation people like James have to support us. I’d like to thank them and our incredible volunteers; we really couldn’t run the event without you.”

West Kent depot volunteers dig deep to transform Reigate primary school garden

5 June 2017



SGN team, including Simon (seventh from right) and Rhian (second from right), take a break from their work to show the pupils their newly spruced-up garden.

Pupils at a Reigate primary school will be able to enjoy playing in their newly spruced-up garden this term, thanks to a team of volunteers from SGN's depot in St Mary Cray.

Brooklands is a primary school for pupils aged between two and 11 with severe learning difficulties, including conditions such as autism. The school has a garden which has been specially adapted for wheelchair access, and a range of outdoor play equipment.

A team of 12 volunteers from SGN's West Kent depot in St Mary Cray spent a day at the school recently, painting garden furniture and sheds, planting summer flowers, securing the school's new play tower and repairing the archway into the garden.

The visit was organised by SGN Engineering Manager Simon Patient, whose seven-year-old daughter Rhian has attended Brooklands School for four years. Simon said: "SGN runs a community action programme in which every employee gets one day a year on company time to help out in their local community.

"Helping with projects at Brooklands has become an annual event now. In the past we've built wooden planters and raised flowerbeds for the garden, as well as constructed outdoor storage containers to hold their play equipment.

"So many of my colleagues wanted to come along this time that we had to turn some down because the depot would've ground to a halt. I'm hoping we can organise another day later in the summer to build some playground furniture for the children.

"We all had a great day – it was a fantastic team effort. We achieved 99% of what we'd set out to do and everyone is keen to go back again!"

Gary Hilton, Assistant Headteacher of Brooklands School, said: "The SGN volunteers have been visiting the school annually for a few years now and always work really hard through the huge list of jobs we give them.

"This year they worked in our garden; painting, repairing and refreshing lots of different areas and helping to keep the space attractive and safe for our pupils. We are looking forward to them returning for a second day later in the year to support us with another list of projects."

London West depot volunteers transform Southfields church car park

5 June 2017



The team, including Joe Daniels (front, 4th from right) and Pastor Matt Southcombe (far right), taking a well-earned break from their work at St Michael's Church.

An army of employees from gas distribution company SGN, along with its contractors, have rolled up their sleeves and pitched in to transform the car park and garden area outside St Michael's Church in Southfields.

Twenty one volunteers from the company's London West depot in Godstone turned up in force to re-lay the church's 176 square-metre car park with slate chippings, as well as tidy up the garden, clean the pathways, and plant flowers and shrubs along its border. The SGN team was joined by colleagues from their reinstatement contractors Cappagh and KLT, who had also volunteered to help out.

The day was organised by SGN Reinstatement Project Manager Joe Daniels, who explained how it came about: "We've been working on a major project to upgrade our gas network in Granville Road in recent months. We've been replacing the existing metal gas main with new plastic pipe to ensure a continued safe and reliable supply to the area.

"SGN runs a Community Action Programme, in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to get involved with their local community; helping out with St Michael's project seemed like an ideal way to say thank you to local residents for their patience while our essential upgrade work was being carried out."

"It was hard work, but great fun," Joe continued. "We started clearing the garden area at 8am and by 10 am we'd already collected two tonnes of weeds! Matt, the pastor, kept us very well supplied with homemade lasagne, cake and drinks, and before we'd even finished working people were coming past and commenting on what a difference the work had made."

Matt Southcombe, Worship Pastor Ordinand at St Michael's, said: "We are a lively and busy church, open to the Southfields community seven days a week and we are thrilled that SGN has chosen to help us for their

community day. Many people have commented already on the difference and what a kind gesture it is from them. Thank you SGN!”

The car park restoration is the second community project in Southfields with which employees from SGN’s London West depot have got involved. Earlier this year, they helped pupils from nearby St Michael’s Primary School preserve its heritage for future generations by constructing a time capsule and burying it outside the school gates.

Dunfermline depot fast-track cycle trail for Seamab School pupils

6 June 2017



Our team show off the new cycle trail to staff at Seamab School.

Pupils of Seamab, a school and residential care complex in Kinross, are riding high this week after volunteers from our Dunfermline depot created a cycle track for them in their school grounds.

Seamab is a small residential primary school in Rumbling Bridge, near Kinross, which cares for, and educates vulnerable children aged between five and thirteen who have experienced trauma or loss in their lives. Pupils live in three bungalows, each with five single bedrooms and separate staff facilities, set in private woodland five minutes away from the school building.

Over the course of a week, 32 employees from our Dunfermline depot spent time creating a cycle trail in the woodland area. After marking out the route for the trail, they used a mini digger to excavate the top layer of soil and replaced it with tarmac. They also created features as part of the track, including a bridge and some small jumps.

Our contractors, keen to get involved in the project, donated equipment and supplies free of charge: GAP Hire gave the team the use of a one-tonne dumper truck for the week, Purvis Group donated 25 tonnes of tarmac planings and Travis Perkins donated the wooden posts needed to construct the track features.

The project was driven by two members of our Dunfermline team, Mark Bell and Scott Henderson, both of whom are keen off-road cyclists. Mark said: "Knowing the difficult start these children have had in life, and with my keen interest in mountain biking, I saw this as the perfect opportunity to give something back to them.

"The school gave us a rough idea of the route they wanted the cycle track to take and we built on that, adding in a couple of small jumps, a bridge and some other features of our own.

"Scott and I stayed there the whole week, overseeing the work as well as mucking in ourselves. I was amazed when we managed to finish within a week – it hadn't seemed possible when we first arrived.

"The children were over the moon with what we'd done – and very keen to try out their new track. Their only criticism was that they would've liked the jumps to be bigger!"

Seamab Chief Executive Joanna McCreadie said: "Outdoor education and activity is a huge part of life here at Seamab, and our children have really benefited from learning to ride mountain bikes, which are great for their self-esteem and confidence, not to mention their balance.

"They've been enjoying days out around Scotland, but of course they want to be cycling while they're here at the school and care complex too. The mountain bike trail created by the SGN team looks amazing and the children have thoroughly enjoyed testing it out!

"We're so grateful to SGN for their ongoing friendship and support, and for the hard work that has gone into creating something really meaningful for the children."

Over the last few years, we've carried out several projects at Seamab School. In 2015, we created a yurt within the school grounds to be used as an outdoor classroom, as well as being a safe and relaxing space for the children. Most recently, in April this year, we installed new car parking spaces in the school grounds.

Glasgow volunteers give back to Erskine veterans

13 June 2017



The Glasgow team take a breather from their work on the Erskine Estate.

Residents of Erskine Park, a care home for veterans living with dementia, are making the most of their newly spruced up garden this summer, thanks to a team of volunteers from our Glasgow (South) Maintenance team.

Erskine is a charity that provides nursing, residential, respite and dementia care for veterans and their spouses. It has four purpose-built facilities across Scotland, in addition to 44 cottages on the Erskine Estate in Bishopton for veterans and their families.

To coincide with National Dementia Awareness Week, a nine-strong team from our Glasgow (South) Maintenance team spent the day in the home's Normandy Garden. While there, they sanded down and repainted railings around the garden's summerhouse, mended and painted 12 wooden chairs and three tables, as well as tidied the garden.

They volunteered their services as part of our Community Action Programme, as Colin Dodds, who organised the day, explained: "We run a scheme in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to help in their local community. Erskine is well known in our community for its sterling work and we saw it as the perfect opportunity for us to give something back to the men and women we owe so much to."

Lesley Wylie, Manager of Erskine Park, said: "We were delighted when the SGN team visited Erskine Park to help us repaint the garden furniture and summerhouse. Our veterans spend a lot of time in the gardens and the furniture was in need of refurbishment. Residents have already commented on how lovely the garden looks now. We really can't thank them enough."

Legal eagles join 10k London walk for justice

14 June 2017



Our Legal team before they set off on the London Legal Walk around the city. Pictured are: Back row (l-r) Deep Chana, Jawwad Irshad, Paul Castell and Paul Lomas, middle row (l-r) Fiona Massie, Candice McWilliam, Lauren Walker and Laura Gale, and front row (l-r) Nicola Shand, Emma Jackson, Sabrina Nayee and Sharmila Sylvester.

Employees from our Legal team put their best foot forward to help vulnerable people gain access to free legal services by joining 12,000 other lawyers at the London Legal Walk.

The London Legal Walk is an annual event run by the London Legal Support Trust (LLST), an independent charity which raises funds for legal support services in London and the South-East.

The 12-strong team, all from the our Horley head office, was among 700 teams who took part in the 10-kilometre walk through Central London, passing well-known landmarks such as the River Thames, St James' Park and Hyde Park.

The idea of helping the Trust came from Tristan Wright, a property solicitor in our Legal team. He said: "I used to work for a firm of solicitors in Holborn and they always took part in the London Legal Walk. It is a great fun event for a very worthwhile cause and a perfect way to discover hidden gems in London you don't usually see."

As well as taking part in the walk, the team boosted their fundraising by holding a bake sale for colleagues in Horley and washing cars in the Horley car park. With the help of donations from friends, family and colleagues, they raised over £500 from the three activities, which we matched with a donation from our Into Action charitable fund – bringing the total raised for the LLST to an impressive £1,000.

Vicky Ling, Chief Executive of the London Legal Support Trust, said: "We are delighted that the SGN Legal team were among the many other members of the legal profession who again rose to the challenge and turned out in even greater numbers than before.

"Free legal advice services change people's lives, providing them with expert help to reduce debt, poverty and homelessness, and combat discrimination and injustice. LLST works with the charities we fund to make sure every pound raised goes as far as it possibly can."

New Bridge nursery CAP day

20 June 2017



The team from our Reading depot take a break from their work at New Bridge Nursery School.

An army of volunteers from SGN arrived at New Bridge Nursery School in Reading last Thursday, ready to spruce up the children's playground.

The 20-strong group, all from our Reading depot, spent the day at the nursery in Montague Street, working their way through a long list of odd jobs, including re-felting the shed roof, jet washing and cleaning play equipment, fitting hooks in the storage shed for hanging bicycles, cutting back hedges and removing a low-level brick flower bed which was starting to crumble.

The idea for helping out the nursery came from Matt Morland, a Team Manager at our Reading depot. Matt said: "All three of my children went to New Bridge Nursery School and my wife works there now too. The nursery budget is extremely tight, so paying someone to come in and do these jobs was not an option.

"Our company runs a scheme in which each employee gets one day every year on company time to help out in their local community, and my wife was aware of this so she asked whether there was anything we could do to help."

Lisa Bedlow, Executive Head Teacher of the nursery school, said: "We are delighted with the team's amazing work. They were highly professional, extremely polite and very hard working and achieved so much more than we had imagined possible – and most certainly far beyond our own capabilities. They have helped us maintain a high quality and safe environment for our nursery children.

She added: "The team also donated 130 safety high visibility zip tags, and a teddy bear wearing a hi-vis jacket, which will be a wonderful teaching resource for the autumn when the dark nights draw in and we talk to the children about the importance of being visible to motorists."

SGN wins at Corporate Engagement Awards 2017

21 June 2017

SGN's community partnerships with Girlguiding, The Outward Bound Trust UK, Royal Voluntary Service, Seamab and Solutions for the Planet has received an award at the Corporate Engagement Awards 2017.



We support International Women in Engineering Day 2017

23 June 2017

We're supporting International Women in Engineering Day (INWED) by encouraging our female employees to spend a day work-shadowing their engineering colleagues.

The women, who work in non-engineering roles, work-shadowed the engineers to get a true representation of the different roles and tasks they encounter every day. Engineering at SGN is very diverse, with roles in many different departments, including operations. The 'mentors' were chosen to highlight the variety of engineering roles here at SGN, and we're seeking to use this year's campaign to highlight our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We're hoping to raise awareness of the breadth of career options available in engineering by supporting INWED, where the 2017 theme is #MenAsAllies.

Kirsty Richardson, Head of Employee Experience, said: "We want to demonstrate through job shadowing that engineering is open to everyone. Shadowing helps raise awareness of what our engineers do and allows those involved to gain exposure to the various roles available within SGN, learn more about themselves, gain new skills, and recognise their strengths and, most importantly, their potential.

"This global campaign is a great opportunity for us to look at how we can do more to encourage diversity of thinking, develop an inclusive and flexible culture, and challenge any workplace bias. While all appointments will be made on merit we want to do all we can to open up development opportunities to everyone. Our overall goal is to have a diverse and inclusive workforce, and that in turn brings real business benefits."

Kirsty added: "We've had a fantastic response and the organised days are well under way – in fact, we're now considering more shadowing opportunities in future."

Operations Controller Gloria Onuh works in our Walton Park office in Portsmouth. She spent a day with Team Leader Steve Wickham from our Solent depot joining his repair team on one of our sites. Asked if the experience had inspired her to consider an engineering career, Gloria said: "Absolutely. It's given me more confidence and has shed light on things I had little or no understanding of. I think everyone should be given the opportunity to shadow someone. A lot goes on beyond our computer screens and desks."

Jess Dunlop from our HR team, shadowed Team Manager Andy McCusker from our Glasgow depot. She said: "Women shouldn't feel their gender dictates what job they can do and so I wanted to support International Women in Engineering Day while pushing myself a little out of my usual comfort zone. It also opened my eyes to the many different types of technical careers available at SGN. If I ever want to take a more technical role myself, I know I'm at the right company."

And it's not just male engineers who were shadowed, Project Officer Masha Allan, who's based in our Edinburgh depot, mentored Robyn Pender from our Events team. Masha said: "It was my guidance counsellor at school that pointed me in the direction of engineering. I love what I do and if it wasn't for her I may not be where I am today.

"I think it's important to share your experiences with colleagues around you and help each other. I wanted to give Robyn the opportunity to see what my role is about and how varied it can be."

We joined forces with both Girlguiding in 2012 and Solutions for the Planet (S4TP) in 2015 to help introduce young women and girls to potential careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects. Research by Girlguiding has shown that in the UK, fewer than one in 10 girls between the ages of seven and ten would choose a career in STEM. The partnership hopes to raise awareness of jobs in the industry at an early age, allowing girls to think differently about their career aspirations.

This month, volunteers from SGN spoke to five to 10-year-old girls about STEM at three 'Magic and Mayhem' themed Girlguiding events. Over 2,000 girls across the UK attended the events in the New Forest, Clitheroe and Sussex. The volunteers organised a building activity using spaghetti and marshmallows at their stand.

Furthermore, our partnership with Solutions for the Planet (S4TP) has been a great success.

S4TP is a programme which inspires new ways of thinking by connecting businesses with schools to solve social, environmental and economic challenges. Teams of passionate pupils have received mentoring from our volunteers where they have been encouraged to explore opportunities and careers in STEM subjects. This year, two of the schools mentored by the company's volunteers have made it through to the final stage of the scheme, which takes place on 5 July at the Palace of Westminster in London. One of the teams, Drone Aid from Longfield Academy in Kent, is made up entirely of girls which demonstrates our commitment to diversity.

Employees raise funds for Sussex charity in memory of colleague's son

27 June 2017



Gary and his partner Jo present the cheque for £1,400 from SGN to Jane and Fraser Brooks from You Raise Me Up at the charity's coffee shop in Polegate, East Sussex. Also pictured are Clive Austin and Peter Heneghan from Sussex depot, who led the way with the donation of Christmas meal money from many colleagues.

Colleagues of our Sussex depot team manager Gary Simpson were by his side when he visited the East Sussex coffee shop run by the charity 'You Raise Me Up' to hand over a cheque for £1,400.

The money has been raised in memory of Gary's son Harley, 11, who passed away last November following a road traffic accident.

Wanting to show their support, a number of Gary's colleagues felt strongly that they wanted to give the money usually set aside by SGN for their company Christmas dinner, to a charity which has provided him with counselling. This kind gesture was then matched by a donation from the company's Into Action charitable fund, taking the total raised to £1,400.

You Raise Me Up, based in Polegate, East Sussex, offers emotional and financial support to families who have lost a child or young adult. Gary described staff from the charity as being like 'an extended family' to him and his partner, Jo, providing them with much needed support after they lost their son.

Determined that Harley's memory should live on, Gary and Jo – who live in St Leonards-on-Sea – have thrown themselves into fundraising to give something back to the local charities that supported them after his accident.

Two memorial pages set up for Harley have, to date, raised £2,473 for the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance, and £2,100 for Ronald McDonald House Charities, which helps seriously ill children and their families. A 'Walk of Light' in Gary's home town of Hastings attracted a turnout of 250 people and raised over £1,100, while a total of £1,550 was collected by colleagues at the company's Outstanding People Awards in May after You Raise Me Up was picked as the charity to benefit from the evening's fund-raising efforts.

The total raised by Gary, his family, friends and colleagues now stands at nearly £9,000.

Harley was a big rugby fan and a member of the Hastings and Bexhill Rugby Club Under 11s team. Following a sponsorship application completed by SGN's Sussex Resources and Logistics Manager Chris Rose, the hire solutions company Gap has pledged to donate £1,000 to the club.

Gary described Harley as someone who loved life: "He was a cheeky and energetic lad, full of mischief and with an infectious smile and giggle which brought joy and laughter to so many. A true helper at heart, he loved nothing more than to lend a hand, but was always modest in his acceptance of praise. We are all so proud of his determination, for such a young boy."

And he said he had been deeply touched by the support he had had from colleagues since he returned to work: "The support from everyone at work is greatly appreciated, and so many of our colleagues are joining us at future events planned this year to honour Harley, which means a great deal."

Our Senior Communications Officer wins Shooting Star award

30 June 2017



Our Senior Communications Officer Hannah Brett won the Shooting Star award at this year's Utility Week Stars Awards in Manchester.

The Utility Week Stars Awards is an annual event which recognises colleagues and peers who have gone above and beyond to keep water and gas flowing and the lights on across the nation.

Hannah, who has been with us since 2012, is a shining example of someone who is committed and tenacious, and takes everything in her stride while doing a very challenging job. Corporate Communications Manager Chloe Boyce commented: "We're all thrilled for Hannah to have won this award, and I know so many other colleagues will also be very pleased on her behalf. She has been instrumental in developing our social media channels to give our customers and stakeholders a much improved experience when engaging with us. Her professionalism, commitment and enthusiasm are not only inspirational to the wider Communications team, they make her the go-to person among more experienced colleagues."

Our colleagues were also finalists in three other categories. Head of Community Pamela Goeë was a finalist in the Hero Award (individual) category and, Stakeholder and Community Manager Caroline Lawrie was shortlisted along with General Manager Gerald Paver for the Supernova Award. SGN was also nominated as a company in the Hero Award category.

CEO John Morea said: "My congratulations to everyone who was nominated and to Hannah for winning at this prestigious event. For me it just further confirms what great teams and people we have in our company. Well done!"

Hannah, who was delighted with her award win, said: "I'm a bit overwhelmed actually to be honest. It's a total shock and I didn't expect to win at all. I think it's incredible, it's not just a gas industry event but an industry-wide event. I'm just totally overwhelmed to win and really grateful to have been nominated by my peers."

Our CEO sets out his vision of a low carbon gas future

30 June 2017

Our CEO John Morea has delivered his vision of a low carbon gas future at the Utility Week Energy Summit 2017.

In a presentation at the national conference yesterday, John discussed a number of key initiatives to support a low carbon energy future such as biomethane and hydrogen. He explained to attendees including energy experts, decision makers and journalists how gas networks have a vital role in helping to offer a future energy solution that is at least cost and would have the lowest impact on customers.

John explained how we're already greening the gas with biomethane with 30 plants connected to our network, supplying low carbon gas to 160,000 homes. He outlined the potential in the coming years to further decarbonise gas in our network by blending BioSNG and hydrogen, and the possibility in the longer term to move towards 100% hydrogen networks.

In his speech, our CEO John said: "We realise no one solution fits all but modernising our gas networks gives us options which can underpin the lower carbon UK economy of the future. The use of renewable gases will allow customers to continue to benefit from our valuable gas network infrastructure and, with the right incentives, will provide an affordable, low carbon solution we all want, with the security of supply we all need."

Winners of national carbon monoxide awareness competition receive awards at Westminster ceremony

3 July 2017

The awards ceremony for an annual school safety competition to raise awareness of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning has taken place at the Palace of Westminster.

The competition was launched in January by the companies which are responsible for running the gas networks across Great Britain.

Along with all the other UK Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs), we put out a call for entries from school students in any form of media to promote CO poisoning awareness, and were pleased to receive nearly 1,000 entries ranging from videos, posters, websites, and poems warning of the dangers of the silent killer.

Last Thursday, the winners and their guests were given a tour of the House of Commons in the Palace of Westminster before the winners received their prizes at a special ceremony hosted by Barry Sheerman, MP, who co-chairs the All-Party Parliamentary Carbon Monoxide Group (APPCOG), in Portcullis House.

The competition was run on an area level by each GDN and open to students in Key Stage 1 (KS1) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) (ages five-11) across Great Britain. At the ceremony, the area and overall national winners for KS1 and KS2 were awarded prizes for themselves and their school.

Our area winners:

Key Stage 1

Scotland Area Winner: Katie Hutchinson, 4th Bathgate Brownies, Bathgate. Katie designed a poster.



South Area Winner: 5th Kidbrooke Brownies (Foxes), London. The girls made a video.



Key Stage 2

Scotland Area Winner: Alex Geddes, Lochdonhead Primary School, Isle of Mull. Alex made a video.



South Area Winner: Tona Loving, 3rd Winchester Scouts, Winchester. Tona designed a poster.



Tom Bell, Chair of the GDN CO Best Practice Group, said: “All of the GDNs were impressed by the number of creative entries that were submitted to this year’s competition and we hope that the process involved has helped the students recognise the potential dangers of CO.

He added: “CO has no smell, taste or colour and lives are lost every year because of CO poisoning. It is through awareness initiatives such as this competition that safety messages such as getting gas appliances safety checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer, and the need for an audible CO alarm can reach more people across Great Britain and save lives.”

First launched in 2007, the competition was founded and run for many years by charity CO-Gas Safety www.co-gassafety.co.uk in partnership with the GDNs. This year the GDNs, including Cadent, Northern Gas Networks, and Wales & West Utilities, have taken over the running of the competition. Each winner receives a cash prize for themselves and for their school/organisation.

Edinburgh employees impress MSP on depot visit

4 July 2017



Edinburgh MSP Alex Cole-Hamilton meeting with SGN's Edinburgh depot General Manager Eddie McAuley, Caroline Lawrie from the company's Stakeholder Engagement Team and Construction Manager Stuart Pender.

Employees at SGN's Edinburgh depot were given a ringing endorsement by Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP this week when he stopped by to hear more about the gas network company's business.

'Skilled', 'engaging' and 'passionate about what they do' were just some of the words used by the Liberal Democrat MSP to describe the employees he met while visiting the company's depot in Lonehead Drive, Newbridge on Monday.

SGN's Edinburgh depot looks after the network supplying gas to 475,000 homes and businesses across the city and the Borders, including Holyrood Palace and Edinburgh Castle. The depot is home to almost 170 employees, who provide gas network emergency maintenance and repair services, as well as new gas connections.

During his visit, Mr Cole-Hamilton, who is the MSP for Edinburgh Western, met with Eddie McAuley, the depot's General Manager, as well as Construction Manager Stuart Pender, who explained more about the company and about Edinburgh depot's activities in particular.

He showed a special interest during his visit in the company's programme of work to replace old metal gas mains with new plastic pipe to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas distribution network. The depot expects to upgrade 50 kilometres of old metal pipes, and Mr Cole-Hamilton was keen to hear how employees engage with the local community while this work is carried out. He also asked to be notified of any specific projects in his constituency.

While at the depot, he took the opportunity to meet with Caroline Lawrie from the company's Stakeholder Engagement team, to discuss SGN's initiatives to help vulnerable customers. These include its Help to Heat scheme, which is helping to lift thousands of low-income and vulnerable households across Scotland out of fuel poverty, and its free locking cooker valve, which is a simple safety device the company fits for free in the homes of vulnerable customers to eliminate the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on.

Speaking after his visit, Mr Cole-Hamilton said: "I rarely have the pleasure of visiting a company whose employees are so visibly passionate about what they do and so engaging to listen to. I was impressed with the wide array of tasks SGN undertake to put people's safety at the forefront of their mission. Furthermore, the way they engage with the local community was particularly impactful. I thank SGN for the opportunity to visit their dynamic headquarters and meet a few of their skilled employees."

SGN General Manager Eddie McAuley said: "We were very proud to have the opportunity to show Mr Cole-Hamilton around our depot. He told us he'd found his visit very informative and that it gave him a much clearer picture of how SGN fits into the gas industry, so from our perspective it was very worthwhile."

SGN team repays Tongham residents with community centre facelift

10 July 2017



The SGN team take a break from their work at the recreation ground around Tongham community centre.

An SGN team has given the recreation ground around Tongham Community Centre a facelift to thank the local community for their support while engineers battled to repair flooded gas pipes last year.

In May 2016, water flooded the gas network in the village causing 350 customers in the Surrey village to lose their gas supply. An emergency team from the gas network company's Aldershot depot used the community centre as their base of operations while engineers worked tirelessly to restore gas supplies.

SGN Business Performance Manager Richard Zapp, who helped organise the project, explained: "It's good to have a central point where members of the public can come and speak to us and where we can give out heaters and other equipment, so we were very grateful to the Tongham Parish for the use of their community centre.

"When we were here last year, we asked if there was anything we could do to say thank you and we were told the community centre car park and recreation ground were in need of a spruce-up. We promised then that we would come back and sort them out and that's exactly what we did!"

The 17-strong team worked tirelessly throughout the day, weeding the flower border and jet washing the car park, trimming borders on either side of the concrete drive, as well as clearing debris from footpaths, the balcony and drive. A tidy-up of trees and shrubs in the recreation ground completed its transformation.

They offered their help to the Parish as part of SGN's Community Action Programme (CAP) in which all employees are given a day off work on company time every year to help make a difference in their local community.

Victoria Perks, Administration Supervisor at SGN's Aldershot depot, said: "We worked solidly the whole day – and discovered muscles we didn't even know we had, but it made a nice change from being in the office. The Tongham Parish Council and Community Association/Centre Management were very appreciative of what we'd managed to achieve, so it felt really worthwhile."

Les Oakley, Tongham Parish Council Chairman, said: "We are very grateful to SGN for all their hard work. The recreation ground looks fabulous, and was ready just in time for our SAMFEST music festival last Saturday. Plus, we've already had comments from dog walkers about how well-maintained the area looks."

Young entrepreneurs share big ideas in national innovation competition

11 July 2017

Young entrepreneurs mentored by SGN have featured in the Solutions for the Planet (S4TP) national finals where they shared their ideas to key challenges affecting our planet.

Solutions for the Planet is a science, technology engineering and maths (STEM) programme with a focus on sustainability and entrepreneurship. It is delivered in partnership with energy, utility and construction companies, who support teams of students in KS3 to generate solutions or 'Big Ideas' to sustainability issues. These Big Ideas are submitted to a competition with semi-finals held at a regional university and finals at the Houses of Parliament in London.

While 'Bin it to Win it', a team of three girls from Pudsey Grangefield School in West Yorkshire, won the 2017 national final – held in the Palace of Westminster on Wednesday 5 July – two of the schools mentored by SGN volunteers also did fantastically well.

The Green Musketeers from Greenacre Academy, is a year seven all-boys team from Kent. They were one of the youngest teams in the final and were highly commended for their idea to create a dome full of trees and human friendly animals to raise money to protect jungles. Their mentor is our very own Property and Estates Co-ordinator Jodie Carroll. Jodie said: "Young people, especially women should be introduced to STEM subjects from a young age because they are very important and build the foundations for an interesting and challenging career for both boys and girls.

"Working with the students was a fantastic experience because I could watch them all grow as individuals and challenge themselves throughout the process."

Drone Aid, from Longfield Academy, which is also in Kent, was the other SGN-mentored finalist. The team is made up entirely of girls. They suggested a new system, using drones, to allow the emergency services to reach previously inaccessible people that need help.

'Bin it to Win it' won the final with the brilliant idea to create a rewards-based app and game to encourage young people to recycle. Their teacher, Subject Leader of Business, HSC and Psychology Sarah Boyes, said: "STEM subjects tend to be typically male dominated which is concerning because our current economy is very much STEM based. The jobs of the future and the competitive advantage of the country relies on the future generation being able to innovate and generate ideas faster and of a better quality than other economies. Programmes like this help to ensure that girls are a part of this movement.

"The girls have developed a really strong sense of self belief, they truly feel that they can go out and conquer the world and intend to do so."

Jen Baughan, CEO at Solutions for the Planet, said: "The confidence that the young people have developed and their belief in their ideas is fantastic, and it's down to the dedication and commitment from them, their immensely supportive teachers and mentors from our partner organisations. The young people demonstrated outstanding entrepreneurship, presentation skills and teamwork that they will carry with them into their future careers."

We've been working in partnership with S4TP for two years now. Along with partners Tarmac, the Institution of Gas Engineers and Managers (IGEM) and Brammer and Buck and Hickman, our role is to act as business mentors to support and develop students' 'Big Ideas'.

Over 3,400 secondary students from 26 schools across West Yorkshire, West Midlands and the South East joined the Solutions for the Planet 'Big Ideas' programme. The programme aims to build innovation partnerships between young people, businesses and communities and get the young people interested in science, technology, mathematics and engineering (STEM) subjects.

Mayor Liz Frost opens Epsom Park depot as SGN builds on commitment to Surrey

13 July 2017



Our apprentices Harry and Harley join Director of HR & Services Kate Naylor in meeting with Mayor of Epsom & Ewell Councillor Liz Frost and Consort Councillor Chris Frost

We're thrilled to have welcomed the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor Liz Frost, to officially open our new premises in Epsom.

At the ceremony yesterday morning, Cllr Frost unveiled a plaque celebrating the opening of the building and the gas network company's continuing commitment to the local area.

The new-build depot and offices, known as Epsom Park, provide a home for dozens of gas engineers, emergency repair managers, mains replacement colleagues, maintenance teams and administrative employees who have been amalgamated under one roof for the first time in the town.

The planning phase and construction of the depot has been ongoing for nearly two years. It replaces existing facilities in Epsom and South Godstone.

The new depot has a purpose-built building management system which controls things like ventilation, lighting and power. It also has meeting room facilities, energy monitoring, cutting edge security and future-proofed IT.

On-site warehouse and stores facilities have been designed specifically for the depot teams with state-of-the-art security. They'll be able to manage and distribute stores stock more effectively and have a safe and secure place to store equipment and polyethylene (PE) pipe used to upgrade the gas network.

Drainage was a significant challenge and we had to install a whole raft of below-ground special drainage racks to deal with it. We have used special intumescent curtaining to ensure compartmentalization for fire protection purposes; a first in our building projects and saving a lot of money.

Depot General Manager Paul James said: "The old sites have served us well over many years, however were a bit tired.

"All of us have enjoyed moving into the new depot and working together as one team to deliver our targets.

"The move will allow us to learn new skills, and provide a more efficient and flexible resource. Importantly, it will enable even closer working links with customers and contractors."

SGN owns and operates the gas distribution network in Southern England and Scotland, delivering gas to 5.9 million customers. At its Epsom base, it employs 184 people. Its area of operation stretches from Clapham, down to Kingswood and across from Leatherhead to New Addington. The visit by the Mayor has reinforced the company's relationship with the town.

On opening the new depot, Cllr Frost said: "I was delighted to be invited to open these excellent new facilities and meet the people there. I learnt a lot about gas networks from the many SGN staff I met on the day and it was good to hear how the team is keeping its local gas network and its customers safe and secure day-in day-out. It was also good to see the regeneration of the old Citilink site in the Epsom & Ewell borough."

Peter Webster, SGN's Director of Operations (South), said: "We're delighted with this new modern depot which underlines our plans to invest in the local gas network in the forthcoming years. Opening this facility is good news for our stakeholders, good news for our customers and employees, and good news for Epsom and the surrounding area."

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for St Mary Cray as part of £85,000 project

14 July 2017

We will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas network in Sevenoaks Way, St Mary Cray.

As part of a £85,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Bromley Council, our project will start on Monday 24 July and last approximately three months.

We'll be working in Sevenoaks Way in three phases. During the first five-week phase, we need to temporarily close Leasons Hill and Station Road at the junction with Sevenoaks Way to ensure everyone's safety around our work area. Signed diversions will be in place.

In early September, the junction will fully reopen and our engineers will move northwards along Sevenoaks Way towards Springvale Retail Park. We will maintain traffic in both directions around our work area, but we'll need to temporarily suspend the southbound bus stop for two weeks to keep traffic flowing along Sevenoaks Way.

In mid-September, we'll start our final phase of work in the verge along Sevenoaks Way. We won't be working in the carriageway during this stage, so there won't be any impact on motorists.

SGN Engineering Manager Paul Gibbons said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project, including working six days a week.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, St Mary Cray homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Lesmurdie Road, Elgin, as part of £490,000 project

18 July 2017

We will soon be starting work to upgrade the local gas network in Lesmurdie Road, Elgin, as part of a wider project to upgrade our gas network in the Bishopmill area.

As part of a £490,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Moray Council, our project will start on Monday 7 August and will last approximately 20 weeks.

We'll split this part of the project into two phases to help minimise disruption as much as possible.

Phase one will begin in Lesmurdie Road on Monday 7 July. To ensure everyone's safety, the road will be closed northbound between its junctions with Lossiemouth Road and Reis Street for approximately eight weeks. A signed diversion route will be in place for motorists via the A96 and the A941 North Street. Access for residents will be maintained at all times.

In phase two, temporary traffic lights will be in place in Lesmurdie Road between its junctions with Reid Street and Chandlers Rise for 12 weeks.

SGN Project Manager Alan Howie said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to minimise disruption during our essential project."

Local volunteers help bring the countryside into the city

19 July 2017



Down at the farm. FCOs Matt Cox (left) and Scott Reilly (right) from our Oxford depot

Oxford's new city farm moved a step closer to completion last Friday thanks to an army of volunteers from gas network company SGN and charity Oxfam. Almost 60 employees from the two organisations spent the day at the site, helping make the farm more accessible for visitors.

Oxford City Farm is a 2.5 acre site that is being transformed into a vibrant community-led city farm in the heart of east Oxford, near Florence Park. Its aim is to engage local people with the processes of food production and promote healthy eating and local food. With the help of volunteers, it is growing fruit and vegetables and hopes, in time, to expand to include farm animals.

The SGN team offered their support to Oxford City Farm as part of the company's Community Action Programme in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to help make a difference in their local community.

Oxford depot General Manager Richard Mendham explained how they got involved: "Last summer, we helped in the creation of a new horticulture therapy nursery in Cutteslowe Park. When the project manager for that scheme asked us to get involved with Oxford City Farm, we jumped at the chance.

"Our task today has been to prepare and lay a 130-metre-long path around the perimeter of the farm to allow visitors to stroll around the different areas. It's more than a day's work, so we're hoping to spend some more time here finishing the job off in the next few weeks.

"The city farm also backs onto a care home, so we've been asked to extend the pathway up to the boundary. Later in the year the plan is to put in a gate giving care home residents their own access to the farm."

On the same day, Oxford-based charity Oxfam also sent a team of 32 volunteers to help with laying raised flower beds, attacking bramble roots, pulling up ragwort, weeding and harvesting in the polytunnel.

Paul Mullins, Head of Supporter Services and Operations at Oxfam, said: "My team first volunteered with Oxford City Farm last year and enjoyed it so much that we came back again. We are helping to create a thriving outdoor space that the whole community will enjoy for years to come. Spending a few hours outdoors getting back to nature is an added bonus."

Oxford City Farm Chairman Lucie Mayer said she was thrilled to be welcoming SGN and Oxfam to the site and really looking forward to the transformational work they had planned:

“This type of partnership is a win-win situation,” she explained. “The farm benefits from receiving materials, funds, expertise and people power from the volunteering organisations, and the teams involved get a chance to participate in meaningful community-based activities that make a real difference. We are keen to grow this area of our activity and I would urge any local organisations interested in volunteering at our amazing site to get in touch.”

Exceptional contractors recognised at London award ceremony

20 July 2017

We recognised our exceptional contractors at our inaugural Replacement Contractor Excellence Awards (RCEAs), held at The Kia Oval cricket ground in London on Friday 14 July.

Head of Replacement (Southern) Tracey McIntyre explains: “We wanted to do something to recognise the excellent work and achievements of the dozens of replacement contractors we have in the south, working on our £250 million a year gas mains replacement programme. It’s incredibly important in every way that they deliver the work to the highest standards of safety and customer service. We wanted to honour those who’ve taken the service delivery to the next level, not just because this recognition is important but because it further unites us in striving to be the best together.”

Tracey added: “So we came up with the concept of a grand awards event where SGN managers and teams could nominate any of the contractors working for us, to go up for six specially designed categories. These included safety, customer experience and an overall contractor of the year.”

In the end there were 143 nominations across the six categories which the judges brought down to three finalists for each. Winners were announced on the night and can be seen listed below.

Tracey concluded: “Apart from it being a great event to recognise the excellence of some of our contractors, it was good so many of our replacement team managers got involved in the nominations. But what really was heart-warming, was the fact on the day the generosity of our contractors and own people really shone through as we raised a further £5,881 for the ‘You raise me up charity’. This is the charitable cause we’re helping to raise funds in memory of 11-year-old Harley Simpson, the son of Team Manager Gary Simpson from our Sussex depot.”

The winners:

Safety Award - Mark Claydon from I & G Contractors Ltd

Our judges wanted someone who demonstrates exceptional safety behaviour and acts as a role model to inspire others to ensure safety at work. Mark was described by judges as “being passionate about delivering safety and seeing his role as an ambassador for safety”.



Director of Operations (South) Peter Webster (left) and Head of Operations (Replacement) Tracey McIntyre (right) present the Safety award to Mark Claydon, I&G Contractors Ltd.

Customer Experience Award - Ian Ridgway from Ridgway Gas Contractors Ltd

Ian was presented the Customer Experience Award for continually delivering our customer promise and being committed to achieve outstanding customer service every time. Our judges said: "All the SGN managers who have worked with Ian over the past 10 years in the Oxford and Thames Valley area, have said they're really impressed with his customer skills and knowledge."



Tracey McIntyre (left) and Peter (right) present the Customer Experience award to Ian Ridgway, Ridgway Gas Contractors Ltd.

Inspirational Leader Award - Andy Holland from JDT Utilities Ltd

For this category, the judges were looking for someone who acts as a positive role model and leads by example to bring about outstanding performance in their team. Our judges said: "Andy spends countless hours on site using his own experience to coach and bring out the best in his team."



Peter Webster (left) and Tracey (right) present the Inspirational Leader award to Andy Magor, JDT Utilities, who received the award on behalf of his colleague Andy Holland.

Unsung Hero Award - Dan French, Nick Greenwood & Matthew Burzio from R & B Utilities Ltd

The team from R & B Utilities were witness to a serious road traffic collision which resulted in a vehicle overturning. The quick thinking of the team meant the stressful situation for those in the vehicle was minimised as were any further potential injuries. To our judges this showed “a real sense of pride and a commitment to getting things right”.



Tracey (far left) and Peter (far right) present the Unsung Hero award to (from l to r) Dan French, Nick Greenwood and Matthew Burzio from R&B Utilities.

Team of the Year - Luke Phillips and Shane Dudley from WCB Utilities Ltd

The judges looked for a team which continually adopts an effective approach to planning and coordination, pulling together as one to produce outstanding results. They described Shane and Luke as ‘an organised and committed team, which works very well together. No matter the project or task required they always maintain positive outlook and never lower their standards’.



Peter (far left) and Tracey (far right) present the Team of the Year award to Shane Dudley and Luke Phillips from WCB Utilities.

Contractor of the Year - WCB Utilities Ltd

For this category, the judges searched for a contractor that has our company's and our customer's best interests at heart day in, day out. According to the judges, the team at WCB Utilities 'always work with integrity and professionalism to present a positive image of SGN to all our stakeholders'.



Contractor of the Year WCB Utilities. Back row (l to r) Shane Dudley, Luke Phillips, Peter Dolling, Steve Clark, Kerry Davies, Dave Stevens and Director of Operations (South) Peter Webster. Front row (l to r) Head of Operations (Replacement) Tracey McIntyre, Wayne Butler and Lee Hillman.

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for Margate as part of £500,000 project

20 July 2017

We will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in the Shottendane Road area of Margate.

As part of a £500,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Kent County Council, our project will start on Monday 24 July and last approximately six weeks.

To ensure everyone's safety around our work area, we will have temporary traffic lights in place in Shottendane Road at its junction with Nash Road and Hartsdown Road. We'll be manually controlling these traffic lights at peak times to help traffic flow past our site.

We also need to temporarily close Nash Road at its junction with College Road for the duration of our project. A signed diversion will be in place for motorists via Ramsgate Road and Star Lane.

Our Engineering Manager Warwick Drawbridge said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project. We'll be working seven days a week to finish this work as quickly as safely as possible. We've also planned to carry out this project during the school summer holiday, when the roads are traditionally quieter, to reduce inconvenience to the local community.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, Margate homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for A23 Brixton Road as part of £2.4m project

21 July 2017

We will shortly be starting work to upgrade the local gas supply network in the A23 Brixton Road in the London Borough of Lambeth.

As part of a £2.4 million project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains and services need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Transport for London (TfL) and Lambeth Council, our project will start on Monday 31 July and last approximately seven months.

We'll be progressing southwards along the A23 Brixton Road from Camberwell New Road towards Normandy Road in sections. To ensure everyone's safety, we need to put lane restrictions in place around our work area in Brixton Road for the duration of the project. The centre two lanes will be closed with all traffic, including cyclists, filtered through the bus lanes.

We would encourage road users to please plan ahead and allow extra time for their journeys.

SGN Engineering Manager Paul Gibbons said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project, including working extended hours, seven days a week.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. By upgrading our network, we will continue to ensure a safe and reliable gas supply to south London homes and businesses for many years to come."

Plans to replace the gas network for Old Kilpatrick and Erskine

July 2017

We are currently considering the installation of a new pipeline crossing the River Clyde, near Erskine Bridge.

The gas network for the Erskine and Old Kilpatrick areas currently runs below the footways of the Erskine Bridge, which was opened in 1971.

In 2019, Transport Scotland are planning to undertake a four year maintenance and painting project on Erskine Bridge.

The initial phase of this work will require the existing footway panels to be removed during a partial bridge closure. This presents us with a unique opportunity to remove the existing gas pipelines from the bridge structure. Combining the gas pipeline removal with the painting works ensures that inconvenience to the public is minimised.

We're holding two information meetings this week as we consult with the community about the work:

Tuesday 25 July: Old Kilpatrick Bowling Club, Old Kilpatrick, Station Road, Glasgow, G60 5LX

Thursday 27 July: Erskine Bridge Hotel, Riverfront, Erskine, PA8 6AN

Please join us at 5.30pm. There will be a short presentation at 6pm, followed by an opportunity for you to speak to members of the project team who will be on hand to answer any questions and talk through our plans in more detail.

Football's coming home to Wouldham ... with a little help from SGN

24 July 2017



The SGN team (L-R: Freddie Fewtrell, Jamie Hodges and Aaron Dean), with Wouldham FC Manager Glenn Bulmer.

A trio of volunteers from our East Kent depot have helped Wouldham football club prepare for its first match on home turf in over 10 years, by laying the groundwork for the club's new changing rooms at Wouldham Park.

When Wouldham FC folded some years ago, its changing rooms were knocked down. Unable to play in the league with no changing facilities, when the new club was formed four years ago it was forced to play matches in the neighbouring villages of Borstal and Rainham.

The team has always wanted to be back in Wouldham, so earlier this year the players and their families, together with club sponsors such as the Medway Inn public house, raised enough money to buy a portacabin which could be used by the players for showering and changing.

Three volunteers from ours East Kent depot in Ashford spent a day at the club's new home ground, Wouldham Park, recently, excavating a trench for a water pipe and laying a drainage system to serve the new changing rooms.

The idea of offering the club their support came from Repair Engineer Aaron Dean, a former Wouldham FC player and friend of the club's current manager, Glenn Bulford. Aaron said: "Our company runs a Community Action Programme (CAP) in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to make a difference in their local community.

"When Glenn mentioned they were looking for someone to lay the groundwork for their new changing rooms, I thought it would be an ideal way for us to use our CAP days.

"We had a great time. We had initially only planned to dig the trench for the water pipe, but while we were there the landlord of the Medway Inn turned up with the equipment for the new drainage system, so we fitted that too.

"I played for Wouldham FC for five years and football is still a big part of my life, so I found it very rewarding to be able to give something back to the club that has given me so many good memories."

Wouldham FC Manager Glenn Bulford said: "Since the club re-formed, it's gone from strength to strength. We've still got a long way to go, but being back on home turf will give the lads a massive boost and we're really grateful to Aaron and his team for supporting us. With SGN's help, Wouldham are finally a step closer to playing back at home."

Glasgow depot hosts Alison Thewliss MP

24 July 2017

We hosted Alison Thewliss MP at our Glasgow depot on Friday. Alison, who is an SNP MP for Glasgow Central, looked at the innovative ways we work in the road including how we use our core and vac machines to reduce the size of our excavations and inconvenience to motorists and local residents.

Alison then met our apprentices who shared their learning experiences at SGN and how they've been involved with promoting our apprenticeship programme to young people in local schools and raising awareness of career opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects.

Alison also saw a demonstration of our locking cooker valve – a free safety device to keep vulnerable people gas safe in their own homes.

Coatbridge volunteers aid restoration of hidden Lanarkshire gem

25 July 2017



Volunteers from our Coatbridge depot at Millheugh country estate.

Volunteers from SGN teamed up with Lanarkshire environmental group Friends of the Calder to help improve the Millheugh Estate for the local community.

The Millheugh country estate is one of Lanarkshire's hidden gems, regularly used by local residents for walking, fishing and other outdoor pursuits. The estate is now under the control of South Lanarkshire Council, but funding is scarce and the upkeep of the estate relies heavily on willing volunteers through environmental groups like Friends of the Calder.

A team of 22 volunteers, all from SGN's Coatbridge depot in Burnbank Street, spent the day at the estate recently, splitting into four groups to tackle as many jobs as possible. Between them they cleared away Snowberry bushes which were taking over at the area's much-loved Calder Falls, cut back growth hiding the old Victorian bath house, created a path alongside the newly-created pond at Barnhill, and chopped up a tree that had been preventing water flowing through Millheugh Bridge.

General Manager of SGN's Coatbridge depot, Gary Connor, was one of those who took part. He said: "Some of the areas on the estate, such as the derelict Victorian bath house and the old oak tree had become a magnet for anti-social behaviour; people had been leaving broken glass and litter behind them and setting light to the base of the tree. We cleared those areas, making them visible to anyone passing by and therefore a less attractive place to congregate."

It was a member of the SGN party, Team Leader Jim Devine, who first alerted Gary and his colleagues to the need for the work. Jim Devine, a community councillor and Friends of the Calder member, said: "I live in Blantyre and my wife and I regularly use the paths on the Millheugh Estate for walking and it was clear they were in need of some care and attention.

"SGN runs a community action scheme in which every employee gets one day each year on company time to make a difference in their local community and I had been looking for a suitable project for our community day for some time. This seemed like the perfect choice, so I raised it with Gary and between us we got a team together.

“Because it was something different for a lot of the guys, they were very enthusiastic to take part. We had great fun on the day and it was a fantastic way of getting to know people you wouldn’t usually see on a daily basis. And from a personal perspective I was very proud to be able to do something so worthwhile for my local community.”

Susan Lindner, Chair of Friends of the Calder, said: “The team arrived in their vans bright and early, armed with their tools and diggers – not to mention bags of energy! We’d set them a fair list of tasks to keep them busy and they worked all day until they’d got through them.

“By clearing these areas out, they have opened them up to make them much more inviting for everyone to use, and we are delighted at the difference they have made to the area for their community.”

SGN rallies the troops for Bovington Royal British Legion

28 July 2017



The volunteers take a break from their restoration work at the site of the Royal British Legion's new Bovington club.

When the Royal British Legion needed help to give its new branch in Bovington a facelift before its opening this September, it called in the cavalry. Forty three volunteers – almost half from SGN – gave up their time to transform the building.

The new club will be held in Bovington's former Clouds Inn public house, which has been leased to the Royal British Legion by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), with three years abatement on the rent. In the four years since the pub closed down, the building had become rundown and was badly in need of a spring clean, some minor repairs and a lick of paint.

Twenty employees from our Southern Maintenance team joined local residents and Legion members, as well as teams from the MoD and its asset contractor Carillion, to help with the restoration work. In just one day, they managed to complete two weeks' work, cleaning the building from top to bottom and painting it inside and out.

When the Bovington club opens in September it will be the first new branch of the Royal British Legion in 45 years. Engineering Project Manager Simon Thurlow, who has been asked to become its Vice Chairman, said: "Being involved with the Royal British Legion and this new venture for the charity is an honour, and I'm confident it is going to bring so much to the local community.

"There's been a real will among residents and new Royal British Legion members in Bovington to get the club off the ground – people have been paying their membership even though there hasn't been a club to go to, because they want to be involved when it opens.

"This 'can do' attitude was reflected in the volunteering day. We had a mammoth task to complete, but everyone worked like Trojans and it all ran very smoothly. Everyone had a great time and as Vice Chairman of the new club, I found it particularly rewarding to see it taking shape."



Simon Thurlow (R) and Dean Smith

Gerry Nunn, Dorset County Chairman for the Royal British Legion, said: “One of the most heart-warming things I have seen for a long time was the SGN volunteers all working to help us get Bovington’s Royal British Legion club ready for its opening – it was like DIY SOS without the celebrities! By the end of the day the club was well on its way for the finishing touches to be made.

“When the club opens in Bovington in September it will be as a result of the branch’s persistence to provide a hub in which its members can socialise, and a centre for activities and events to support the Armed Forces Community, and we are very grateful to the SGN volunteers for their support in making it happen.”

SGN volunteers get their hands dirty at Butser Ancient Farm

31 July 2017



Members of the SGN team (L-R): Gloria Onuh, Garry King and Otilie Morris take a break from their work at Butser Ancient Farm.

A team of employees from SGN rolled up their sleeves and quite literally got their hands dirty when they volunteered at Butser Ancient Farm recently.

The eight-strong group, all from SGN's Walton Park office in Portsmouth, split into two teams, each spending one day at the farm. They were tasked with applying daub to the interior of the farm's new Danebury Roundhouse and sorting Roman mosaic tiles (tesserae) into different colour tones, ready to be used in the renovations of the farm's Roman villa.

Butser Ancient Farm, near Petersfield, is a world-renowned hub for archaeological research, carrying out pioneering experiments to understand how the people of ancient Britain lived. Its Danebury roundhouse, based on archaeological evidence from Danebury Hillfort near Andover, is one of many ancient dwellings at the farm, all of which have been constructed to help visitors get a feel for how we used to live.

The idea of volunteering at Butser Ancient Farm came from SGN Operations Control Team Manager Ann Henderson. She said: "I read an article in my local paper about some other people who had volunteered there and it sounded really interesting.

"SGN gives everyone who works for the company one day each year on its own time to help out in their local community, and when I suggested to the rest of my team about approaching the farm, there were some keen volunteers.

"Putting your hand in a bucket of daub for the first time feels quite peculiar to start with, but then it becomes quite therapeutic. Quite a few parties of school children came round while we were working and of course they thought it was hilarious when they heard daub was made from cow manure!

"Our normal day job involves sitting in the office at a computer, so this was a complete contrast. At one point I even found myself helping to round up a baby goat who had managed to escape from his pen. We felt a

tremendous sense of achievement at the end of the two days as we'd managed to 'daub' the whole interior of the roundhouse."

Trevor Creighton, Projects Co-ordinator for Butser Ancient Farm said: "The volunteers did a fantastic job and we were incredibly impressed by the quantity and quality of what they achieved in such a short time. It now means we can move the building on to the next phase and finish the outside soon – ready for the autumn term."

Former SGN apprentice graduates with distinction

1 August 2017



Ryan at his graduation from Aston University.

One of our former apprentices from Provan depot has graduated with distinction from Aston University after completing a foundation engineering degree.

Ryan Higgins, 28, joined our apprenticeship scheme in 2010. After completing his training, he was promoted to his current role as a Maintenance Team Manager at our Provan depot, where he is responsible for looking after the teams and equipment that control the pressure of gas in SGN's network.

Ryan studied for his degree on a block-release basis at the university in Birmingham. He explained what prompted him to return to his studies: "I enjoy learning and I'm very ambitious and I thought getting a qualification could only be beneficial to my career. I initially spoke to my manager about doing an Open University degree, but he suggested the foundation degree as it was much closer allied to what I was doing at SGN."

The former winner of our Apprentice of the Year award said he was extremely grateful to the company for supporting him through his studies: "SGN not only financed my degree, but also gave me time off work to attend college.

"I'd be lying if I said it wasn't hard work, particularly as my second child was born while I was studying towards my degree, but I've had great support from the company, my tutors and my fellow students.

"Studying towards my degree has given me a more in-depth knowledge about the science behind the equipment I work on, and greater confidence when dealing with colleagues in other departments," he added. "My aim now is to work towards my BEng (Hons) degree and, hopefully, progress further up the ladder with SGN."

SGN Maintenance Manager Gerry McCormack, who interviewed Ryan for his apprenticeship seven years ago and has been his line manager ever since, said: “Ryan’s a very level-headed, conscientious young man. It’s been a busy time for him, looking after the day-to-day running of the pressure control teams in his area at the same time as studying towards his degree, but he knows how to prioritise and he’s done a great job.”

Another of Ryan’s colleagues, Project Officer Jonathan Wan, also graduated from Aston University along with him. Jonathan, who earlier this year earned the title of ‘Unsung Hero’ in our Outstanding People Awards, works as part of SGN’s Edinburgh Network Construction team. He already has an honours degree in engineering, but opted to take additional modules at the university to supplement his mechanical engineering knowledge.

Panos Doss, Ryan and Jonathan’s tutor at Aston University, said he had nothing but praise for Ryan and Jonathan: “They were very, very hard-working – model students and they used their industry experience to support their fellow students. As a university lecturer, it’s always difficult to get ‘live’ information about what’s going on in industry, so being able to tap into their experience helped me shape the course and develop it even further.”

Neil Snell, our Head of Technical Learning, said: “Right from day one, Ryan and Jonathan have shown they are capable, ambitious and keen to learn, and as a company, we’re always keen to invest in people who demonstrate those qualities.”

Dundee volunteers help clean up Fife beaches

1 August 2017



The team from SGN's Dundee depot take a break from their clean-up work at Lower Largo beach.

Volunteers from gas distribution company SGN cleared almost 15 bags of rubbish when they helped clean up Fife's Lower Largo Beach and Shell Bay recently as part of the company's Community Action Programme.

Working on behalf of the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, the 12-strong team from SGN's Maintenance team in Dundee picked up an assortment of litter that had been washed up on the shore, including old car tyres, yoghurt cartons, buckets and spades and oil containers.

The idea of cleaning up the beach came from SGN Maintenance Manager John Forsyth. He said: "I was shocked by a documentary I saw on Sky a few weeks ago called *The Plastic Whale*. It was about a stranded whale whose stomach was found to be full of plastic packaging when they opened it up.

"A few weeks later, I saw a similar story on the BBC news about another whale stranded off the Isle of Skye that had four kilos of plastic debris recovered from its stomach. The fact that this happened so close to home made me determined to try and do something," he said. "SGN gives everyone one day off each year to make a difference in their local community, so I had a chat with my team and we thought this would be a really good use of our time."

John got in touch with the Fife Coast and Countryside Trust, which manages the beaches in Fife. They provided the team with refuse bags and also disposed of the rubbish the team managed to collect.

The team walked nine miles in total, crossing from Lower Largo Beach onto Shell Bay, as John explained: "Lower Largo wasn't too bad, but when we got to Shell Bay, it was littered with debris," he said. "We collected almost 15 rubbish bags full and a lot of it was made of plastic, which is a real hazard to marine life, so we really felt as though we'd made a difference.

"It was also a great day out for the whole Maintenance team. The weather was unusually good and after we'd finished, we had a barbeque on the beach – and took our rubbish with us of course!"

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for Sevenoaks as part of £200,000 project

3 August 2017

We'll shortly be starting its latest phase of work to upgrade the local gas supply network in London Road, Sevenoaks.

As part of a £200,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with Kent County Council, the next phase of our project will start on Monday 7 August and last approximately three weeks.

We'll be working in London Road between Granville Road and Hitchen Hatch Lane. To ensure everyone's safety around our work area, London Road will temporarily become one-way northbound between Granville Road and Hitchen Hatch Lane. A signed diversion will be in place for through traffic wishing to travel southbound on London Road towards the town centre. Access will be maintained to Sevenoaks Station from both directions throughout our work.

We also need to close Granville Road at its junction with London Road for the duration of this phase. Access will be maintained via South Park.

SGN Engineering Manager Steve Colvin said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, Sevenoaks homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Horley animal lovers lend a hand at Edenbridge rescue home

11 August 2017



Animal-loving volunteers from our Horley head office were in their element when they spent the day helping out at the Last Chance Animal Rescue home in Edenbridge.

Last Chance Animal Rescue is a Kent-based charity which rescues, rehabilitates and re-homes dogs, cats and rabbits. A high proportion of its residents are dogs which the charity saves from 'death row' in Welsh pounds, and for whom the rescue centre truly is their last chance.

Four volunteers from our Horley Connections team spent the day at the rescue home. As well as helping with fun chores like walking and playing with the dogs, they also rolled up their sleeves to tackle some of the more essential tasks such as cleaning out kennels, painting kennel walls and washing the rescue home's vans.

The group offered their support to the charity as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) which gives every employee one day a year on company time to make a difference in their local community.

Horley Connections Process Assistant Meagan Dorney, who organised the volunteering day, said: "Some of our colleagues helped out at the rescue home last year and had a great time, so when we were discussing what we'd like to do for this year's CAP day, the decision was unanimous.

"We all thoroughly enjoyed our time there. The animals are all such characters it's hard to understand how anyone could abandon them. While we were cleaning the kennel windows, for instance, two of the dogs kept passing their ball under the gate for us to throw for them.

“My favourite Last Chance resident was Buster, a 14-year-old Staffordshire terrier. Staffies get a bad press, but he was so gentle and affectionate. If I didn’t work full-time I would’ve be tempted to take him home with me right there and then.”

Susan Anderson, Office Manager at Last Chance Animal Rescue, said: “It was a pleasure to have SGN helping out for the day; it’s so lovely for the animals to have some extra fuss and attention. At Last Chance we always welcome volunteers coming in to help walk our dogs, or business groups looking to do something a bit different for the day.

Edinburgh manager takes to two wheels to raise funds for charity

17 August 2017



Kevin (far right) and his wife Elaine (2nd left), before getting on their bikes to raise money for Parkinson's UK at the Stirling Pedal for Parkinson's event. Former Scotland rugby union player Gavin Hastings (pictured to the left of Kevin) also took part in the ride.

A £500 donation from our charitable Into Action fund has boosted the fundraising efforts of one of our managers in Edinburgh, who cycled over 50 miles this month to raise money for research into Parkinson's Disease.

Kevin Macdonald, General Manager of Special Projects at our Edinburgh office, was among 190 cyclists who took part in Pedal for Parkinson's a sportive run by the charity Parkinson's UK.

The Pedal for Parkinson's route starts and finishes at Stirling High School, and riders are able to choose from three routes of varying difficulty: 23 miles, 34 miles for 51 miles. The 51-mile route takes those riders brave enough to choose it through the stunning scenery of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

Kevin explained what prompted him to take part in the event: "My wife's father was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease two years ago, so we'd been looking to do something that would raise money for a Parkinson's charity.

"We saw this event advertised locally and thought we'd take part. When they heard we were doing the ride, a group of friends from our local village decided to join us and my daughter also took part in the 23-mile ride, so there was quite a group of us in the end.

"Neither my wife nor I are keen cyclists – my training consisted of one 15-mile cycle ride three months ago – so we found 51 miles a bit of a struggle to say the least.

"The first 20 miles of the ride went well, but then we reached Duke's Pass – a four-kilometre-long stretch of road on a 240-metre incline. That's when we really started to struggle. It was definitely the hardest part of the ride, but we persevered and made it to the top – an achievement that was probably the highlight of the whole event for me."

Donations are still coming in, but so far Kevin, his wife Elaine and the rest of the team have raised nearly £2,000 for Parkinson's UK in sponsorship from family, friends and colleagues. This total has been boosted even

further by a £500 donation from our Into Action fund, which supports employees who give up their time for charity.

Volunteers solve parking problem for St Boswells animal rescue centre

24 August 2017



The team take a well-earned break from their hard work at Arthurshiels Animal Rescue Centre.

A team of volunteers from our Galashiels depot have lent a helping hand to an animal rescue centre on the Scottish Borders by creating a new car parking area and giving kennels at the centre a lick of paint.

Arthurshiels Rescue Centre in St Boswells provides shelter and care to domestic animals, with a view to finding homes for them, and also to injured wildlife, caring for them until they are fit enough to be re-introduced to the wild. The Centre receives no government or lottery funding, so is entirely reliant on the support of volunteers and fundraising to continue its valuable work.

Seventeen of our volunteers spent two days at the rescue centre, creating a new car parking area by using a digger to clear stones, weeds and soil and replacing it with hardcore and tarmac. They also painted the inside of the centre's kennels and fences surrounding the cattery, before clearing out its barn.

Emergency Engineer Ryan Allison said: "Our company gives us one day each year on company time to help out in our local community. I'd read about Arthurshiels in my local paper and thought that I would really like to give some time to such a worthy cause. When I suggested it to the guys back at the depot, I was inundated with volunteers.

"We really enjoyed our two days there, and although we worked flat out, we got through a lot of jobs. It was very rewarding to be able to stand back at the end of the two days and see what we had achieved."

Centre Manager Shona Middlemas explained that volunteers like the team from SGN are a huge asset to the Sanctuary. She said: "The amount of work they got through in two days was absolutely phenomenal! We didn't have any car parking before – everyone just parked where they could, which often meant having to move our cars so someone else could get out. If we had to pay for the work they did, it would've cost us a huge amount. Now that money can be put towards other things for the benefit of our animals."



The car park before our volunteers got to work



The car park after

Our Solicitor Laura graduates top of the class from University of Westminster

8 September 2017



Our Construction and Disputes Solicitor Laura Gale has graduated top of her postgraduate class with a Distinction in Dispute Resolution and Conflict Prevention.

As part of her master's degree, Laura undertook a 15,000-word dissertation on Litigation Public Relations within crisis management. This considered the way lawyers and PR professionals collaborate when dealing with legal disputes in the public eye.

Laura spent two years studying part time at the University of Westminster alongside her full-time role in our Legal team. Laura, who is based at our head office in Horley, also attended two evening classes a week at the university's central London campus.

Laura explained: "As well as covering the cost of my second-year tuition fees, SGN also allowed me the flexibility to work from our London depot so I could get to university in time for my evening classes. Without that support, and the unwavering understanding of my manager, I would have really struggled to overcome the challenges of studying and working full-time."

Laura added: "It wasn't easy being back in the academic world more than 10 years after my last qualification, but I'd really encourage anyone thinking about further education to go for it. Even before graduating, I had already begun using the knowledge and skills I gained from the wide range of modules covered by my MA in my day-to-day role. Despite the challenges of balancing my studies, work and home life, it's not put me off further academic studies in future. I'm considering completing a PhD in Law at some point!"

Caroline Williams, Head of Talent and Development, said: "We're extremely proud of Laura's achievement and dedication, as it's very challenging to balance the demands of a full-time role with studying. As a company, we're looking into ways to further support our talented people, like Laura, to be the best they can be. Investing in the professional and personal development of our employees is all part of our commitment to lead the way in energy delivery."

Team repays Gillingham community with primary school facelift

8 September 2017



The SGN team take a break from their work at St Mary's Primary School.

Pupils at St Mary's Primary School in Gillingham are returning to a newly spruced-up playground and classrooms this week.

In May this year, almost 200 customers in the Dorset town were temporarily without their gas supply after water flooded the gas network. An emergency team from our Poole depot used the primary school's main hall as our base of operations while engineers worked all hours to restore gas supplies.

The team hadn't forgotten the school's generosity and while school was out for the summer, it was back to the classroom for our 36 volunteers. Working tirelessly through the week in five smaller groups, they painted walls and woodwork in the main hall and one of the classrooms, weeded footpaths around the playing fields and removed an old wooden maze that had been concreted into the ground.

Our Poole depot offered their help to the school as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which all our employees are given a day off work on company time every year to help make a difference in their local community.

Team Manager Chris Homer, who helped organise the project, explained: "It's good to have a central point where members of the public can come and speak to us, so we were very grateful to the primary school for allowing us to use their facilities.

"While we were here, we asked if there was anything we could do to say thank you and we were told the school's main hall and playing fields were in need of a spruce-up, so we promised to come back and sort them out."

"It was rewarding to be able to do something to say thank you to the school and to the local community for their support, and it was also a great way for the different teams at Poole depot to come together.

“We had members of our Connections and Repair teams there, along with emergency engineers, administration staff and team managers,” he continued. “We rounded off each day with a barbecue and donuts – it was a great way to get to know each other.”

Sarah Bullimore, Headteacher at St Mary’s Primary School, said: “The St Mary’s School community all very much appreciate the hard work that the team put into improving our school environment both inside and out. The children now have more available play space and a better learning environment, and our Year Six children are especially pleased with their refurbished classroom.

“We found the SGN team to be very friendly and hardworking. It was a pleasure to accommodate the company when the need arose in May and to work alongside them more recently when doing the community project.”

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Giffnock as part of £80,000 project

12 September 2017

SGN is investing £80,000 to upgrade its network in the Norbreck Drive area of Giffnock, Glasgow.

This essential work involves replacing old, metal gas mains with new plastic pipe, which has a minimum lifespan of 80 years, to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply for the local area.

Following discussions with Glasgow City Council, work will start on Monday 18 September 2017 and will last for approximately 14 weeks.

Our work will begin in Norbreck Drive on Monday 18 September. During our 14-week project, we'll also be working in Carleton Drive, Dinard Drive and Ravenstone Drive. Some parking restrictions may be in place occasionally, but access to driveways will be available at all times.

SGN Project Manager Scott Barbour said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to minimise disruption during our essential project.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, homes and businesses in the area will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Gas mains upgrade in the pipeline for Hamilton as part of £300,000 project

12 September 2017

SGN is investing £300,000 to upgrade its network in the Burnbank Road area of Hamilton.

This essential project involves replacing old, metal gas mains with new plastic pipe, which has a minimum lifespan of 80 years, to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply for the local area. The work forms part of an ongoing gas mains replacement programme in Hamilton developed with the Health and Safety Executive.

Following discussions with South Lanarkshire Council, work will start on Monday 18 September 2017 and will last for approximately 14 weeks.

Our work will begin in Burnbank Road on Monday 18 September at its junction with Yews Crescent. Temporary two-way traffic lights will be in place in Burnbank Road when required, moving along the eastbound carriageway as our work progresses. The lights will ensure traffic can flow past our work area safely and will be manually controlled to minimise disruption to motorists.

During our 14-week project, we'll also be working in Yews Crescent, Dalziel Street, Linden Lea and Linwood Terrace. Some parking restrictions may be in place occasionally, but access to driveways will be available at all times.

SGN Project Manager David Black said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to minimise disruption during our essential project. Where possible, we'll be working extended hours and on weekends to ensure our work is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, homes and businesses in the area will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for Weymouth as part of £450,000 project

12 September 2017

SGN is investing £450,000 to upgrade its network in Westwey Road, Weymouth.

This essential project involves replacing our existing gas pressure regulator in Westwey Road to meet the increased gas demand from local homes and businesses. The regulator is a piece of equipment that maintains the pressure in the network. This essential work will ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community for many years to come.

Following discussions with Dorset County Council, work will start on Wednesday 20 September 2017 and will last for approximately 10 weeks.

We'll begin installing and connecting the new gas pressure regulator to our network on Wednesday 20 September. We'll be working in Westwey Road next to the gas holder.

During our 10-week project, we will need to install temporary two-way traffic lights around our work area to ensure the safety of motorists and our engineers. We'll manually control these lights while we work to help traffic flow along Westwey Road and minimise disruption for motorists.

SGN Project Manager Simon Thurlow said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to minimise disruption during our essential project. We'll be working extended hours and on weekends to ensure our work is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new pressure regulator will be able to meet the increased gas demand in the area. This means once the work has been completed, homes and businesses in the area will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Dumfries depot volunteers improve garden access for care home residents

12 September 2017



Elderly residents of Charnwood Lodge in Dumfries are finding it easier to get out and about in the care home's grounds after a team of volunteers from our local depot laid new pathways to improve disabled access.

Twelve volunteers from our Dumfries depot spent two days at the care home, laying paving-stone pathways through the garden to improve access for residents who walk with a frame or need a wheelchair. While there, they also painted fences around the garden's border.



The finished pathway through the garden

Charnwood Lodge is a 60-bed residential care home in Dumfries that provides specialist nursing care to older people and those living with dementia. The idea of offering support to the care home came from one of our depot team, Robin Armstrong, whose mother is a resident there.

Robin said: "Our company runs a scheme in which everyone gets one day out of the office each year to help in their local community. When I offered to help out at Charnwood Lodge, Kerry, the care home manager, was delighted.

“We had a great time, and it was really nice for the whole team to work together in an informal environment. The care home staff were over the moon with what we’d managed to do, and when I was there visiting my mum on Sunday, everyone I met commented on it.”

Kerry Higgins, Care Home Manager for Charnwood Lodge, said: “The SGN team were fantastic and worked so hard over the two days that they were with us. The improvements they made to our garden will make a massive difference to the lives of the people we support.”

Our London West depot takes a walk on the wild side

13 September 2017



Residents of Howletts Wild Animal Park near Canterbury will have plenty of tasty treats and things to keep them occupied this winter, thanks in part to a team of SGN volunteers.

Five volunteers from our London West depot spent a busy morning at the Park, stripping willow branches and packing the leaves away to be frozen. They will be fed to the animals in the winter when the trees are bare.

Rather than throw away the leftover willow branches, the team spent the afternoon weaving them into baskets to be given to the macaque monkeys. The monkeys' keeper hides edible treats in the baskets for the monkeys to find, which keeps their minds active and stops them from getting bored.

Howletts Wild Animal Park is set in 90 acres of ancient parkland. Set up as a private collection in 1957, the park was opened to the public in 1975 and has since earned a reputation for its commitment to the conservation, breeding and re-introduction of rare and endangered animals.

The volunteers offered their support to the Park as part of our Community Action Programme, in which every employee is given one day each year to help out in the community.

Maintenance Administration Assistant Caroline Baxter explained what prompted her team to ask about volunteering at the park: "Some of our colleagues helped paint the elephant enclosure here last summer and enjoyed their day so much we thought we'd see whether they needed any more help.

"Although it was hard work, we had an amazing time! The highlight for me was getting to feed some of the primates after lunch. First we fed the Gelada baboons – they were really cool-looking, but we could only feed them through the bars of their enclosure as they have rather sharp teeth! Then we fed the lemurs, which jumped all over us trying to be the first one to get to the food."



Our Maintenance Admin Assistant Caroline feeds the lemurs

Adrian Harland, Animal Director at Howletts Wild Animal Park said: "We're very grateful to the SGN team for helping us collect leaves for the winter and also make enrichment items to amuse our primates. Enrichment is vital to help keep our animals active, stimulated and interested. The lion-tailed macaques really enjoyed their willow baskets and continued playing with them even after all the treats had been eaten!"

We've pledged our support for Gas Safety Week 2017



During 15 – 21 September 2017, we raised awareness of gas safety to help reduce the number of dangerous gas appliances and keep everyone and their families gas safe.

Gas Safety Week was also an opportunity for us to highlight the work we do all year round to promote gas safety. This includes warning about the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO), encouraging people to invest in and test their CO alarms and teaching people, including school children, about the symptoms of CO poisoning. And, working alongside the other gas network companies, promoting our locking cooker valve.

CEO John Morea said: “This Gas Safety Week we’re working with Gas Safe Register to encourage people to have their gas appliances checked every year by a Gas Safe registered engineer and to learn the symptoms of CO poisoning. It’s also a chance for us to talk about our award-winning locking cooker valve. This is a simple safety device that’s making a massive difference to some of our most vulnerable customers, such as people with Alzheimer’s or autism. What’s more, we’re offering this life-changing service for free.

“The valve is fitted to existing gas cooker pipework. When the valve is locked, the gas supply to the cooker is stopped. This eliminates the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on. The carer or relative can easily turn the valve on when the cooker is required using the key, enabling the gas cooker to be used safely.

“Not only does the locking cooker valve help vulnerable customers retain their independence, it also provides reassurance to family, friends and carers.”

With 21 deaths and over 800 gas-related injuries in the last three years, it’s crucial that people have their appliances checked each year to be assured they are working safely and efficiently. People should also check that their engineer is Gas Safe registered. Anyone working on gas appliances while not being registered is working illegally.

Jonathan Samuel, Managing Director for Gas Safe Register, said: “It’s great to have the support of SGN in this year’s Gas Safety Week. By working together, we can reach more people and help to reduce the number of dangerous gas appliances that could be lurking in the homes of the UK’s 23 million gas consumers. We know from our own investigations data that one in six gas appliances in the UK are unsafe meaning far too many people are victims of preventable gas related incidents.”

Stay Gas Safe at home this Gas Safety Week by following these top tips:

Sign up to a free annual gas safety check reminder service at www.staygassafe.co.uk.

Be aware of the signs that an unsafe gas appliance may cause such as a lazy yellow flame instead of a crisp blue flame; soot or staining on or around the appliance; excess condensation in the room.

Know the symptoms of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. CO gas is known as the 'silent killer' as it has no smell, taste or colour. The symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, breathlessness, collapse and loss of consciousness, which can easily be mistaken for something else.

To refer someone who might benefit from our [locking cooker valve](#), call 0800 975 1818 or email locking.valve@sgn.co.uk.

Always ask to see an engineer's Gas Safe ID card and check it to make sure the engineer is qualified to check or fit the appliance in question.

To find out about dangers in your area visit www.StayGasSafe.co.uk and to find a Gas Safe registered engineer call 0800 408 5500 or visit www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk.

Silver award from Ministry of Defence for armed forces support

27 September 2017



General Manager Simon Russell from our Sussex depot collects the award on board HMS Victory.

At a ceremony on board HMS Victory earlier this month, we were among just 20 employers from across the UK presented with a Silver award by the Ministry of Defence for our support of our armed forces.

The Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS) encourages employers to support those who serve in the forces and inspire other organisations to do the same. The scheme encompasses bronze, silver and gold awards for organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support for the armed forces community.

Our Silver award status means we have not only demonstrated our support for service personnel and employ people with military backgrounds, but we also show flexibility to our employees with armed forces training commitments, such as military reservists and adult volunteers involved in cadet forces. As a company, we also signed the Armed Forces Covenant – a promise ensuring that those who serve or who have served, and their families, are treated fairly.

Alongside his day job at SGN, our Senior Engineering Design Manager Russell Goodayle is also a senior volunteer with the Royal Air Force Air Cadets. Russell said: “SGN’s flexible leave arrangements have allowed me to attend various camps, training courses, meetings and functions in support of my current senior volunteering role as Officer Commanding Kent Wing Royal Air Force Air Cadets. This flexibility has also helped many fellow Cadet Force Adult Volunteers (CFAVs) do tremendous work with the young people in our communities and my reservists colleagues go on to achieve great things with the regular armed forces at home and abroad.

“Employers supporting the armed forces, reserves and cadet forces benefit from the vast skillset that the ex-military personnel, reservists and CFAVs bring to the workplace. The support of their employer is essential to allow them to undergo training and to maximise their professionalism in their additional and voluntary roles.”

General Manager Simon Russell from our Sussex depot collected the award on board HMS Victory. Simon said: "Receiving this award on behalf of SGN, in the presence of senior figures from the military, was a real honour. It was even more special as it took place on HMS Victory, in the shadow of the newest addition to the fleet, HMS Queen Elizabeth.

"Understanding that SGN supports reservists, adult volunteers and employees from a military background makes me proud to receive the award on everyone's behalf."

Gas network upgrade in the pipeline for East Grinstead as part of £74,000 project

4 October 2017

We will shortly be starting work to upgrade our gas network in London Road, East Grinstead.

As part of a £74,000 investment project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, the existing metal gas mains need to be replaced with modern plastic pipe.

The essential work forms part of an ongoing mains replacement programme developed with the Health and Safety Executive. Following discussions with West Sussex County Council, we'll be working in London Road in two phases. Our project will start on Monday 9 October and last approximately 12 weeks.

From Monday 9 October, we need to temporarily close one lane in London Road (A22) from Station Road to St James Road. Traffic will be reduced to one lane past our work area for approximately five weeks to ensure everyone's safety.

To avoid disrupting the town in the run-up to the busy festive season, we'll suspend our project from Friday 17 November.

On Monday 8 January, we'll return to London Road to begin the second phase of our project. During this seven-week phase, we need to close London Road at its junction with Railway Approach. A signed diversion will be in place for through traffic in both directions via A22 Beeching Way, High Street and London Road.

SGN Engineering Manager Steve Colvin said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project. Our engineers will be working six days a week to complete this project as quickly and efficiently as possible.

"We appreciate that roadworks can be frustrating, however, the new plastic pipe has a minimum lifespan of 80 years. This means once the work has been completed, East Grinstead homes and businesses will enjoy the benefits of a continued safe and reliable gas supply for many years to come."

Community project forges ahead with help from Orpington volunteers

13 October 2017



The SGN team from left: Jamie Kingdon, Dave Simmons, Dan Mills, Neil Baxter, Gina Burgess, Michelle Goodburn, Wes Goldwin, Glenn Miller and Steve Martin take a break from their work.

A community project in South East London, which is geared towards increasing the confidence, skills and wellbeing of local residents, has moved a step closer to its launch with a helping hand from a team of our volunteers.

Edible Rotherhithe is aiming to transform a vacant area of land at the rear of a social housing estate into a thriving new community space. The project is geared towards supporting the well-being of local residents through carpentry, arts and crafts, and food-growing activities, so they feel able to access local training, employment and other developmental opportunities.

Nine volunteers from our Southern Risers depot in St Mary Cray pitched in to help at the project site near the Silverlock Estate in Rotherhithe. There they levelled off and cleared an overgrown area to make way for a new polytunnel, and painted a 20' by 8' shipping container which will be converted into a ceramics workshop.

Our team heard about Edible Rotherhithe from the local tenants' and residents' association (TRA) when they were in the planning stages for a project to renew gas risers in Millender Walk.

Project Manager Steve Martin explained: "We met with the TRA to explain what the work would involve and they told us we would need to take into account the Edible Rotherhithe project, which backs onto the estate.

"Our company gives everyone a day each year to make a difference in their local community, so when we met with Christina, the CEO of Edible Rotherhithe, and heard about her plans, we asked if there was anything we could do to help the project get off the ground.

"I think Christina and her team were quite surprised at how much we managed to get done in a single day. We also enlisted the help of three of our contractors, GH Preston, K&S Pipe Contractors and Actionshake Limited, who donated the paint and paintbrushes as well as other materials and ducting, removed all the weeds we had cleared from the site and gave us the use of a digger free of charge for the day."

Christina Wheatley from Edible Rotherhithe said: "The team from SGN were absolutely wonderful. Right from our first meeting when they came to talk to us about the gas riser work, their main concern was to minimise its impact on our project.

"The work they did to level out and clear the area that was overgrown with weeds would've taken four of us three whole days on our own, so it was a massive help to the project."

Gang of volunteers safeguard historic Iron Age hill fort

17 October 2017



The sun shines on the team who took part: Richard Mendham, Glenn Norman, Drew Reynolds, Wayne Edwards, Paul Rose, Andy Scott, Paul James, Richard Murray, Gavin Brown, Peter Webster, Steve Catling, Maria Fairchild, Iain Fourniss, Graham Cox, Tracey McIntyre, Rob Instrall and (kneeling) Mark Meloy, Steve Mills, Simon Russell and Steve Harger.

A team of our senior managers were following in the footsteps of their ancestors recently, when they gave up their time to help the National Trust protect an ancient South Downs landmark.

Cissbury Ring, just north of the coastal town of Worthing, dates back over 5,000 years. The Iron Age fort spans 65 acres and in the Neolithic period, the hill on which it was built was the most important flint mining area in Sussex. The extensive network of 270 mine shafts are still in evidence today.

The area around the fort is home to a variety of insects, rare birds like skylarks, reptiles such as adders and a host of other wildlife. Part of the Trust's ongoing management of the historic landmark involves keeping scrub and trees in check to ensure this diversity of wildlife in the chalk grassland habitat is not lost.

Our 18-strong SGN team met at the historic site, and using bow saws and branch loppers helped to cut down a sloping bank of brambles and small trees from the side of one of the hill fort's ramparts. Under the watchful eye of two fire marshals, they then burned the vegetation they had removed.

It was the second year in a row our senior managers they had volunteered at the National Trust site, and prior to that they carried out work on the Trust's Brownsea Island to help preserve the island's red squirrel population. They offered their support as part of our Community Action Programme, in which every employee is given one day each year to make a difference in their local community.

One of the volunteers, Personal Assistant Maria Fairchild, said: "We were really lucky with the weather because on the two days either side, it had been raining hard. When we first arrived it looked like a pretty daunting task, but we worked solidly and by the end of the day when we saw the difference we'd made, we felt a real sense of achievement."

Another of those taking part was Paul Rose, General Manager of SGN's our Southern Operations. He said: "It's rare for all of us general managers to have the opportunity to get together and focus on something other than work. There was lots of banter during the day and it was a great team building exercise, but what was most rewarding was seeing just how much we got done."

National Trust Ranger Andy Pearce said he was delighted with what the team had achieved: "Cissbury Ring is a very significant archaeological site, and controlling the spread of scrub and trees is an essential part of

protecting this special historic place. Tree roots can destroy archaeological features, and scrub and trees provide shelter for burrowing animals like rabbits, which can also do a lot of damage.

“It was great to work with the SGN team again. We got lots of work done and cleared an impressive 100 metres of the ramparts – important work to protect the rare chalk grassland habitat and the Iron Age hill fort. Now that section of the ramparts has been cleared, we can leave the herd of New Forest ponies that live on Cissbury ring to do their job... grazing off what's left.”

'Future leaders' complete ILM management course

24 October 2017



The candidates. Back row (l to r): Maxime Biret, Joe Hayes, Paul Quinn, Craig Tasker, Douglas Hamilton, Katie Lobban and Ian Roberts. Front row (l to r): Julie Greig and Matthew Skeoch.

Nine employees recently completed their Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) course by delivering their final presentations at Edinburgh International Climbing Arena (EICA).

Based throughout Scotland, the candidates completed their 18-month ILM course last month. The course was delivered by our Training team together with Develop Training. Employee Development Officer Joanna MacLaine said the candidates have learned how to “manage projects and finance, deal with difficult situations and different personalities, and manage conflict situations”.

Clive Lawrence Forbes, Develop Training’s Head of Corporate Management Development, said that the candidates “come out the other end knowing what you need to do when you’re managing and developing teams to success.” While our Head of Technical Learning Neil Snell described the presentations as “part of the learning that they [the candidates] are getting to become future leaders of the company”.

The final presentations for our colleagues who are taking the ILM course in the south and south east of England, take place in late 2017.

Underground robot upgrades Hove gas network as part of £655,000 project

25 October 2017



CISBOT in action to seal the joints in the pipes.

SGN will begin work to upgrade the local gas supply network in Church Road, Hove, later this week.

As part of a £655,000 project to ensure a continued safe and reliable gas supply to the local community, we're using an innovative robotic system called CISBOT to upgrade our gas mains in Church Road and Sackville Road.

The innovative robot, developed by US-based ULC Robotics, will work underground to seal the joints in the pipe. CISBOT can travel approximately 170 metres in each direction from a single excavation, so we don't require long trenches along the road to access our pipes. This means we're able to upgrade our network more quickly and with less disruption, reducing the impact of our essential work on Hove's residents and road users.

Following discussions with Brighton and Hove City Council, our project will begin on Wednesday 25 October and last approximately 14 weeks. We'll be working in Church Road and Sackville Road in five phases. To ensure everyone's safety, we'll need to suspend some parking around our work areas but we'll maintain two-way traffic around our site.

To minimise disruption to the local community over the busy festive period, we'll suspend our project from Thursday 21 December until the first week in January. When we return to Church Road in early January, we'll need to temporarily close the slip road from Church Road to Holland Road for approximately three weeks. A signed diversion will be in place.

SGN Engineering Manager Casey Everitt said: "By using the innovative CISBOT robot to seal the joints along the inside of our gas main, we're able to minimise inconvenience for Hove's road users, residents and visitors while we upgrade our gas main along Church Road and Sackville Road.

"The robot works underground and upgrades the gas main from the inside, which means we don't require long trenches along the road to access the pipe. Less digging means we can complete this essential work more quickly. What's more, the robot works inside the live gas pipe, so there's no need to interrupt gas supplies while we upgrade our pipes."

Urgent gas network upgrades in the pipeline for Dundee

27 October 2017

We will shortly begin urgent upgrades to our network in the A85 beside Dundee Railway Station.

Following discussions with Dundee City Council, our work will start on Monday 6 November 2017 and will last for approximately 4 weeks.

Our work will take place just after the taxi rank exit at the station. To ensure the safety of our engineers and road users, a temporary eastbound lane closure will be in place in the A85 approaching the station from the roundabout.

Access to buses, taxis and road users wishing to use the drop-off and collection areas at the station, will be maintained at all times.

Project Manager Paul McDonald said: "We've worked closely with the local authorities in planning this work and we will be doing everything we can to limit disruption during our essential project.

"We're aware this is a busy route and would like to thank motorists and local residents while we carry out this essential work."

We're backing industry campaign to encourage households to Be Winter Ready

2 November 2017

We have joined forces with the UK's other gas and electricity networks, as well as Energy Networks Association, to launch Be Winter Ready Day today.

The new initiative aims to help the public be better-prepared if they have a power cut or gas emergency this winter, as research reveals 9.5 million people across Great Britain admit they don't carry out basic winter preparations as the colder weather rolls in.

The survey found that 59% of people think the reliability of the gas and electricity networks means they don't have to prepare for winter as much as they used to. Over half don't keep a torch in their house in case of a power cut, and over 70% don't take steps to get their boiler serviced in advance of winter.

Furthermore, over 70% don't know who their local gas or electricity network operators are, with only 21% saying they prepare themselves for winter by finding out who to contact if their gas or electricity goes off.

The energy networks are calling on the public to follow these three steps to Be Winter Ready:

- **Know your free emergency numbers** – in a power cut dial 105 or, for a gas emergency, dial 0800 111 999.
- **Prepare your home** – keep a torch handy and get your appliances serviced by a Gas Safe registered engineer to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Vulnerable households can get extra support by signing up to the Priority Services Register. Contact your gas or electricity network to find out more. Visit energynetworks.org to find out who your network operator is.
- **Keep your eyes open** – keep an eye on the weather forecast and, if you have a power cut or a gas emergency, check on your neighbours.

On the rare occasion power is interrupted or a gas emergency happens, our energy networks have engineers working around the clock to restore supplies safely and as quickly as possible, keeping customers regularly updated on the progress. It has never been easier to contact your gas or electricity network companies any time of the day or night for information and advice.

David Smith, Chief Executive of Energy Networks Association, said: "In recent years the chances of unplanned problems with electricity and gas supply have reduced dramatically. Since 1990, network companies have invested £80 billion in improving the reliability of local energy networks in the UK. On average, electricity customers have a power cut just once every two years and gas customers will have their gas supply interrupted just once every 40 years.

"However, as the nights get colder and darker, the chances of severe weather increase. Storms, floods and other extreme conditions can sometimes cause damage to the electricity network and disrupt the energy supply. That's why we are calling on the public to Be Winter Ready and make sure they are prepared in case they have a power cut or gas emergency."

Our Acting Environment Manager Faye graduates with first-class honours from the Open University

3 November 2017



Faye Tester, our Acting Environment Manager based in Glasgow, graduated from the Open University last weekend with a first-class honours Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Environmental Management and Technology.

Since joining us in 2009, Faye has progressed through a number of roles with us. In her current role as Acting Environment Manager, she is involved in issues from waste management to environmental compliance-across the whole the company. For over seven years, Faye has juggled working full-time with studying for her degree in lunch breaks and evenings. Faye said: "Studying was really hard work, but so worth it knowing I have a successful career with my well-earned degree. My studies were really enjoyable and when I found out I was graduating with a first, it was the best feeling."

Susan Stewart, Director of the OU in Scotland, said: "Our students come from all kinds of backgrounds and from all over Scotland and they study for lots of different reasons, but what they all have in common is a fierce desire to fit learning into their busy lives. Faye is a fantastic example of that commitment and dedication, and I'm extremely proud of her and everyone else that graduated with The Open University in Scotland this weekend."

SGN top of the tree at this year's UK Business Awards

29 November 2017



L-R: Tony Green (GNV-DL), Colin Osborne (SGN), Stuart Sherlock (SGN), Drew Reynolds (SGN), Richard Mason (SGN), Prashant Sali (Judge and CEO of Consultants and Solutions) and PJ Rudden (RPS).

It was double joy for gas network company SGN as they landed two trophies at the nationally acclaimed 2017 UK Business Awards for their pioneering robotics systems.

Competing against major banks, telecoms companies and retailers, the SGN Innovation team collected their awards at Wembley Stadium in London on Wednesday 22 November. After entering their revolutionary robotics project into the mix, the team came out on top in both the Innovation and Utilities categories. Now in their second year, these awards are designed to recognise and celebrate exceptional business performance.

Innovation and New Technology Manager Gus McIntosh was delighted with the win, saying: "Our Innovation team has worked very hard to get our robotics projects to the point they are being used in day-to-day operations. This really is testament to the exceptionally skilled and dedicated people we have at SGN.

"We use innovation to allow us to continue keeping our customers safe and warm 365 days a year. These pioneering robotics reduce the need for multiple excavations and trenches, reduces disruption on the roads and saves time and money, which is excellent news for our customers and other stakeholders.

"Our aim is to revolutionise roadworks – we are continuing to develop innovative solutions to carrying out our essential activities."

The Cast Iron Joint Sealing Robot (CISBOT) system, enables SGN to remediate joints on some of its larger iron gas mains without the need for multiple excavations in the road or taking the gas main out of service. Many of these larger pipes are often in densely populated, traffic-sensitive locations, so the use of CISBOT provides real potential for pipeline refurbishment with significantly less disruption to the public.

The robot can collapse to a very small size, so it can be inserted into the gas main through a small hole drilled into the pipe. Once the robot is inside the gas main, the robot's operator uses the on-board camera and controls to precisely position the robot over the joints and then injects the joint with a special sealant.

The system is controlled from the rear of a single box truck, which houses monitoring screens showing the robot's activities, the robot's tether reel, control system and maintenance area.

SGN CEO John Morea said: "These awards really do recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of individuals, teams and businesses throughout the UK and we're extremely proud that our Innovation team has been recognised by the UK Business Awards."

Volunteers help prepare Year 10 pupils for the world of work

4 December 2017



Project Manager Tim Drake (right) interviews an Applemore College student

A team from our Castle Malwood office gave up their time to conduct mock interviews with students from a local secondary school.

Year 10 students from Applemore College, situated in the village of Dibden Purlieu on the edge of the New Forest, are preparing for two weeks' work experience next summer. As part of the school's careers programme in which the pupils are looking at their options and learning how to write CVs, the students took part in mock interviews conducted by five volunteers from our company.

Our team offered their help to the school as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which all our employees are given a day off work on company time every year to help make a difference in their local community.

Project Manager Tim Drake, who is also a school governor at Applemore College, said: "By interacting and talking with a complete stranger under interview conditions, the students built their confidence and got supportive feedback on how to improve their interview skills.

"I was personally really proud and inspired by the smartness and confidence of our students at their first interviews, and proud of my team's professional support and hard work at the event."

The students had been briefed on how to conduct themselves at interviews and were keen to try out their new skills. Keiran, 15, was interviewed by Tim. He said: "I was really nervous before the meeting but the interviewer was brilliant and helped me feel more relaxed. They were really interested in what I had to say and the feedback they gave me afterwards was encouraging and helpful. My next interview will be for sixth form college so I'm already feeling more confident that I can give a good account of myself."

Project Officer Jennifer Lee found it "particularly rewarding" interviewing the Applemore College students. She said: "I met one of the engineers of the future and it was really heart-warming to see how enthusiastic she was about new breakthroughs in technology. I helped her with choosing the subjects she needed to achieve her goals."

Mechanical Engineer Cameron Hawkes was also part of the interviewing team. Cameron said: "For me the stand-out pupil was a girl who aspired to join the Royal Navy as an engineer. She had clearly researched the role and knew what she wanted.

“It was rewarding and heart-warming so see students from such a variety of backgrounds put so much effort into the exercise. I really hope they all achieve their aspirations and find a job they enjoy.”

Carol Eskriett, Assistant Headteacher at the school, said the students found the experience “invaluable”. She added: “We’re very grateful to the members of the SGN team who gave up their time to work with our students and make it such a rewarding experience for them.”

Spotlight on innovation as we celebrate Ofgem project funding and join industry leading event to discuss gas network future

6 December 2017



Street robotics in action on George Street in Edinburgh

The future of the UK's energy networks is being showcased this week at the industry's biggest annual innovation event, which is sponsored by SGN.

Hundreds of delegates are expected at the Low Carbon Network Innovation (LCNI) Conference in Telford.

The conference is held by the Energy Networks Association (ENA) on behalf of the UK electricity and gas network operators.

The 2017 conference is providing an opportunity to explore the key learnings from electricity and gas network innovation projects. The programme will provide networking opportunities in addition to project focused presentations and workshops.

The conference began today with SGN colleagues attending to share insights with the industry about how we're planning for the future of the gas network. As well as being an event sponsor, we are participating in several panels and break-out sessions across two days.

A key topic for discussion by us is our 100% hydrogen project which is assessing the viability of constructing and operating the first hydrogen distribution network in Scotland.

We are providing a high level overview of the project, discussing some of the risks and benefits associated with H2 networks, and then describing our project in detail.

Also on the agenda is a focus on our robotics technology, which will use advanced robotics and artificial intelligence to lower the cost and improve the efficiency, safety and environmental impact of utility excavations and activity. Other subjects include our real-time networks and smart paints projects.

Our support for the industry-leading conference comes just days after Ofgem announced the winners of its annual Network Innovation Competition (NIC).

Our project to develop a new Robotic Roadworks and Excavation System (RRES) has been awarded £6.3m in NIC funding, building on our past robotics successes.

Innovation and New Technology Manager Gus McIntosh said: "I'm delighted we've been awarded another NIC project. Excavation and reinstatement is an everyday activity for our teams, both in urban and rural environments.

"The RRES project will see us develop a robotic solution to improve the safety and efficiency of our works, as well as the impact we have in the busiest streets."

Each year network companies compete for funding for the development and demonstration of new technologies, operating and commercial arrangements which have the potential to benefit consumers.

Ofgem are providing up to £57.5m to seven projects this year.

The expert panel was impressed with our bid, stating: "The panel considers RRES has the potential to provide significant environmental and financial benefits to gas consumers by reducing the time needed for street works."

CEO John Morea said: "Well done to our Innovation team. You've heard of autonomous cars, well this is the gas version - lots of sensors and soft touch tech to be developed with our partner ULC over the next three years.

"We're also in a consortium that's looking at the feasibility of hydrogen as an alternative fuel for heating. That project won just under £9m."

SGN and Royal Voluntary Service promote keeping safe and well in winter

7 December 2017

As the cold weather sets in, we're working with Royal Voluntary Service to help older people stay safe, warm and well this winter.

We've teamed up with the charity to produce a free leaflet offering tips on staying physically and emotionally well, whatever the weather.

Tips on staying safe and well this winter include:

- Make sure gas appliances have a regular service and a gas safety check every 12 months
- Keep torches, a battery powered radio and spare batteries easy to find in case there is an unexpected power cut
- Look out for any warning signs that your gas appliances aren't working correctly e.g. lazy yellow or orange flames instead of crisp blue ones, black marks on or around the appliance and too much condensation in the room.

Pamela Goe, Head of Community at SGN, said: "We're supporting Royal Voluntary Service because we want to help improve the safety and well-being of older people who are isolated or more vulnerable.

"It's vital people are aware of gas safety, especially in winter. We'd recommend everyone has a carbon monoxide alarm. Knowing the simple warning signs of carbon monoxide, such as 'lazy' yellow or orange flames instead of crisp blue ones or black marks on or around the appliance, could save a life.

"We would also recommend a locking cooker valve which is connected to the existing gas cooker pipework and stops the supply of gas once locked, eliminating the risk of the cooker being unintentionally turned on or left on.

"If anyone smells gas, thinks they have a gas leak, or is worried that fumes containing carbon monoxide are escaping from a gas appliance, they should call the National Gas Emergency Number on 0800 111 999. Lines are open 365 days a year and calls are free."

Royal Voluntary Service Chief Executive, Catherine Johnstone, said: "As the colder weather sets in, some older people need to start thinking about how they can keep well and preparation plays an important part in that. The Stay Safe, Warm & Well leaflet provides a prompt or reminder for people to find out how to stay well and safe in winter and flags up more about what services are available to them.

"Royal Voluntary Service volunteers can help with things like transport after a stint in hospital or to medical appointments, picking up prescriptions or getting some shopping in if the icy temperatures mean it's harder than usual for an older person to get out and about.

"We're also encouraging anyone who has an older neighbour or relative to check on them regularly to make sure they have everything they need to stay happy and healthy during the winter months."

The Stay Safe, Warm & Well leaflet is also available by calling 0800 731 9197.

Triumph for rising stars in gas distribution company apprenticeship awards

14 December 2017

Two striving engineers have been recognised for giving an outstanding performance by their employer, gas distribution company SGN, in their 2017 Apprentice of the Year awards.

After fighting off tough competition from their peers, Mark Walters, 25, was named the company Apprentice of the Year while Jason Wood, 21, won the award for Top Performing Apprentice in Scotland.

Mark joined three years ago and has just completed his apprenticeship, while Jason is now in the middle of his third and final year. Both have worked extremely hard by combining theoretical study at their local Develop Training facility with practical experience on-site under the supervision of an experienced engineer.

Mark, who is based at our West Kent depot and lives in Tunbridge Wells, applied for an apprenticeship with SGN after working in a retail jewellery store. He explained: "I had worked in my previous role for three years and decided that I wanted a fresh start somewhere I could make a career for myself. I researched SGN and their apprenticeship scheme seemed like a great opportunity which would offer me progression, so I went for it.

"I was really surprised to win. The apprenticeship has given me the motivation to advance even further and it's great to have been recognised."

Mark was presented with his award in November at our Horley office by HR and Services Director Kate Naylor.



Mark displays his award, alongside Kate.

Head of Operations for Scotland, Jim Small, presented Jason with his award at our Edinburgh office in November. Jason, who lives in the Edinburgh area, applied for an apprenticeship after studying Mechanical Engineering at university. He explained: "I wasn't enjoying my university course as much as I'd hoped as there wasn't much opportunity to do practical work. I decided I wanted to apply for a job where I could be more hands-on and make a career for myself. I researched SGN and their apprenticeship scheme seemed like a great opportunity which would offer me progression, so I went for it."



Jason displays his award, alongside Jim.

Apprenticeship Scheme Manager Marc Gasson said he was delighted their efforts had been rewarded: “Both Mark and Jason’s attitude to their apprenticeship programme has been fantastic right from day one. It doesn’t matter what they get asked to do, they always give 100%. They also both work great in a team and get on well with everybody.

“In deciding who should win the company’s Apprentice of the Year award, we took into account the views of the apprentices’ mentors, their line managers and Develop Training, along with the progress they had made and the personal skills demonstrated over the past year.

“It’s not simply about which apprentice performed best academically, it’s more of a broad judgement about their attitude, behaviour, performance and how they get on with other people.”

Since launching our apprenticeship programme in 2008, we have recruited 115 apprentices for our six depots in Scotland and a further 191 for the South of England. We invest between £90,000 and £140,000 in each apprentice and that investment has been rewarded by the fact that the programme has a 97% retention rate.

SGN gets 'smart' about theft in ongoing partnership with SmartWater

19 December 2017



SmartWater has been applied to all our liveried vehicles to further protect against theft of our vehicles and high-value equipment.

We've teamed up with global security company SmartWater to further protect our company against theft.

SmartWater is a water-based forensic marking solution that we've applied to our liveried vehicles, as well as the tools and equipment onboard. The forensic formula contains a unique identifying code, much like DNA, which is registered to our organisation. If our assets are stolen and recovered, it not only identifies the owner, but confirms the theft of those items.

Senior Security Manager Andrew Sindall said: "SmartWater is a global product and has been used extensively here in the UK and abroad in the initiative to tackle theft. The deterrent power of this well-known brand is recognised in the criminal fraternity and academic studies have shown that 74% of criminals when interviewed, would not go near or target anything displaying SmartWater signs.

"We have already been working with SmartWater for a number of years around the prevention of metal theft from our sites. As a result, we've seen a decrease in the number of reported incidents. Given these successes, we were keen to extend our partnership further to provide even greater protection for our vehicles and high-value tools and equipment."

SmartWater CEO and Co-Founder Phil Cleary added: "Tool and van theft continues to be a major issue for much of the UK, and so I commend the positive steps taken by our clients to try and reduce the risk to their assets and commercial vehicles. This latest initiative is a great example of the strong, proactive working relationship between our two companies and is testament to the value of the SmartWater brand as an effective and proven deterrent.

"Consequently, a powerful warning has now been issued to thieves looking to target SGN assets, as they are unlikely to challenge our 100% conviction rate, allowing SGN to continue to deliver key services uninterrupted."

SGN volunteers help St Christopher's Hospice get ready for Christmas

22 December 2017



Our Special Elf Service from left: Amie Arthrell, Kayleigh Horton, Zia Andrews, Brian Andrews, Lisa Morgan, Jack Gunning, and Alexandria Graham in front.

A team from our St Mary Cray office spent a day helping a local hospice get ready for their annual Christmas market.

Our seven volunteers visited St Christopher's Hospice on a cold winter's day to set up stalls, deliver leaflets in the local area and wrap up presents for Santa's grotto. They even decorated the grotto to make sure it was jolly and bright before Santa's arrival.

Jo Mowbray, Community Fundraiser at St Christopher's Hospice, said: "Thank you so much for SGN's continued support of St Christopher's – it is hugely appreciated. The volunteers were all amazing and worked so hard and made the setting up of the event so much easier for the fundraising team."

Colleagues from our St Mary Cray depot have formed a close bond with St Christopher's and have been supporting the hospice for a number of years as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP). This scheme provides all our employees with a day off work on company time every year to help make a difference in their local community. For the third year running, St Christopher's also provided a Christmas hamper for us to raffle off in our depot, raising over £280 for the hospice.

Network Assistant Zia Andrews said: "I wanted to get involved with the CAP day at St Christopher's Hospice in Sydenham as some of the nurses from there were instrumental to the end of life care provided for my mum in her own home just prior to her passing. They made the worst time of our lives a little more bearable, just by caring for my mum with so much compassion. They also looked after my dad in the weeks following my mum's passing by providing counselling.

"The day was hard work, but a lot of fun, from wrapping plant pots, making sandwiches and finally decorating Santa's grotto and the surrounding area for the kids to enjoy the following day."

Lisa Morgan, Connections Account Manager, also enjoyed her experience volunteering at St Christopher's Hospice: "I have only been at SGN for a few months and have already heard such positive things about CAP days – I have to say it did not disappoint. It was great to be able to help out at the Hospice and I was very lucky that the colleagues I attended with had such great humour and positivity about the whole day."

Heart Centre receives festive boost of funds from Oxford team

27 December 2017



Our team presents the donation to the hospital. Pictured from left are Steve Crunden, Phil Stokes, football match organiser Josh Spencer and Louis Quinn.

The Oxford Heart Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital has received a festive boost of funds after our staff took part in a charity football match in memory of a much-loved friend and colleague.

The match, which was held in Thame in September, was organised as a tribute to Keith Stansfield (better known as Stan), who passed away in July 2014. Stan, a repair team leader at our Yarnton depot, suffered a cardiac arrest while attending a job. He was taken to the John Radcliffe, but despite repeated attempts to save his life he sadly passed away. He was 54. He was hugely popular and respected, with his positivity inspiring everyone who knew him.

The idea for the charity football match to mark the third anniversary of Stan's death came from Josh Spencer, who is one of the team based at the depot. The colleagues used their yearly team building fund to pay for the pitch and they raised £415. This was matched by our Into Action fund, which supports employees who give up their time to help charities or their local community.

And last week, the funds were handed over to the team on the ward. There was also time for the SGN representatives to see some of the equipment which is only possible for purchase through charitable funding.

Joe Baker, Communications Assistant at the hospital, said: "Thanks to charitable donations to Oxford Hospital's charity, the Oxford Heart Centre has been able to purchase some important new equipment. This includes bespoke resuscitation trolleys and state-of-the-art video-laryngoscopes.

"This life saving equipment is now identical across the Oxford Heart Centre which helps the emergency teams to deliver the highest standard of resuscitation and emergency care."

Richard Mendham, General Manager at our Oxford depot, said: "Since Stan's passing our fantastic team have shown great inspiration, looking into different ways to help, support and raise funds for this amazing charity. I would like to say a big thank you to all involved for making this a night to remember. Long may these events continue to not only remember a much loved friend and colleague but also raise vital funding for this wonderful charity. Well done all, Stan would have been so proud."

Community centres get a festive makeover with help from Horley volunteers

28 December 2017



Connor Habbishow and Jody Williams tidy up the children's play area

Eight volunteers from our Horley head office brought festive cheer to two local community centres by creating Santa's grottos and giving the centres' toys, play areas and gardens a thorough clean.

The community centres, in Crawley and Horsham, are run by community-based charity The Springboard Project. The charity provides inclusive play and leisure opportunities for families with young children and fun short breaks for children and teenagers with disabilities.

The volunteers spent three days at the centres, working like the busiest of Santa's elves to carry out a variety of tasks. They helped put up Christmas decorations and created Santa's grottos at both centres. Su Parrish, Service Delivery Manager at The Springboard Project, said: "We really appreciate the help that all the volunteers gave over the three days. We were so pleased to have help with decorating both centres for Christmas – it all looks very festive now."

Our team offered their help to the charity as part of our Community Action Programme (CAP) in which all our employees are given a day off work on company time every year to help make a difference in their local community.

Admin Assistant Jody Williams had the tough task of cleaning the toys in the children's play area. She said: "I think what made this particular task rewarding was knowing that the staff didn't have a lot of time in their day to get things like this done. It was nice to know we made things a little bit easier for them, allowing them to focus on the amazing work they do."

Not content with sprucing up the inside of the centres, our team ventured into the gardens to sweep up the leaves, collecting an impressive total of 19 bags! They also took a trip to a nearby supermarket to raise awareness of the charity. Josie O'Hara, who helped by giving out leaflets, said: "We gave out some leaflets about The Springboard Project hoping to encourage more people to visit the centre and make the most of the support available to them."