



From left to right: Fiona Lees, CEO, East Ayrshire Council. Fiona McKenzie, CEO, Centrestage, Councillor Dougie Reid, MSP Angela Constance. Paul Mathieson, Chief Operations Officer, Centrestage. MSP Willie Coffey. Gary MacLean, Scotland's National Chef. Eleanor McLaren, Chair Centrestage. Katie Kelly, Depute CEO East Ayrshire Council. Lynn Hendry, The Hunter Foundation.

'SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL CHEF AND CABINET SECRETARY VISIT NEW HOME FOR CENTRESTAGE'.

The sun shone as the Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities, Angela Constance MSP and Gary MacLean, Scotland's National Chef and winner of the BBC MasterChef Professionals 2016 visited Kilmarnock Academy on Tuesday 29th May, to see some of the work of Centrestage and hear more of their plans to relocate to the iconic site.

Ms Constance's visit to Centrestage represents the continued vision for the Scottish Government in supporting innovative community approaches that provide services that lessen the impact of poverty, reduce social isolation, and improve the future life chances and choices of children. It is also the first ministerial visit to the historic site since Centrestage was awarded funding through the Regeneration Capital Grants Fund, which was key to the transfer of Kilmarnock Academy as a community asset.

Gary MacLean, Scotland's first National Chef, tasked with celebrating national produce and teaching communities how to make the most of locally sourced, healthy and affordable food, spent time with Centrestage's 'On the Road' team. In addition to learning about their dignified



food provision model, Gary took the opportunity to take part in Centrestage's latest community initiative, Eat and Train, funded by Scottish Government through the Aspiring Communities fund. This course, teaching people across Ayrshire how to prepare and create delicious food for their families using local produce, is already oversubscribed and transforming families attitudes to home cooking and budgeting.

Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities, Angela Constance said: "I was really pleased to visit Centrestage today to see first-hand the inspiring work they do to support people of all ages across Ayrshire access healthy and nutritious food as well as tackling other social issues, using music and drama as the hook to get people involved. I am delighted the Scottish Government is providing £2m from our Regeneration and Capital Grants Fund to help Centrestage realise its ambitious plan to bring all its services together on the former Kilmarnock Academy site as part of a community hub."

Centrestage CEO Fiona McKenzie said: "It has been a real privilege to welcome the Cabinet Minister and National Chef to Kilmarnock Academy today. The support of the Scottish Government has been vital to the development of our dignified food provision model and the impact of this aspect of our work on wider outcomes including reoffending and exclusions is significant. Our team takes real pride in the work they do and for them to be able to showcase their work to Gary alongside the members of our communities is a real honour."

For more information on the plans and vision for 'Kilmarnock Academy', please visit www.centrestagemt.org.uk

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