



**Scottish Businesswoman urges Dunkirk spirit during coronavirus pandemic**  
*HALO founder offers support for older and vulnerable community members*

Scottish businesswoman, Marie Macklin CBE, has today (Wed 18th March) offered a package of support to the communities of Kilmarnock which will help tackle the local impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the places closest to her heart.

Having seen first-hand how the pandemic is directly affecting the community of her home town, Kilmarnock, Marie is promoting a 'Lift Up Your Hearts' spirit for businesses to come together and support each other and their local communities through this crisis.

And in a bid to kickstart other businesses across Scotland to support local communities, Marie has pledged an emergency community cash fund of £100,000 to assist the elderly and most vulnerable people across East Ayrshire and to provide support for local small businesses suffering hardship.

The 'Lift Up Your Hearts' package of support Marie and the HALO are offering to work on with East Ayrshire Council includes:

- Delivering food, medicines and other essential supplies to older and vulnerable people
- The establishment of a Facebook Group aimed at vulnerable people and older people or their carers, offering the opportunity for them to make contact with each other and share their experiences
- Free accommodation within their apartment portfolio to allow those affected by coronavirus to self-isolate
- The establishment of an emergency COBRA-style business group to assist small to medium sized businesses (SMEs) with potential advice and funding.

**Jeane Freeman MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport**, said: “During these challenging times I am encouraged to see communities, which includes those within our business sector, coming together to support each other. A team effort comprised of individuals, businesses and local and national government is needed to target assistance where it is required the most and this generous offer of support from Marie Macklin will be warmly welcomed.

“I am also asking everyone to focus on looking out for your family, friends and neighbours as well as yourself, paying particular attention to the elderly or those who have underlying health problems and to continue to follow the guidance being issued by the Scottish Government. Together, we can make sure we are looking out for those around us.”

**Fiona Lees, Chief Executive of East Ayrshire Council**, said: “We have been humbled and heartened by the generous offers of support we have received from individuals, groups and local businesses. In many ways we are not surprised, given the kindness and compassion we see daily in communities across East Ayrshire. Our teams are linking with community and voluntary organisations to discuss the roles they could play and to identify the support they need. We will be working closely with these community led groups and they will become key information and distribution points for food, resources, information and the coordination of volunteering.

“We welcome the announcement from Marie Macklin offering a package of support for the communities of Kilmarnock. Marie has always been passionate about her home town and she has a long history of delivering regeneration projects and of supporting good causes. We look forward to working with Marie and HALO on the ‘Lift up Your Hearts’ Package of support, which is so welcome and will undoubtedly assist our communities and businesses in these unprecedented times.

Marie Macklin CBE is Founder and Executive Chair of the HALO Urban Regeneration Company. The HALO, the first phase of which is currently under construction in Kilmarnock, will create a net zero carbon commercial, educational, cultural, leisure and lifestyle quarter in the town, fuelled by renewable energy.

Marie said: “The coronavirus pandemic is affecting communities across the globe and it is vital that we come together to support each other through these unprecedented times with a true ‘Lift Up Your Hearts’ campaign. There is a great deal of admirable work being undertaken on an individual basis by businesses, who are also facing their own challenges at this time, but a co-ordinated effort by the commercial community is now required. Now is the time for us to support the communities we work and live in.

“Personally, I believe it is right that I support the communities that have supported me throughout my career and I hope the package of support that I am offering East Ayrshire Council will help as many people as possible get through these difficult times. I also hope this will act as a catalyst for others to provide support too.

“I want the older generations and vulnerable people in Kilmarnock to see that we are demonstrating the Dunkirk spirit to do everything we can to support them. We, the business community, are not retreating – we are advancing, to protect each other and support our communities.”

**Ends**

#### **Further enquiries**

##### **The HALO**

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#### **Notes to Editors**

**The HALO Urban Regeneration Company** <https://halo-projects.com/>

The HALO Kilmarnock is a £63m brownfield urban regeneration project on a 23-acre site, formerly the home of Johnnie Walker, the world’s leading Scotch whisky.

With a vision for a dynamic commercial, educational, cultural, leisure and lifestyle quarter where people can ‘Live, Work, Learn and Play’, the HALO will provide a sustainable community approach to a mixed-use development powered by electricity with a net zero carbon footprint.

Through the HALO Enterprise and Innovation Hub, we will collaborate with our partner Scottish Power to create an industry leading cyber and digital training and learning facility, establishing the HALO at the forefront of the “Fourth Industrial Revolution” – the digital revolution.

Join the Lift Up Your Hearts group on Facebook: [http://bit.ly/LUYH\\_FB](http://bit.ly/LUYH_FB)

Follow Lift up Your Hearts on Twitter: [http://bit.ly/LUYH\\_Twitter](http://bit.ly/LUYH_Twitter)