

Youthful outlook needed

Town chief: 'We've ignored young people for too long'

TEENAGERS should help determine the future of Helensburgh, according to the man charged with reviving the town.

Incoming Helensburgh Partnership chairman Derek Anderson believes that the voice of the young has been ignored for too long and it is time to start listening.

He said: "We need to get information out of young people, it is their town and they should be involved in its future."

"More and more the community is coming to the fore over the town's issues and young people have to be part of that."

He added: "Although I have not involved them before it is something I want to do and we will find a way to do it. But communication with the community as a whole is important."

Mr Anderson began his new role at the beginning of October and has spent the last month reading reports on the area and looking at the main issues that need to be addressed.

The Partnership was set up in February to implement key development opportunities in the town centre and waterfront.

Mr Anderson said: "I don't see things as being problems but as opportunities. For example, the east-end of the town centre is an area that needs improvements and will benefit from regeneration. Because it is the first part of the town people see we have to make sure that it is seen at its best — so there's a huge opportunity to regenerate that area."

By Frances Ridge

"The Pierhead is another opportunity but anything that is done at the pierhead has to be sympathetic as it is important to the people of Helensburgh."

He added: "One of the reasons I took this job is that Helensburgh has a lot of potential that can be built on."

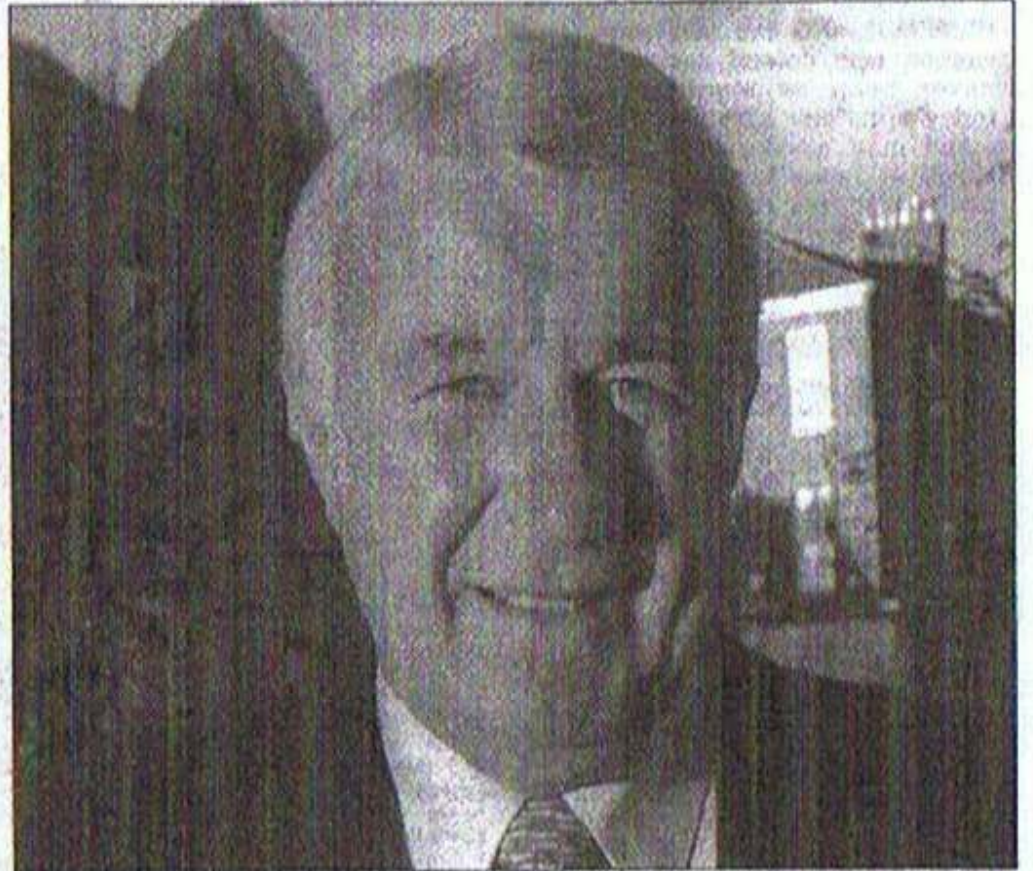
The Advertiser revealed on October 19 that retailers miss out on an estimated £20 million as shoppers take their cash elsewhere — but the Helensburgh Partnership plan to help big names open in the area to help boost the local economy.

Mr Anderson said: "I can see no reason why the big names wouldn't want to come to Helensburgh, it is a popular place and it has a lot going for it. We will point businesses in the right direction, although we can't tell people what to do we can create opportunities and that is something we are keen to do."

Having recently been involved in the regeneration of Dumbarton Mr Anderson believes that Helensburgh residents need only look to their neighbours to see what can be done to a flagging town.

He said: "There is still work to be done but the whole town has improved through a regeneration project. That is an example of what can be done but no two projects are the same."

"All sorts of wonderful clichés have been used to describe regeneration in the past, but my vision is simply that the Helensburgh Partnership should make a difference."



NEW AGENDA: Derek Anderson