

Local heroes are rewarded in Queen's New Year Honours list



Graham Bell, Audrey Cumberford and Carol Burt

A stalwart of further education, a former chief executive of social enterprise Kibble and a charity founder are among those from Renfrewshire named in the New Year Honours list.

Graham Bell headed up Kibble, based in Paisley, for 24 years and has been made an OBE in recognition of his leadership in developing, supporting and promoting social enterprise.

The 64-year-old led Kibble from a small organisation to becoming one of the country's major social enterprises, helping young people with complex social, educational and emotional needs.

Mr Bell said he first found out about his OBE around five weeks ago – and he admits it was difficult to keep it a secret.

He told The Gazette: "I was both very surprised and delighted.

"Before my first job, I volunteered in youth clubs and worked with a lot of young people.

"Now I have made the move from helping people to helping others help people, which I believe is an important part of business."

Meanwhile, Audrey Cumberford has been awarded the MBE after spending six years as principal and chief executive of West College Scotland, which has a campus in Paisley.

She led the college through a significant period of change following the merger of Paisley's Reid Kerr College, of which she was previously principal, with Clydebank College and James Watt College, in Greenock.

Ms Cumberford started her career in college management at the old Telford College, in Edinburgh, back in 1996.

Now steering the ship at Edinburgh College, she has been honoured for her services to education.

Also receiving a royal accolade is Carol Burt, founder of organisation I Am Me Scotland, an award winning community charity which works in partnership with Police Scotland to educate young people and the wider community about Disability Hate Crime (recognised as one of the most under report crimes in the UK).

Carol, from Paisley, started the project five years ago after gaining 12 years' experience in the housing and social work sector of local government and 10 years in the private sector, working in administration and human resources.

Source – Daily Gazette