

*Losing Leisure,  
Scotland's Community Centre Closures.*

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**Video Documentary-** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JI7OjzWQgY&t=10s>

**Abstract,**

In Autumn of 2023 a controversial decision to close 39 leisure facilities in the South Lanarkshire local authority led to a media outcry with some politicians and communities across the central belt of Scotland expressing their anger via both traditional and social media channels, (Hutcheon and Lennon, 2023).

Scotland's local governments are coming under growing financial pressures with local authorities across the country having to consider the viability of subsidising community leisure facilities over other services.

The resistance and pressure from groups amongst others eventually led to a reversal of the planned closures. However, council leaders have highlighted the budget deficit of 64 million pounds remains for the next three years (Pollock, L, 2023).

This submission would take the form of a linear video documentary of 20 minutes in duration which will draw on contributions from across the debate including, economists, journalists and campaigners.

Ethnographic in nature, I will draw on and adopt a practice-based approach which will shed light on the role of traditional and newer forms of media play during the crisis with particular focus on how opposition and protest groups are mobilized to challenge political decisions about leisure activities that carry importance to people and the communities that benefit from them (Shaw, 2006).

In presenting the work a video documentary will be screened drawing on the key themes previously explored by Boswell et al (2019), regarding political decision making and how the UK leisure sector is exposed to budget limitations (Nichols et al, 2020).

## Output

Oral Presentation and Mobile Video Documentary

## References

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Hutcheon, P. and Lennon, H. (2023). *Plans to close 39 sports and leisure facilities in North Lanarkshire abandoned*. [online] Glasgow Live. Available at: <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/north-lanarkshire-council-abandons-plans-27831981> [Accessed 28 Nov. 2023].

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## Bio

Dr James Mahon is a 33-year-old Romanian born Irish broadcast storyteller and University lecturer who has worked for local, regional, national and international outlets. He has accumulated more than 1000+ hours of live presenting and reporting experience. While on assignment he has covered the largest election in history in New Delhi India in 2019 as well as the ISIS occupation of Mosul in Iraq in 2017. Mahon is currently based in Scotland with ITV Border where he is a freelance self-shooting on-screen journalist. He is interested in human-interest stories and social and political issues. He is a digital media consultant, trainer, university lecturer, author and was an invited speaker at the World Journalism Conference in Paris 2019 and the UK Media Education Summit 2021 as well as MECCSA in Scotland in 2023.