

CLOCHANDIGHTER

*COVID 19 SPECIAL EDITION
JUNE 2020*



*A lasting tribute to all NHS workers
Thanks to all members of the Portlethen community
who contributed and showed that you care!*

*Photo courtesy of Grant Duguid,
Produced by Portlethen Town Association*

Doric Coronavirus (Covid19) Advice

Fit ye need to dee:

- ▶ **Bide at hame.**
Stay at home.
- ▶ **Dinna be clarty, wash yer hans.**
Wash your hands for 20 seconds as soon as you get home.
- ▶ **Dinna touch yer fizog, een, neb or moo.**
Avoid touching your face, eyes, nose or mouth.
- ▶ **Only ging oot for yer messages, meds or te stretch yer shanks.**
Only go outside for food or health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home).
- ▶ **Bide 2 metres (6ft) awa fe folk at aa times. Dinna meet up wi ither folk, even freens, neebors or yer ain kin.**
If you go out, stay 2 metres (6ft) away from other people at all times. Do not meet others, even friends, neighbours or family.
- ▶ **If ye feel bilin' het, or hae a dry kinkin' hoast, dinna ging te yer GP or hospital.**
If you have a high temperature or a new, continuous cough, do not go to the doctor or hospital. Ring 111 or if it is life-threatening, dial 999.
- ▶ **Ye can smit aabody wi the virus even if ye dinna look peely-wally.**
You can spread the virus even if you don't have symptoms.
- ▶ **Ca canny aabody!** Be careful everyone!



/bramblegraphics

Editorial

Well here it is! A written account of what has been happening in the Portlethen community during the Covid 19 Pandemic. I have tried to include everything that was sent to me, and I sincerely hope that my editing skills (or lack of) have done it justice.

As many people have pointed out, these are strange times indeed. At first, like many others, perhaps I didn't take the whole thing as seriously as I should have. The 'Elbow Bumping' was treated as a bit of a joke, and we thought that it was no worse than a bad case of the flu. As the weeks and months passed and 'Lockdown' measures introduced, we soon recognised that this was not going to go away any time soon, and that everyone would see their lives turned upside down by it.

Even our war veterans have described it as a greater battle than many of the wars they had fought, as this was an 'Unseen Enemy'. It also proved to be indiscriminatory, and the nation soon realised the value of our 'Keyworkers'. It took the 'Great' out of Great Britain as we came to realise that we were poorly equipped for what lay ahead, and that our political leaders and so called 'experts' were struggling to deal with it. Hopefully lessons will be learned, but all too late.

After the initial selfish plundering of supermarket shelves and the 'Toilet Roll' rush (still trying to understand that one!). We began to come together as a community to help the more vulnerable who were affected by the virus. Community hubs were set up and funding made available. Volunteers came forward and support networks put in place. Schools closed, and parents and teachers had a new challenge of home schooling and virtual teaching. All socialising came to an abrupt halt as pubs, restaurants and leisure facilities closed. In its place the daily walk, cycle or run became the norm, and many people discovered the beauty that surrounds them in their local area.

Local businesses responded by providing a new type of service while still following social distancing measures. Friends and family found new and innovative ways to keep in touch, with virtual meetings, quiz nights, darts matches etc. Those in the same household spent more time together and learned how to communicate with each other (no doubt there have been casualties). It is a true saying that you only miss what you have when it is no longer there!

As restrictions are lifted let's not get too complacent, as the danger still exists. Our communities will be hit with a rise in unemployment and an economic recession, and we must be in a position to respond to those needs. We can only hope that we have all learned some valuable lessons and that the world will eventually become a better place!

I hope that you will enjoy this edition of the Cloch, and I wish you and yours all the very best.

Take care, and stay safe!

Ron Sharp - Editor



Roy Rocks it for the NHS!

It was possibly the last glass of Chevalier de Bayard about half one in the morning that did it. The kids, as is normal, didn't give any respect to potential hangovers and got up at their usual (early) hour, so I was awake again only a handful of hours after I'd put the bottle to bed.

So, with a chronic need for fresh air and some kind of physical graft to sweat-out the last of the head-fuzz, carving the initials of our National Health Service onto the side of a hill seemed like a logical step. If nothing else, it was a good way to socially-distance myself from a child-derived backbeat of Peppa Pig and screaming.

Having secured a verbal go-ahead from the old man who actually owns the field (making sure not to breathe on him, lest he have doubts regards my capability), I set about measuring and pegging out the letters. As you can imagine, my schoolboy maths is a little rusty, so this wasn't a quick or simple process to get right. Especially with regard to the "S", an absolute faff of a letter to carve into a hill, it has to be said.

Now, I've built/fixed/installed a few things with the "help" of my dad, and as sure as the sun will rise, he can be counted on for one thing; turning up with no clear idea himself of how to perform a task correctly, but utterly convinced and happy to express that you're doing it wrong. If he wasn't a) the landowner b) a sober responsible adult and c) usually right, he might have got a fairly brief response. Under the circumstances, I figured he might be worth listening to. If you were one of the motorists who had to avoid the bloke standing in the medical centre junction looking sideways at a grassy incline, you have my apologies.

Yep, the old man was right. From a distance it was probably about half the size it needed to be. Start again. After the bad language subsided and some coffee and bacon rolls went in, a revised fag-packet sketch came out. I figured that even if it wasn't visible from space, letters 2m wide by 2.6m tall would involve quite enough actual work for my liking, so that's as big as they were getting.



Esme and Cooper, "helping".

Backtracking slightly here, you may be reading this wondering why the whole idea. One, we're in the perfect spot to be seen from the health centre junction, and hence by all the NHS staff as they leave work at night. Two, I do genuinely love the NHS. You don't need to know my medical history but I've been as close to death as it's possible to get without it being permanent, and I'm still here coming up with daft drunken schemes. Also for the same reason that my wife ran her fundraiser for the Kids' Hospital the Christmas before last - they've been brilliant at keeping our offspring alive despite them having the self-preservation instinct of lemmings. In addition, this happened against the backdrop of sending a hundred dollars to my Texas-based pal's crowdfunder to help with her post-stroke medical bills. Enough said.

Now, all of the works to this point took place on a Sunday. Apart from the pre-drinks which also took in a fair bit of Saturday. So, having failed spectacularly to smash the job in one day as planned, I then had to call work and explain why I needed Monday off. They basically said it wouldn't be the first time I'd needed Monday off because I've dug myself into a hole over the weekend (although it would be the first time it's literally involved the digging of holes) so no problem. Thanks, guys.

Most of the subsequent digging went off without a hitch, even the "S" came out quite nicely. However, despite using the same methods and reference points as the letters, the accompanying love heart just did not look right from up close. A little bit more traffic-dodging confirmed this suspicion - from the bottom of the road it looked absolutely awful. If you went into hospital with a heart in that bad shape they'd get a farmer in to shoot you.

So, mega-stressed that I'd botched the whole project at the last hurdle, I was forced to make some free-hand alterations. To this day I do not know where my maths went wrong, but I reckon I managed to just-about salvage it. Even viewing from the road I still wasn't convinced the bodge-repair was all that great, so I got my pal Grant to fly his drone over to check it out properly. Phew.



Drone shot – not looking too shabby after all!

With the text itself carved out, I figured with lockdown coming into play, garden centres would be tripping over themselves to get rid of their stock of bedding plants. It turned out they'd all adapted to a delivery service already and were clean out of stock due to everyone being stuck at home and working in the garden. Nice one Kemp, that's another fine mess you've gotten yourself into.

Taking to the internet and the various community groups for ideas, various suggestions were made as to what to do instead. Wildflowers were discounted - would grow tall enough to make the letters lose their shape, and we'd end up with an amorphous blob. Poured concrete slab might end up sliding down the hill at the first heavy rain. One bloke (who I would love to give credit to but can't find the post now!) even suggested getting local kids to decorate coloured stones to fill in the letters. In my wisdom I reckoned that was a non-starter as there would be more stones required than Portlethen's kids would have patience for, and that social distancing measures might make it impossible anyway.

Some time passed without a better idea coming to me, so I was forced to re-evaluate things on the painted stones front:

Pros: Colourful, non-seasonal/permanent, low maintenance, should stay in place nicely.

Cons: Many, many stones required. Social distancing logistics for drop-off.

A bit of head-scratching later, I figured that fixing down a lid-free deposit bin across from the junction would be a good way to avoid any virus concerns. No lid to lift, so nobody has to touch anything, and nobody needs to come off the public road where people are walking anyway. The only person at risk from handling the stones is the fella asking for them, so on his head be it to take his own precautions. This way, people getting out for their one state-permitted walk a day can keep an eye out for a nice stone one day, and drop it off painted another day. No unnecessary journeys created, local kids stuck at home have something to do, everyone wins.

A quick call to the P&J, and I had an appeal article to share online. It was very kind of them to decide that I must have given them the wrong age, and that I looked no older than 29. Happy to take that little win.



As well as knocking an undisclosed number of years off my age, the effect of the article and its rapid spread around social media was instant. I'd literally tied the drop bucket down, went to make up a sign and have a brew, and when I went back to hammer in the signpost I had my first painted stones in there. A couple of days later and the bucket was needing emptied twice a day. Unbelievable.

The process has not been without setbacks. We had a week of solid sunshine when this whole thing started, then a day of driving rain and hailstones. It became clear that not everyone's stones were necessarily waterproof, and were now looking worse for wear. The bin also filled up with rainwater and the stones in the bottom that weren't waterproof were trashed. Apologies to those affected, but all the wiped stones were restored as best possible or completely redecorated, so your efforts didn't go completely to waste. The bin now has some drainage holes in the bottom - I should have thought of this originally.



Waterproofing in progress!

In terms of completion, the response has been absolutely unreal but we're not quite there yet. I reckon we're maybe about 60% of the way there as things stand, although there's a large amount of stones currently being waterproofed that haven't made it onto the hill yet. Those that arrive untreated get a coat of car body spray lacquer if they've got intricate designs, whereas the more simple and single-colour ones get a coat of wood varnish applied by brush. It's an extra step the process that I hadn't bargained for, but without it we'd just have some grey letters on a hill so it's worth doing, but any that arrive ready-treated are a bonus!

At the end of the day, you're all superstars anyway for knocking your collective pan in to cover-up for my poorly-conceived drunken idea. Can we just keep it going a wee touch longer? Please?

When we're all done, the masterplan is to get the whole thing photographed close-up in Hi-Res images and the files made publicly available. If any school, library or even individual wants to print out the images and arrange them in collage form to fully replicate the letters in full size with the ability to look at the individual stones in detail, they can go right ahead. We've not got too long to go before we can make this happen.

There's also the idea that another display of some sort could be created for other keyworkers elsewhere in Portlethen. Anyone want to make any suggestions, or volunteer to lead a project?

My thanks for now go to:

- Portlethen Town Association, for offering funding support when I was still hunting for flowers.
- Rev. John Watson, for the same kind offer.
- Darren Robertson, Claire Shearer and anonymous others who donated lacquer and varnish.
- The PTA again, for letting me post updates and photos on their social media channels.
- Susan Forbes for running a collection point in Findon.
- Wendy Murray for assisting with waterproofing, hopefully 4 buckets wasn't too much...
- Lorraine Johnston for her very kind (and extremely flattering) portrait of me on a slate!
- Anyone who helped share the appeal online, or otherwise did PR on my behalf.
- Grant Duguid for the drone-shot.
- The old man for allowing it, and my wife Tegan for her ongoing tolerance of my daft ideas.
- All of you crafty lot who painted stones - thanks a million!



Anyone I've forgotten can feel free to leave me a beautifully painted stone with a rude message on it.

Cheers,
Roy Kemp

What the kids think:-

Local nursery pupil Esme said "it was fun painting them and taking them to the hill."

Verity Shaw said "It was a lovely way for a our community to say thank you to the NHS."

Local school girl Freya, and her sister Esme painted some stones and put them in the bucket so Roy could fill the NHS dig out.



The stones painted by Freya and Esme.

Roy Kemp is a wonderful man in everything he does. What could he do next build a giant coronavirus hospital? Nobody knows!.....Thanks Roy!

Roy has done this because he thinks the NHS staff rock for saving 100's of people lives during this difficult time. I visited the site with my Dad to take a look for myself. I think it is really cool because I like how he dug it right on the hill then put the stones in.

I also conducted an interview with my Dad and he thinks it is a wonderfull tribute to people who are being very brave. He also thinks it will brighten up Portlethen, hopefully for years to come! - Jack



Ava went to see the sign. "WOW!" she said. "Look at that ladybug stone".

Roy is still collecting stones and still needs plenty more, so get painting!

I'm sure he will love them all.





As the Coronavirus Crisis was gathering speed, a worldwide movement started. People of all ages were displaying rainbows as a symbol of hope and a method of cheering up friends and neighbours.

A local Facebook group was created, From my Window: adding sunshine to social distancing, which had soon gained over 6000 members from near and far.

Group members are provided with a weekly theme if they or their children wish to create new artworks weekly while others continue display the rainbows Or additional NHS and Key-worker support pictures.

Images are shared on the page as well as in the windows and it served to flood Facebook feeds with happiness and positivity during a time of change and much uncertainty.

It is great to see the rainbows and other artwork while out on daily exercise, they certainly seem to make the passers-by smile.

Mandy Beagrie



**A smile
a day
keeps
Covid
away!**





Some Covid Poems

By Christine Stewart



The schools they closed, the playgrounds fell silent
Open spaces and play parks became eerily quiet
No scooters or bikes or children's shrills
A virus was coming so deadly, it kills

On 23rd of March, the government declared
That life as we knew it would not be spared
Stay at home and isolate - do not go out
A lockdown in place, we should not flout

Work places closed, we now work from home
But the Doctors the nurses the ones we don't see
The carers, the shop assistants, all who are key
Are all front line workers, whoever they may be

No pubs, no restaurants, no places to go
Our pace of life was altered and slow
Our cities and villages all now ghost towns
No smiley faces only sadness and frowns

The Government says we can only go out
For food and walks just once a day
Should you meet your son or a family friend
Social distance only, two metres away

The supermarket shop became such a chore
With a one way system around the store
The shelves all emptied, the essentials all gone
Even a toilet roll war started at dawn

Beauty regimes they started to falter
Hair styles changed and began to alter
With hairdressers closed, what could we do
A DIY haircut was the only way through

On Thursday evenings at eight o'clock
We left our homes and did a short walk
To clap for the carers and all that they do
Our appreciation for them is well overdue

Now in mid May, we are still in lockdown
Home schooling part of everyday life
Parents doing their best with this new regime
Kids missing their friends and their school routine
The worst of this is so clear to me

Our daughters and sons, our extended family
To kiss and cuddle and hug them so tight
That's been removed, that god given right

Our lives have changed beyond recognition
But one day soon we will make this our mission
To get back to normal, how ever normal may be
We'll meet again, just you wait and see



AHHH!

Every few weeks, we went without fail
Off to the hairdressers, we did trail
Sat in the chair and off-loaded our news
Listened to all of our hairdressers' views



AHHH!

Oh what good times we remember they were
An hour or so to sit in that chair
A cut and blow dry is all that we need
To tidy this mess that sits on oor heid

Three months on from that last appointment
We look in the mirror and with such disappointment
Ahhhh we scream "what's that that we see"
"Who's that person that's looking at me"

We wash it, we dry it, we try our best
What ever we do, its still a mess
Grey hairs appear with a blink of an eye
Home dye kits, don't give it a try

Just wait until this lockdown has passed
That mop of hair that we have massed
Will be dyed and styled and back to normal
No longer recognised as something abnormal

Hairdressers, we need you, we can't do without you
These past few months, oh you have been missed
After lockdown, we will flock to your door
These dreadful hair styles will be no more

A Childs Eye View

By Mandy Beagrie

Just as I thought I knew
My place within the world
It all changes, what a 'to-do'!
My understanding completely unfurled

Some bloke ate a bat
And got a nasty bug
It spread across the whole wide world
And I can't give my nana a hug

With nursery days already done
And starting school unclear
We all have to stay apart
Yet the virus still spreads, and fear!

Now we have a 'school' at home
The teachers not the best
There's drinking, swearing and even tears
Wearing jammies or a vest

Our days are long and emotions high
We hug a lot (and I sometimes cry)
I miss my friends and teachers too
The virus is a big fat poo!

The past few months have seen trying times, and the PTA have done their best to react in Portlethen's best interests by providing funding and support for the community, local organisations and businesses.

Your support for us continues to grow, and we now have around 700 facebook followers. We still need you to complete the membership form available. By doing this it shows that we have the backing of the community we serve, and we ask nothing in return.

Our Secretary, Mike Lloyd-Wiggins, has penned a few words which we feel sums up well how most of us are feeling at present. Hopefully attitudes will change for the better, and the old-fashioned social and family values will prevail....we can but hope!

A Smile a Day Helps Keep the Blues at Bay

As everyone is aware, Covid-19 has had a profound effect on people and has caused much grief and heartbreak for many. It has also affected all parts of society, the economy, people's welfare, mental health, sports, just living and the basic faith in ourselves, and it may continue to do so for some time with many people concerned for their futures. People have come together to thank those that work on our behalf to ensure that we have services and support to carry on and to look after us.

You are aware of all this. We are informed every day about the cause and effects of Covid-19. In some ways we have been lucky in our area of North Kincardine which seems to have had a lower rate of infection. Of course, this fact does not help or give relief to those families who have suffered.

However, I would like to suggest that a lot of the people of Portlethen seem to have changed, maybe just a little and maybe some still have a long way to go. For some people, their priorities have changed. We have all been under threat, and that alone can make what was once important less so. People have commented that this is a chance to change the way we work, the way we communicate, the way we re-assess what is important in our everyday lives and to put people at the heart of what matters.

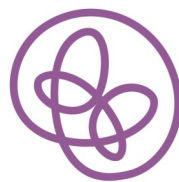
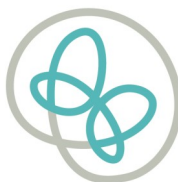
In Portlethen we have an excellent support Group based at the Jubilee Hall, the Coronavirus Community Care Group (CCCG), which, in the very early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, set out to provide support to the people of Portlethen. This group will provide food and help to those who have faced economic hardship. Aberdeenshire Council is also providing support to people, groups, and businesses. Funds are being made available to Towns and Villages to help relaunch them to the public so that when we can shop again people will look local.

For all its bad effects and the way that people have had to face lonely times, there is one thing that gives me a lift when walking around Portlethen as part of my exercise routine. It is a simple thing, but it has made a huge difference and has restored my faith in people. What is this act? We cannot shake hands or give family hugs. So, what is it? It is the act of saying Hello and giving a smile. People are greeting each other more; they now say Hello and smile or Good Morning, Afternoon or Evening. Most people seem happy to see another person and to want to share a moment. Of course, I am not talking about people who already know each other, I am talking about those of us who might know the face but nothing else or are even total strangers.

In these trying times a friendly word and a smile can be helpful and when we have removed the restriction of Covid-19, long may this continue.

As we start to recover from the Pandemic there will be a need for us to respond to new social and economic challenges. The PTA is committed to reacting in a positive way to help with the regeneration of our community. We have already put in additional bids for funding and look forward to working alongside our partners and local businesses and organistaions to make this happen.

Take care and stay safe - Ron, Mike, Alec, Alison & Darren



Change

Heritage

Strength & Unity

Unending

Clochdighter Accounts

Transactions in the quarter to 3^{0th} April 2020

	Credit	Debit	
Balance b/fwd.			£8,712.65
Advertising Income	£4565.0		£13,277.65
Donation - Coronavirus Community Care Group		£500.00	£12,777.65
Printing Costs		£3,256.00	£9,521.65
Donation - Jubilee Hall		£500.00	£9,021.65
Donation - Portlethen Paths Development Group		£500.00	£8,521.65
Christmas Lights - Cable ties		£39.99	£8,481.66

Monkey Business!



Full marks must be given to Susan Mellis of Broomfield Road who kept everyone's spirits high during lockdown by finding many new and interesting costumes for Monkey. Many people went out of their way just to see what he was up to that day. Needless to say that Monkey is now a legend in Portlethen.



Monkey continued to amuse but had a wee bit of a drama when he was planning to go on holiday. The Covid police heard he was about to break the rules and came round. Once he had paid his fine they did get into the community spirit and lent him their gear for a quick photo opportunity.



Well done to both Susan and Monkey. There must have been a lot of hard work put in to this, and it has been fully appreciated by the good people of Portlethen. Once restrictions are over I hope that you can both have a well earned holiday. And we expect a picture postcard from Monkey.

Tamas Blaque by Chevalier Frederick Stewart

(Portlethen resident and founder of The Portlethen Heritage Society)

So, there I was, in lockdown. Wondering what to do next, having planted lots of seed tatties in pails, homemade boxes, and - ssshhh - in the flower borders. With my interest in history, I started thinking about the Scottish mercenary, Tamas Blaque (Tam Blake).

Blaque was part of the Coronado expedition into Arizona and New Mexico in 1540, and I contemplated the impact on the Great Plain Indian tribes after the arrival of the Spanish on horseback. Thinking about Blaque reminded me of the Métis tribe whose homeland is in Canada and part of the United States. The tribe trace their descent to both indigenous north Americans and European settlers. The Métis is a group of people with a distinct culture and language, and in Canada they are recognised as a distinct Indigenous people.

To keep me active, I decided to become an Unofficial Member of the Métis Tribe and construct a Tipi out of scraps of wood and branches (notice the flag is blue and white). The gas mask is to remind folk that despite my Alzheimers...I am still in the zone!





Dementia Friendly
ABERDEENSHIRE
- PORTLETHEN -

Dementia Friendly Portlethen are unable, under the present government restrictions, to bring you Musical Memories or Boogie in the Bar in our usual format, but we are still able to bring you music every week, as we are uploading weekly tunes on the Dementia Friendly Portlethen facebook pages for you to enjoy. When it is safe to do so, we will return to these activities and hope that you will join us for a boogie and/or a sing-a-long.

If you need any help, please contact us.

Julie Forbes, Chair, Dementia Friendly Portlethen

E-mail : dementiafriendlyportlethen@gmail.com

Seeing Portlethen with new eyes

In normal times, the hustle and bustle of daily life leaves us with little time to enjoy our surroundings. Those of us lucky enough to be able to get out and about during these terrible and unprecedented times, are required to take our exercise within the local area. Some may speed through theirs, running or cycling. Walking, on the other hand, will give you time to enjoy your surroundings.

As a townie born and bred, throughout my childhood and early adulthood my only trips to the countryside lay at the end of long bus or train journeys. Here we have such opportunities on our doorstep, and I have never been so grateful to be living out of town!

Prior to lockdown, and working in Aberdeen, my walks were always "with purpose", usually towards and around shops. But now - no shops, no problem. Confined to Portlethen, my feet have found new paths to tread and the daily walk has become an adventure.



Walking through Portlethen, you'll have noticed a variety of wild flowers popping up in amongst the grass on verges, along pathways and in parks. This bio-diversity brings a little touch of countryside to our wee town, and the bees and butterflies will love it.

Then there's the Woodland Park. I must confess that without the excuse of a dog to walk, I had never ventured there. But you don't need a dog to experience the tranquility that can be found amongst the trees, the wildlife and the renowned sculptures. The well-laid out paths lead you around the Park and the thoughtfully placed stones, painted by children young and old and, just add to the smiles on people's faces as we walk through.



The Moss was always a favourite haunt with our children. With more time on our hands, we are more aware of the variety of trees and plants there, the gorse in its splendid yellow glory, the birdsong and always just the possibility of glimpsing a deer (haven't managed that...yet!).



Taking a walk off the beaten track - maybe a path you haven't walked before, a country road you've only driven before, or a track you haven't even noticed before - is always a joy. We've done all of these, but we're not finished yet. We've seen countryside, farms and farmland, a bunker, derelict cottages, and houses old and new. We've found tracks and pathways we didn't know existed, followed them and ended up in Downies, Old Portlethen and (once) the A92!

So much to see, and all on our doorstep. Where will your next walk take you? - *Alison Lloyd-Wiggins*

Coronavirus Community Care Portlethen and Surroundings

The Coronavirus Community Care group was set up in March and since that time it has been making sure the most vulnerable are given a helping hand during the pandemic.

The group has split the town into 24 separate zones with team leaders and volunteers delivering food parcels, medicine and anything else needed during the crisis. To make sure they were targeting those most at need they delivered thousands of cards to residents who were asked to contact the community care group if they needed help.

Coronavirus Community Care for Portlethen was set up by Robert Gordon University student Sophie Stephen. It started out as a social media site for anyone with spare essential goods like food or toilet roll. After holding a meeting before the lockdown restrictions were introduced Sophie decided to set up the group. It has quickly taken off and hundreds of people from Portlethen and the surrounding area have given up their time to help out.



Sundari Joseph, Rodolphe Blanchard-Kowal and Sophie Stephen from Portlethen-based Coronavirus Community Care

Sophie decided to launch the group when the original social media page gained popularity. The international marketing management student said:

"The Facebook page grew so quickly and within a few days we had 300 members on it. So I decided to have a meeting to get people involved and it has grown from there. It has been great hearing about people in the different zones getting help. The amount of donations has been amazing too. We have been getting food, cleaning supplies, nappies and even hand sanitiser."

Coronavirus Community Care is based at the Portlethen Jubilee Hall, which acts as a distribution hub for any deliveries that need to go out.



Sundari Joseph from the hall committee said they want anyone in the town who could do with help to get in touch. She said:

"We put cards through the doors of about 6,000 households and we did that early in March. We are offering shopping, food parcels, the collection of prescriptions and telephone support for anyone who is lonely. "We are just doing what we can and the community has really rallied round in all areas. We are looking for people in need and if someone knows anyone who needs some help they can get in touch with us."



Local volunteers helping local people

Coronavirus Community Care is a group set up in Portlethen and the surrounding areas to provide support to the community in these difficult times.

We are here to support you if you are struggling with any aspects of self-isolation.

We can help with supplies, shopping, transport, food, or even a friendly voice to talk to and much more. If you would like to help out or to know more about us, you can contact our central base in the Jubilee Hall at:

Tel. 07396339448

Supported by Portlethen Town Association, Portlethen & District Community Council, and Jubilee Hall



1st Portlethen Scout Group



SCOUTIN'

A few years ago Scout leaders were told to put the 'out' into 'Scouting'. This would normally be the time we would do it. Not this year; Beaver, Cub and Scout camps have been cancelled, expeditions put on hold, hikes postponed.

Has Scouting stopped in Portlethen? Of course not. It takes more than a pandemic to dampen the enthusiasm of Leaders, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. So instead of meeting in Bourtree Hall and the local schools, we have held meetings on Zoom. Instead of completing challenges and badge work with our friends, we have been doing them in our houses, gardens and when we're out for our daily exercise.



What have we done? We did a haggis hunt in Nicol Park. You wondered what those pictures were, didn't you? We have drawn spring pictures for Aberdeen Rotary Club to include in care packages for care homes and key workers. Did you see Bear Grylls' 'Hike to the Moon' on The Big Night In? 1st Portlethen were putting in the miles to contribute to the total of £344,000 raised by Scouts UK. Some have taken part in virtual campfires and played 'Somewhere over the rainbow' for 'We Make Music for the NHS' with Nicola Benedetti. We have learned the Green Cross Code and taken our families on a road safety walk. The minibeasts in our gardens have been hunted and identified.



Music for the NHS



Hike to the Moon

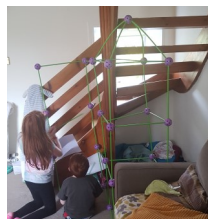


Minibeast Hunt



Builder Badge

The best thing was Camp at Home. More than 50 Beavers, Cubs and Scouts built dens inside or pitched a tent in the garden and slept in it for at least a night. One Beaver slept in a tent for six nights and some Cubs and Scouts did not sleep in their beds for the whole of April. Most of them camped on 30th April when Northumberland Scouts organised a world record breaking Camp at Home with more than 95,000 taking part.



Of course every Beaver, Cub and Scout is proud to earn badges to recognise their achievements and the Leaders are working hard to give them the opportunity to continue their progress to the top awards. So far Bourtree Beaver Colony alone has already earned 50 badges which the Leaders will be delighted to present at our first meeting back.

As one parent said 'Scouting has given them a focus other than school work'.

*By Christine Michie
Assistant Beaver Leader*

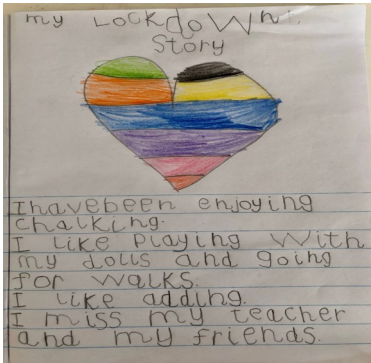




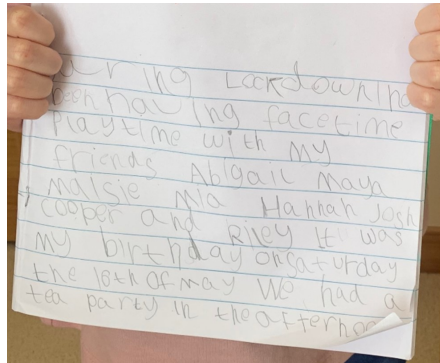
Portlethen Primary School

Trust Teamwork Respect Achievement Inclusion Nurture

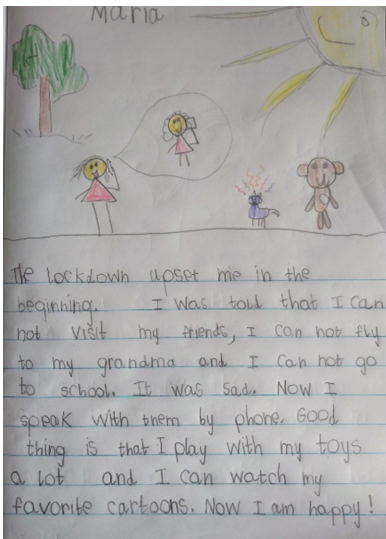
As our wonderful pupils have been adapting to home learning since lockdown, I am delighted to share with the community just a snapshot of the fantastic work they have been doing. As Head Teacher of this amazing school and a community member, I wish to thank pupils and families for their resilience, determination and positive outlook and the community at large for all you are doing for each other. I always say I'm Proud To Be Porty when talking about our school but I am also proud to be a resident of this superb community. Enjoy reading our pupils' work!



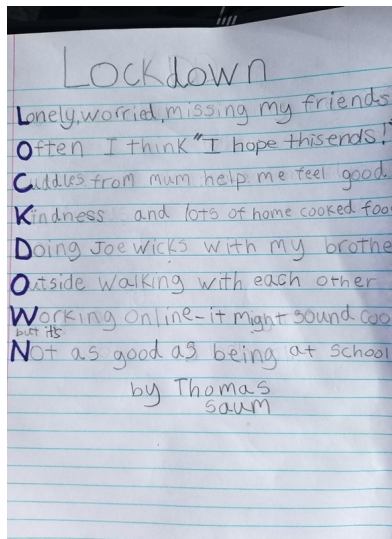
By Alejandra, P1



By Ceris, P1



By Maria, P2/3P



By Thomas, P5/6

Lockdown

The best thing about lockdown is spending time with my family. I do miss my friends and school but I am enjoying my mum teaching me at home. I found it weird when I saw people wearing masks but I am use to it now.

By Aiden P2/3C

My Parent Interview

What has been the biggest change? **No work and Daddy being at home more.**

How are you finding home schooling? **Busy but fun!**

How are you feeling? **Content**

Your top three moments from this experience? **May the Fourth. Easter party and getting the whiteboard.**

What activities have you most enjoyed doing? **Zooming and walking.**

What are you most thankful for? **My family are all safe!**

What T.V show have you watched? **Lots!**

Your favourite inside family activity: **Camping and owl post.**

Favourite food to bake: **Banana loaf.**

Favourite time of the day: **Snuggles in bed with me!**

Goals for after this: **Speak to family more often.**

By Matthew P2/3C

Lockdown 2020

It all started on March 23rd at 8:30p.m. when Boris Johnson the prime minister of the UK announced that we were going into lockdown due to covid-19 (corona virus). The corona virus is like the flu, but it attacks your lungs. At first, I was excited because we got to stay off school but then I remembered that I wouldn't see my friends and that made me upset.

During the lockdown I done lots of things like playing with my sisters, playing on my trampoline, going out on bike rides with my dad. I hope my little sister can join us soon as we are teaching her how to ride her bike. I also celebrated my 11th birthday with my immediate family and the rest on video call!

During the Lockdown I have also learnt some life lessons like caring for my family and friends and also to be more cautious when out with my friends. It has been hard over the lockdown period not seeing my friends or other relatives, but it has also been fun having quality time with my family.

The whole of the UK is showing their appreciation to the NHS and keyworkers by standing outside their homes to clap every Thursday at 20:00. Me and my family enjoy going out to clap for them.

I know that I am living in a time that will go down in history as the time the world shut down and that is why I am documenting this so when I am older I can pass this on to younger generations of the world.

Lexie, P5/6

My Lockdown Diary

Lockdown was announced 8:30pm March 23rd it has been nearly 4 weeks since it started.

I felt not so scared but I was worried I wouldn't be able to see my friends and that I'd miss school and my football club, but I felt safe being at home with my mum, dad and sister. I've learned lots of new skills being in lockdown. I've baked banana bread, cupcakes and learned how to make chilli, potato and leek soup and lentil soup. I've been helping with chores around the house hoovering, washing the car, laundry and tidying my room. I have been gardening I planted lettuce, runner beans and my own herb garden including chives, basil and parsley. My mum calls these life skills!

I like being active and we have been going out for big walks, riding bikes doing my mums workout stations in our garden. I miss playing football, but my dad takes me out every day to keep my fitness levels up and we do drills, cuppy, shooting and passing skills. I've also been doing my own drills and my dad videos me doing these for my club. I have been helping my sister with her learning and we have been getting on well together as a team. I miss my friends/class every day, even Mrs Bremner! But thanks to technology I can keep in touch with my friends, teacher, family and team-mates by messaging and face timing.

My granny is missing us lots and makes us a goody bag every week which we look forward to, especially when she bakes pancakes. They are the best! We've been swapping games with friends every week which has been fun as we both get to play different games. I'm enjoying uno, dominoes and donkey the most. I really like playing FIFA with my friend online and we play career mode which we both enjoy and have fun with. I've been drawing lots and reading different books and my dad got us Disney plus so we can watch lots of different films and I'm enjoying the animal documentaries. It also made me want to make a fact file about one of my favourite animals snow leopards.

I'm enjoying spending more time with my pet cat Domino. I've been feeding her, brushing her and playing lots with her and her toys and she's enjoying getting lots of attention! Other fun things we have done include having a family sleepover, building a den and at Easter we had an Easter egg hunt, decorated eggs to roll, played fun games and ate lots of chocolate. Me and my sister baked Easter cupcakes and delivered them to our friends, family and neighbours to cheer them up during lockdown.

When my mum helps at the Corono Community my dad teaches me for a few days and I like having both my parents helping me to learn. We are waiting to hear if lockdown will be extended again, I'm not so worried or too anxious as long as we are healthy and safe but I am looking forward to seeing my friends, grandparents and other family face to face and can't wait to get a hug from my gran!

By Logan, P6

My Coronavirus Poem By Olivia, P6

Covid 19 is very mean
Our school is closed
Really sad
Over lockdown I can't play football
National emergency
All of the NHS workers saving lives
Very brave
Inventing a cure
Really missing my friends
Unhappy
Staying at home

Lockdown By Nicole, P7

During lockdown
It's very strange
Meeting up with friends
Keeping out of range.

Say "Hello"
And have a chat
Mustn't touch
I'm fed up with that.

I want to give
My nan a hug
Go away
You nasty bug!

I've been making lots
Of yummy cakes
But there's only so many
things to make.

They smell so good
And taste so fine
But I mustn't eat them
All the time!

I often find
That my dad is snoring
Because lockdown is getting
REALLY boring!

From two metres away
I can see the worry in people's faces
As the government just announced
Another thousand cases.

We clap on Thursday
For the NHS
To show them we know
They are doing their very best.

When we were told
To stay at home
I soon began
To moan and groan.

Facetiming friends
On my phone
Is making me feel
A little less alone.

But I miss the times
Where we would laugh at school
Run around
And act like fools.

I must remember
This isn't forever
Because eventually
We will be together!



Finally, if you would like to have a browse of our "Home School Highlight" school magazine, please follow the link:

<http://portlethen-pri.aberdeenshire.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Home-school-Highlights-First-Edition-2.pdf>

Keep safe and well everyone!

Sandra McKechnie - Head Teacher

To the residents and friends of Portlethen

We find ourselves in strange times here and throughout the world. I'm feeling like many of us, a bit useless despite the very important job of staying at home.

I am an artist, so I have decided I can at least in my own way do something that will hopefully will make our feelings known and mark our thanks to those that have put their lives and their families lives in to the face of danger to help us through the Coronavirus 19 crisis. To that end, I have found an artistic way to acknowledge their sacrifice by building the sculpture.



This sculpture is in the form of an angel made out of plywood and then coated in a paint system that will last in the local weather, it has a large heart that will have dedications to those that are in the front line: Nurses, Doctors, NHS Staff, delivery drivers, shop workers and farmers just as an example, and without doubt all those that stayed in lockdown.

This will be 8 feet high, it took about 2 weeks to make and another 3 weeks awaiting for the co-operation of the Portlethen weather. This is an art piece that has come to mean different things to many different people, part of the different meanings is the use of the form, and of course the colours used represent help, courage, health, stability, and the nature around us.

It is still a work in progress but I hope to have the dedication plaques and the rainbows that will be attached to the hearts finished soon. I am looking for a home to display the finished sculpture so any suggestions or offers will be appreciated.

Please feel free to come along to Easter Court to have a look and take any pictures you would like.

Thanks to all
Stan Brooks MA - Sculptor

The Angels of Covid-19

Sponsored by the Friends and Residents
of Easter Court, Portlethen.

Dedicated to all Front line and Key workers

during the Covid-19 pandemic
for keeping us healthy
both physically and spiritually.

"We Thank You"

Stan Brooks
Sculptor

News from the Shed

With the onset of C19, the trustees of the Shed took the hard decision on 14th March to close the Portlethen & District Men's Shed to members until further notice. However, some of our members and families have been making our sensory garden come alive with flowers in the planters made by the members, and have planted up the vegipods, which will bear fruit, or should I say veg, later in the year. Hopefully by that time we will be able to welcome members and friends back to the shed and formally open the garden.



Portlethen & District Men's Shed also made a donation to Westhill Men's Shed who, with the aid of a 3D printer, are making face protectors for frontline workers.

As the weather improves, work can restart on finishing the mural - keeping our distance of course. We hope that all our members and their families are taking care and staying safe.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you need assistance.

Julie Forbes, Secretary P&DMS
Email: info@portlethenmensshed.com



**PORTLETHEN
& DISTRICT
MEN'S SHED**



Wildlife on the Moss

Working from home certainly has it's advantages, and I have been loving my daily walks on the Moss, and combining them with some nature photography - there is no shortage of subjects!

I was particularly taken with this coy wee robin.

Caroline Rutherford
Portlethen Resident

Lockdown in Portlethen -

some of the positive and negative environmental effects

'Grass verges - Hedgehogs - Portlethen Moss and the Community Woodland - New species records for Portlethen'

Grass verges - to cut or not to cut

Very controversial, but there is a compromise:

Firstly, did you know that one out of every three mouthfuls of food we eat depends on pollinators? It's almost impossible to over-emphasise the importance of the service pollinators perform for us.

The wider verges we have in many parts of Portlethen are ideal for pollinators because they have areas that are further from the road and its associated pollution. They can provide a greater variety of habitats and have the capacity to be a lifeline for pollinators that will help to safeguard pollination of our crops and wild plants into the future. Therefore, a compromise could be - verges immediately at the roadside that are polluted by traffic are cut while the larger grassy areas that are a metre or more from the road are left for biodiversity.

Already we're seeing wildflowers appearing in our uncut grassy areas. Wouldn't it be lovely if these were managed to produce more wildflowers and less grass? What a beautiful sight it would be to have lovely areas of wildflowers with bees and colourful butterflies flitting around them. The humble dandelion:



From Buglife:

'Wild pollinators include bumblebees and other bees (250 species), butterflies and moths (2200 species), flies (6700) and various other insects such as beetles, wasps and thrips.

Pollinators are in serious trouble.

Half of our 27 bumblebee species are in decline, and three of these bumblebee species have already gone extinct.

Seven bumblebee species have declined by more than 50% in the last 25 years.

Two-thirds of our moths and 71% of our butterflies are in long term decline.

Across Europe 38% of bee and hoverfly species are in decline; only 12% are increasing.'

In fact, all insects are in serious decline due to the use of pesticides and herbicides - at a local level we see the spraying of verges, edges and around trees etc. It's well documented that unless things change, insects as a whole will go down the path of extinction within a few decades.

So, let's support the progressive move to leave the larger verges uncut and managed for wildlife.

Hedgehogs

During lockdown more people have contacted me about how to help hedgehogs in their gardens, which is great. Hedgehogs are the UK's most popular mammal and are in very serious decline. Thanks to lockdown there have been fewer road casualties and a greater interest in their wellbeing. Please check areas of long grass before strimming and mowing, hedgehogs won't run away they curl up into a ball, hence the reason they often get hurt.

The worst things for hedgehogs are the use of pesticides (slug pellets!) and herbicides and when gardens are lost to hard landscaping - in fact all our wildlife suffers, our gardens are mini nature reserves for all manner of wildlife.



Again, leaving the larger verges to grow naturally provides a natural foraging area for our local hedgehogs too.

www.facebook.com/HedgehogsofPortlethen

Portlethen Community Woodland and Portlethen Moss

It's great to see these sites, that are managed by The Portlethen Moss Conservation Group and Aberdeenshire Council, being so well used and appreciated during lockdown.



Unfortunately, it's not all good news though because a 'person' has been destroying part of the Moss by taking it upon themselves to cut new paths. This was done during bird nesting season too, which is illegal if birds are nesting. Very irresponsibly, by cutting new paths, this person has uncovered an area of invasive Knotweed which was being contained by the gorse and is now open to spread.

As result this has created a huge job - probably at great expense for us. We're unable to deal with the problem at the moment because of social distancing etc, we just hope it doesn't spread too far before we can start to work on it.

After lockdown we would appreciate any hands-on help to reverse the damage done by the actions of this person - if you've been enjoying the Moss and the Woodland why not get involved? It's very rewarding. We're not a big group and as they say many hands make light work - we will advertise on our Facebook pages when we're planning to do any work.



New species records for Portlethen

We are so fortunate to live in such a biodiverse area. Every now and then a new species appears to add to the list of flora and fauna in Portlethen, here are a few:

Portlethen Moss:

- Rare micro moths that have never been recorded in this part of Scotland before
- Adders- photographic confirmation this year, but records as far back as the 1990's
- Cuckoo - 2 years ago

Slow worm last year on Downies Road

Corncrake - many years ago in the fields near Old Portlethen Village

Portlethen Community Woodland:

The woodland site was a disused agricultural field up until just over 10 years ago.

As it matures the species list goes up - with migrant birds now returning to the woodland to nest - willow warblers, sedge warblers, white throats and a grasshopper warbler has been heard - these little birds all fly from Africa and come here to breed.



Grasshopper Warbler



Blue Headed Wagtail

During lockdown, and not too far away from the woodland, a rare Blue Headed Wagtail was recorded in the last few weeks - there's only ever been one previous record in NE Scotland and that was back in 2018.

A short while ago a (dead unfortunately) pine marten was found just off the side of the dual carriageway at the South end of Portlethen. Tree bumblebees were recorded in Portlethen last year for the first time and again this year. This species of bee only arrived in the UK to England in 2001 with the first Scottish record in 2013 in Dunbartonshire.

I wonder what species will show up next.?

By Denise Martin



Portlethen Paths Development Group

In the March edition of the Clochandighter Magazine there were two articles dealing with local projects our group are involved with: Tree Planting in our community and the Best Garden Competition.

With the ongoing global crisis, these projects have, as you would expect, stalled.

Happily, and just a few days before the lockdown, more than 20 volunteers from our community came out and helped plant almost half the tree-whips we received from the Woodland Trust. Unfortunately certain elements of this particular project will not now happen, such as sowing wild seeds in various locations (maybe next year), but rest assured, we have every intention of resuming planting as soon as restrictions are lifted!



We have a strong desire to improve biodiversity in Portlethen through planting trees, sowing wild seeds and creating orchard areas. No only will wildlife get a benefit from this, but all of us will see an improvement through added colour around our town.

<https://www.facebook.com/PortlethenPaths/>

Although the Best Garden Competition cannot now run in the manner that was originally intended, we do still want to run a version of it. A Facebook Group has been created where members of our community can upload photos of gardens etc. There are full rules and regulations available, but essentially, you can take photos of your own garden, vegetable plot, window box, etc. or you can take photos of someone else's garden (with their permission) when you are out walking or taking exercise.

The competition will be open for a few months, so you can wait until your garden is looking its best before sending in photos!

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/PortlethensBestGarden/>

One final item that was mentioned in the March Clochandighter magazine: the benches that our group purchased are now all installed. Our thanks would have to go to Landscape Services, Aberdeenshire Council. Several members of their team have helped us enormously, not just with benches but with valuable advice and fruit tree planting!



The Grass is always Greener on the Other Side

In a time "BLD" (Before Lock Down) the Portlethen Paths Development Group was working with Aberdeenshire Council and Tajana Telisman Susic, the Greenspace Projects Officer, to look at creating new green spaces in Portlethen to encourage the growth of wildflowers, wild plants and to help increase the wildlife in Portlethen.



This was to be a long-term project and would take time. Normal trees would be planted, after being sourced from the Woodland Trust, and would be planted for being edible fruits, for woodland colour and for wildlife. Aberdeenshire Council planted fruit trees, apple, pears, plums and cherries, all selected as being suited to this area. This fruit, which will come in next year, is available for everyone to collect and use but we would like some to be left for wildlife.



Fruit Trees

Wild Garlic

One other effect is that in some areas the grass might not be cut, thus hopefully increasing the amount of what most people assume are weeds but help provide food for local insects, bees and other pollinators. These areas are marked by "Biodiversity" signs that inform people that the area is for improvement. This is especially important as we must do everything that we can to help prevent the decline in bee population, as they are so vital to other plants as well as the well-being of people.

Then Covid-19 changed all the plans and made our last planting a hurried affair. It also meant that the grass in most areas will not be cut for some time and we will not be able to seed the area with wild flowers, which would have added colour and help make the areas like real wild meadows.

Yes, the areas would look untidy for a time, but already flowers of colour are growing and making the areas a hot spot for pollinators and who knows what other flowers will grow. This is a positive development and will help change the short green lawns into colourful areas with more wildlife for people to enjoy. Most people just walk past the short green grass which does little for the area. But paths will be made clear and an area of a metre (approx. 3 feet) will be cut either side of the footpaths so it will remain clear.

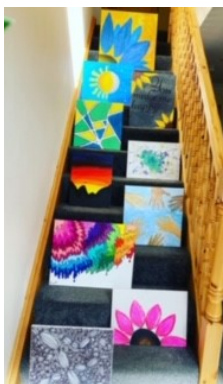


The parks could be used by the schools as weather stations, pollen-counting, insect control points for painting flowers, on non-rainy days of course, and somewhere to see nature in the raw - to be David Attenborough for a few hours.

We need your support to make this project make a difference and to move away from just having a green desert, to make park areas in Portlethen become something more than just a splash of green, to make them a splash of colour. We can make this happen and make a difference to our town.



Katie's Good Deed



Katie Robertson, 14, who is in S2 at Portlethen Academy has been spending her time painting.

After some requests to purchase them she has decided to get some printed to raise funds for a local charity, Charlie House.

A charity very close to her heart!

Well done Katie!





A Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation SC046327

YOUR LOCAL RURAL PARTNERSHIP

Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP) is your local Rural Partnership covering the Kincardine and Mearns area. We are a Scottish registered charity whose objectives are to encourage and develop voluntary activities and skills in the area; and assist in the regeneration of the area through the improvement of the physical, social and economic environment.

Essentially we help our communities make Kincardine and Mearns a great place to live and work!

Mid March this year, life for all of us changed and we entered into some unprecedented times.

The community response to the COVID19 Crisis has been tremendous. From the moment the crisis became official, Community Councils, Community Groups, Local Businesses and individuals mobilised. You didn't wait for an instruction; you created communication platforms; you assessed community potential need; you leafleted every door in their neighbourhood; you linked up with foodbanks; you were problem solving; you were up and running providing crisis support for those in need within days. We are so proud to be part of K&M.

The team at KDP have had to respond to this change and at this time are unable to meet with our communities "face to face". However, we have ensured continuity of service using technology and various media platforms. We are pleased to be able to offer the same level of support albeit in different ways.



Community Cash Event, Newtonhill

Our weekly Bulletins continue to share vital and key information. Due to the fast moving and changing nature of information we are receiving at this time, our Facebook Page has been a valuable resource for getting up to the minute information out to you.

To make it easier for communities to access the vast amount of support and assistance provided within our Towns and Villages by our fantastic communities we have produced an Interactive Map which can be accessed [here](#).

There is no doubt we have a long way to go before we come through this unprecedented situation and communities will be facing ever challenging times ahead. Our focus is to look at how we can help support the current levels of support and enthusiasm from our groups with the passage of time. We need solutions which are flexible and able to respond to changes need. Although help is needed for the here and now, we need to keep sight of what needs to be done for the renewal phase.

This support has to be progressive, transitioning into the recovery phase in line with community needs at the right time.

We wish to thank our wonderful groups and volunteers. Your contribution, your willingness and kindness has made a difference to the communities of K&M.

We're Here to help....

The Team at KDP offer practical help and support in a variety of ways, including:

- Supporting people and communities with projects of all sizes, both existing and new.
- Enabling and encouraging, and harnessing the skills and enthusiasm of local people.
- Providing information, advice and support with:
 - Project planning
 - Funding
 - Community consultation and engagement
 - Community action planning
 - Governance
 - 'Red- tape' so community groups can gain access to services and funding.
 - Business/Project Plans
 - Facilitation
 - Evidence gathering
 - Jargon Busting

We respond to the needs and requests of our communities so feel free to give us a call or drop us an email as we may be able to help or put you in the right direction!

**Kincardineshire Development Partnership
F9, Sheriff Court Building
Dunnottar Avenue**

Stonehaven

AB39 2JD

01569 763 246

officesupport@kdp.scot

www.facebook.com/

kincardineshiredevelopmentpartnership

www.kdp.scot



Chairmans Report

We would like to say thank you to all the key workers and front-line workers that have been doing all they can and even more to keep us safe as well as keep a sense of normality in our daily life during this very unusual time.

Thank you to all of Portlethen and District community members who have shown great resilience and caring attitudes towards each other that we can all be proud of.

Despite the lockdown the PDCC continues to function and is virtually meeting once a month. Please keep sending your queries and we will act on them the best we can.

The PDCC has been involved in supporting the Coronavirus Community Help group however it could. We also participated in bi-weekly online meeting with Aberdeenshire council during which they gave updates on their current processes and information.

As much information as possible was shared either via our Facebook page or the community notice board situated in Asda entrance. The latest notice put up was in regards to a Police notice about "Community Engagement & Reassurance" and information on scams going about.

On another note, the Hillside rezoning exercise consultation has been extended for 10 days after the schools involved are open to all pupils, a closure date will be advised when available.

The online public consultation for the Proposed Local Development Plan 2020 is now live and will close on the 17th July 2020.

We look forward to getting back to a live Community Council meeting with the public present but in the meantime stay safe and distanced.

Paul Melling
PDCC Chairperson
PDCC team

portlethencommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Facebook page PDCC - Portlethen & District Community Council



Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action is funded to support community and voluntary organisations, including groups that have formed very recently because of COVID-19. We can help your group to establish itself, search for funding and promote its services. For more information please visit

www.avashire.org.uk/new-groups.html

We have put together a large and up to date COVID funding list which highlights funding streams for existing groups and organisations including themes on Community both National and Local, Arts and Creatives, Business and Employment, Heritage and Students. This list is updated on a weekly basis and links can be found either on our website at www.avashire.org.uk or you can contact your local Development Officer Sandra McGuigan on 07585 330348.

While the situation continues there will be no Drop-in Surgeries, but working from home, Sandra can conduct video calls on Facetime, Skype, Zoom or Microsoft Teams, so if you need to see a friendly face drop her an email at sandra.mcguigan@avashire.org.uk

We have a dedicated email for any groups wishing to highlight current activities newsletter@avashire.org.uk and any changes to your usual work.

You can also contact us on the main number 03718 110008 (Mon-Thurs 10.00-14.00) or email us at enquiries@avashire.org.uk

And finally we want to say a huge thank you to all the wonderful volunteers in your area who are going above and beyond to help your community, we think you are all doing a brilliant job! Remember we are here to help as usual.



Councillor Alison Evison

A huge thank you to all the members of the community who have been doing so much to support others at this very challenging time. It has been tremendous to see people coming together and groups re-prioritising the work they do, and how they do it, to meet local need. Thank you!



In addition, many residents are also key-workers, and have been keeping us safe and protected, looking after those who are unwell or being shielded, and ensuring that essential services are delivered and that foodstuffs are available. Thank you!

And we have all been living in very different circumstances, many people cut off from close friends and family and work colleagues, and with most children and young people unable to attend school.

Loneliness and isolation have become real concerns and there has had to be a strong focus on mental health as well as physical health. Covid-19 has impacted us all. There is a long road to recovery ahead and the community spirit that has been so evident in Portlethen recently will be so valuable as we move forward.

Just a reminder that the NHS remains open and there for those who need it: www.NHSinform.scot

And some of the wider support available:

For Mental Health:

<https://clearyourhead.scot> NHS 24 on 111 Samaritans on 116 123

For those experiencing domestic abuse

<https://sdafmh.org.uk> or helpline 0800 027 1234

And for general help, support and advice:



Keep safe!

Alison Evison

Email cllr.a.evison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Telephone 07855682845

Facebook: Councillor Alison Evison: Scottish Labour in North Kincardine

Twitter @AlisonEvison

Councillor Ian Mollison

As I write this, society is taking its first steps out of lockdown. Who knows when normality will return. Or even if "normality" will return.



The impact of the pandemic for me and my fellow councillors (apart from any personal troubles) has been that we are working differently. Meetings continue, but remotely using Skype. The biggest one I have attended had nearly 80 folk taking part. I have "been at" full council, policy committees, the Kincardine and Mearns Area Committee, ward meetings and the community council forum which covers Kincardine and Mearns (Portlethen and District Community Council was represented). All done remotely.

The way we use technology has taken a great step forward. And that has meant me acquiring new skills, such as using two screens at once while taking part in a meeting. If you had told me that a couple of years ago, I would have thought you were hawking. I'm still learning as we go.

Many council officers have also been working remotely, though obviously some services have come to a halt. No plants for communities, play parks still not in use, libraries shut, schools closed (with the exception of those looking after key workers' children, such as at Hillside School), road repairs on hold, household recycling centres shut until 1 June, grass in open spaces uncut, and so on.

Staff have been flexible, switching to other roles to keep essential services going (such as bin collections, home teaching, and burials) and to support the more vulnerable in our communities.

Meanwhile community groups have sprung up to help look after those among us who have to keep safe or are just not that able to get out for vital supplies. The last "normal" meeting I attended in person was the one to set up the community coronavirus help group in Portlethen. That seems such a long time ago.

It has been really heart-warming how by and large people have pulled together (while keeping in line with social distancing naturally!).

Normally my article in the Clochandighter focuses on key issues that have affected the area. I hope you don't mind that I have departed from that in these exceptional times. I still post about such matters on Facebook and on my website. You would be most welcome to take a look.

Until we meet again, take care and stay safe. And of course my thanks to all the key workers for their efforts.

Cllr Ian Mollison

Email: Cllr.i.mollison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ian.mollison.73>

Portlethen Academy

Learn and Improve. Get Involved. Think of the Consequences. Respect All.

Over the last three months our staff and pupils have done tremendously well in adapting to their new learning and teaching environments. In the short weeks leading up to lockdown our young people demonstrated real care and regard for others. Whilst we may not be physically in the building, our school community remains connected and supported through virtual means. We are currently placing great emphasis on our school values, which resonate at such a time.

We have watched our ever-resilient team unite and go the extra mile. We continue to see our pupils creating beautiful work, whilst showing empathy as we continue to strive in safeguarding the lives of those most vulnerable in our community.

During lockdown focus has been placed on the health and wellbeing of our staff and pupils, online learning and transitions.

Health and wellbeing

From virtual coffee mornings and quiz nights to fitness and art challenges, our staff have embraced it all. The team had particular success with their pre-Easter holiday video, in which a number of staff lip synced to Justin Timberlake's *Can't Stop This Feeling*. Since posting on our Twitter back in April, the video has received over 20K views. If you are looking for something to bring a little joy to your day, we would definitely recommend giving it a watch.

These activities have helped to provide our team with the morale needed to continue supporting our pupils as they navigate learning from home. Many pupils have flourished in this new environment. Our dedicated guidance team have also offered one to one support for those who have found this shift a greater challenge. This approach has allowed many to reignite their motivation for learning and practice true resilience, of which our pupils can be proud.

Online learning

When we embarked on online learning, we were almost all new to it and are therefore continually working to improve and develop our practice using the feedback from young people and parents. Our technician team have done an outstanding job ensuring that ICT hardware is provided to each and every one of our 800+ pupils. We have also welcomed the abundance of resources that both local and national organisations have shared to support teachers, pupils and parents. As we progress from lockdown into blended learning, it is important that we continue to engage with businesses and members of our community. Such activities allow us to excite our learners about their future, broaden their horizons and help them realise their dreams.

Our Business and Community Support Officer, Isla Elliott, is currently exploring how we can continue to engage with our partners virtually, thus ensuring that we deliver the opportunities required for our young people to graduate as engaged, informed, motivated and empowered young people, who are prepared to become active citizens of our society. If you or your organisation have the capacity to support the school in this way we would love to hear from you. Please direct relevant queries to: Isla.Elliott@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

Transitions

The courses that young people are doing will soon change, allowing our S4-6 pupils to begin their certificated work. We are pleased to share that we have progressed with many school activities virtually, including our prefect and school captain interviews. As a result we welcome our 2020-21 newly appointed school captains Rachel Green and Sadie Myles alongside the prefect team. Rachel and Sadie have already had several meaningful conversations about how they can support the school over the next academic year. Part of that support will be dedicated to our new S1 pupils who will join us in August.

We are working closely with our colleagues in the local primary schools to provide an online transition. This includes materials and opportunities such as, meet the teacher videos and virtual parent briefings. We are also working hard to create a virtual school tour.

By the time you read this we will have had our virtual ceremony for our S6 pupils who missed their formal leaving day. Whilst this is an opportunity to reminisce and say farewells, we do hope to invite them all back when it is safe to do so. Our S6 leavers are going on to many wonderful destinations, from entry level positions and gap years, to further and higher education. There are also a number of school leavers who had great success in securing modern apprenticeships. One of which is Sophie Taylor who secured an apprenticeship with our business partner Maryculter House.

Sophie has done amazingly at continuing her learning as she awaits further information about the reopening of the hospitality sector. Sophie has spent her time in lockdown cooking meals and baked goods for her neighbours. In showing great initiative, she set up an Instagram account and started selling her makes. This attracted the attention of The Sitting Room in Portlethen who, following a very successful meeting, have offered to support Sophie to develop her business plan and branding, and allowing her to access their professional kitchen. It is stories like this that makes us proud of our community and the empowered young people that our pupils have worked so hard to become.

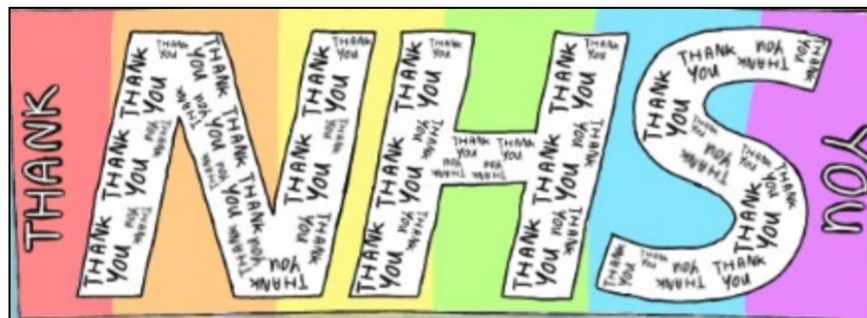
We take great pride in sharing the work that our pupils continue to produce, so have included some here for you. You can see many more wonderful examples on our Twitter page (@PortyAcad).



As labour market predictions alter, engaging with and developing skills for life, learning and work will be crucial. There are many exciting opportunities awaiting us in the future and we would love you to be part of this transformational time. We endeavour to develop positive, sustainable and impactful partnerships with the wider community that allows the school, its staff and most importantly, our pupils to be the best they can be.

Take care, stay safe and well wishes to all.

S1 Make a Mug Make a Difference



Walkin' the Course

As the Greens Convenor at **Portlethen Golf Club**. I would personally like to thank the majority of the public who during the period of lockdown made use of and respected our golf course while taking their daily exercise or walking their dog.



Having been Greens Convenor for a number of years I know only too well the hard work and dedication our Course Manager Neil Sadler and his team put in to keeping it in the condition you have been able to experience and enjoy.

As from Friday 29th May Golf resumed on our course once again, and I would advise that in the interest of your personal safety you refrain from walking the course. I am fully aware of the Right to Roam Scotland Act, however I have experienced first hand the damage inflicted to someone being struck by a golf ball as I'm sure one can imagine.



Personally I would like to say thank you for all the kind comments and well wishes made to the Club shown by many, and furthermore to say don't become a stranger. Once our clubhouse reopens on Phase 3 of lockdown please pop in by for a coffee, breakfast or lunch. Or why not consider taking up one of our many memberships available, from social to golfing.

Once again thank you for your respect.
Ian Cruickshank

Application forms available via -

https://howdidido.blob.core.windows.net/.../file_e11f2811-243...

It has been an absolute pleasure being able to have this green space to take a daily walk on. Thank you. - Jayne MacNab

Thank you for opening the course to the community, it has been a wonderful open space to walk on. - Helen Sleeth

Thank you for allowing us. It's a beautiful walk. Our loss is your gain. - Jackie Hickman

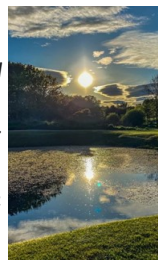
It's such a beautiful peaceful place, thank you again! - Mandy Beagrie

I had a lovely tranquil walk around the course last night, it was beautiful. Thank you. - Alison Duncan

We are really going to miss our walks round the course and the friendly waves from the staff and other walkers! Thank you for opening up to the public! - Ramsay Smith

Thank you so much for allowing us all to enjoy a morning walk around the course. It was really appreciated. - Judith Simpson

It's been a pleasure being able to walk over the golf course during lockdown, as a non golfer the course looks great. - Diane Sellar



GETTING CREATIVE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Now that I have more time on my hands given the suspension of all the groups with which I am involved, and working from home giving me another 2 hours of commuting time to spend doing other activities, how have I been spending this extra time? I have been enjoying some upcycling projects.



If you want to purchase any of the above or want an object you have lying around transformed contact tazart@hotmail.co.uk.



I have also started a major landscape gardening project; so as long as the weather stays dry I can hopefully get this completed.

Julie Forbes

FOOD COLLECTION - URGENT FOOD APPEAL

Catalyst Vineyard Church Scotland is a multi-site church, meeting in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

They have a local food bank called Storehouse that runs all year around.

At the current time the demand has increased dramatically, with around 1.5 tonnes of food given out every week around Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, and the demand is increasing every week.

Due to this increase in demand, we have put a box outside our house to see if anyone in the community, who is able to, would like to help. We have loved that a few people have already donated generously.

IF you are ALREADY out shopping, could you pop a few extra items in your trolley and drop them off in our box and we will take them to the main collection?

Storehouse is taking non-perishable food and toiletries.

MOST NEEDED ITEMS: UHT milk (long life), Tinned meat, Tinned fruit, Tinned goods, Toilet roll, Tea bags and coffee, Rice, Pasta / Sauces, Soap

The box is out every day from around 8am-8pm on our driveway :
Our address is Eastview, Hillside, (off Schoolhill Road), Portlethen.

URGENT
Food Appeal!

STOREHOUSE
Foodbank

IN NEED OF A FOOD PARCEL?
GO TO: [HELLO.CATALYST.VIN](https://hello.catalyst.vin)

CAN you HELP?

HI, I'M HELPING COLLECT
FOOD DONATIONS FOR
STOREHOUSE FOODBANK

WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO
DONATE ANY NON-PERISHABLE
FOOD ITEMS OR TOILETRIES?

MORE INFO ON:
f (Facebook) (Instagram) CATALYST
VINEYARD CHURCH

Thank you so much!

If you are in need of a food parcel please go to website:

hello.catalyst.vin

Hayleigh Mathers

A little bit of maintenance during Covid-19

Some of you may have noticed that the WWI soldier I carved for the memorial orchard had developed a few cracks over the past year. This is fairly normal; I carve from logs which will typically have a water content of 30-40%. As the wood dries it will lose a lot of this water and it will shrink. Wood shrinks roughly twice as much along the growth rings (radially) as it does across the rings (tangentially)- and it is this uneven shrinkage that can cause cracks to develop.

Most of the time I can plan the piece to avoid this but sometimes, like in the arms of the soldier, its hard to completely avoid. The majority of the cracks are small and can be effectively controlled by regular oiling, especially during the first year after carving. This is easy when the piece is in your garden and you can check it regularly and apply more oil when you see small cracks start, but for pieces in public spaces this can sometimes be difficult and these cracks can sometimes develop into checks/spits. When this happens its usually an easy to repair if they are affecting the look of the piece. As I am currently furloughed, I had the time to go up and do some repairs on the soldier a couple of weeks ago.



This crack had developed into a split and I felt it was spoiling the look of the bench and could let water further into the piece and lead to rot. The others were not as bad, but I decided to deal with them all at the same time



The process of repairing the cracks is quite simple with practice. I took up one of my smallest saws along with a portable grinder, some expanding glue and some thin slices of the same wood that I originally carved the soldier from. I used the saw to clean out the cracks and then used the grinder to thin and shape slices of wood into shims so they would fit into the cracks. I needed to try to keep the woodgrain in the shims going in the same direction as in this original piece so it would weather down to the same colour.

Next, I applied glue to the shims and dipped them into water before tapping them into place in each of the cracks. After 20 minutes or so the glue, activated by the water, starts to expand and I wiped away any excess and then left it to set for a couple of hours.

Once the glue was fully set, I used the saw and grinder to shape the shim to match the original carving and gave the whole soldier a fresh coat of oil. Over time the repairs will weather to match the original colour and our memorial bench will be looking its best once again. Given how several of the other carvings I have donated to the woodland site have been damaged/stolen over the years, its good to see that the WWI memorial bench has been left undamaged. I hope this will continue and it will continue to be enjoyed by everyone for years to come.



Whilst out checking on my livestock I have also been keeping myself amused with a few other small projects, a memorial bench for some much-missed pets, a dog carving, a dragon with her eggs, a shark-throne and a few smaller pieces.



Photographs of my carvings can be found on my Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/DervishCarving/>

By Dave Roberts



And the last word from Monkey



May we all live happily ever after