



Clochandighter

Portlethen & District Community
Council Newsletter, September 1997

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome to the Autumn edition of our Community Newsletter. Autumn! Where has the summer gone? Most of us have had to reach for rainwear rather than the bottle of sun-tan lotion.

It was the weather that put paid to our Gala Day on 21 June and helped make it a day to remember in a different way from what we had hoped. That morning, it started to rain before 6am and as the day wore on it became heavier. Despite this many brave souls turned up with stalls, floats and even arena events but the only ones who could have enjoyed the rain was Smokie and his dogs 'n ducks - Totally Quackers.

While I will not embarrass any group or individual by naming them, a SINCERE vote of thanks must go to those who made the most of an impossible task and withstood the rain and atrocious conditions to keep this event going to the end of the day.

There are many Brave Hearts in Portlethen.

Next year's Gala day is the 20 June 1998, and although some people have already volunteered to help, the team would welcome anyone who has an interest to join them so PLEASE pick up the phone and give your details to any of the members of the Community Council.

I would like to welcome the new Rector of Portlethen Academy, Mr. Albert Swinbourne and hope he gets all the help and co-operation he needs from the folk in and around Portlethen.

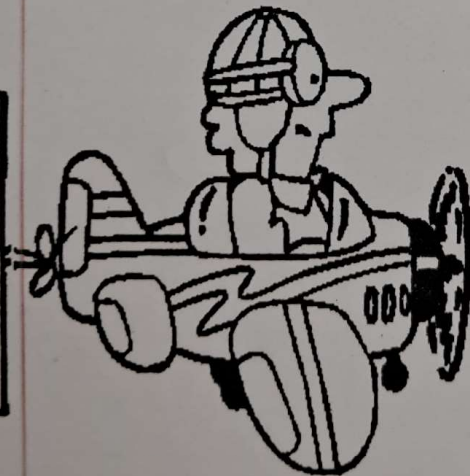
Chairman's Report continued...

Just to prove the folks around the neighbourhood are community minded, several people from different areas have come together as PORTLETHEN PORTCULLIS.

This is a sub committee of the Community Council which intend concentrating all their efforts on Planning and development issues under the auspices of the Council. Not only will they hope to influence future planning for the area but hope to improve the amenities in the town, which are sadly lacking, for those of us who already live here. To achieve this they are willing to lobby the Planning authority, the Builders and even go as far as the local MP and the Secretary of State if necessary. Ideally there should be a representative from each district on this group, therefore, if anyone is interested in helping to develop a better town for us all to live in please contact any member of the council for details.

Rodney Shand
Chairman

N. B. Community Council meetings are held on the FIRST Wednesday of every month in the Community Education Building.



Contact List

Portlethen & District Community Council

Lewis Barron
Linda Begg
Wendy Duncan
Colin Grant

Edna Leavitt
Ailsa Mackintosh
Alex MacKay
Willie Mathieson

Paul Melling
David Mitchell
Kathleen Penny
Norman Penny
Gillian Robertson
Rodney Shand

Derick Stewart
Sue Stewart

Local Councillors

Mhairi Nash

Ann Tunstall

(Sec)

(Trsr)

(VChr)

(ASec)

(Chr)

PORTCULLIS -

PORT WHO?

For those of you who are regular readers of The Mearns Leader and/or the Evening Express the name Portlethen Portcullis may already be familiar. For the uninitiated however, a word or two of explanation will be required.

Portlethen Portcullis was formed at the end of May following a meeting of Portlethen & District Community Council. At this meeting some general concerns were expressed with regard to the impact which large scale planning developments could have on the community. As a result of this, a sub-committee of interested residents came into being. An initial meeting of the sub-group took place and a name which could easily be identified was chosen. Why Portcullis? In days of old the portcullis could deny entrance to the marauding hordes or admit a friendly face. While friends are always a welcome sight, it seems to us that the time has come to drop the portcullis against the continual plundering of local land for never-ending housing estates.

The need for good, quality housing is one we recognise and we have no desire to prevent developers from creating employment. However, we also recognise the very real need for Portlethen to become a community where people want to put down roots, raise a family and stay for more than just one or two years. We feel strongly that what is needed is a breathing space, time to consider the needs of the community as a whole and how best to achieve these needs. Will 300 more families seeking places in the local schools and nurseries, appointments at the Health Centre, social amenities and access to Aberdeen on an already crowded trunk road really add to your quality of life? Will it add to theirs?

Portlethen Portcullis is fighting for this breathing space on your behalf. We have already lodged a letter of objection to the current application with the Planning Authority. If you wish to contact us for further information or to read a copy of the letter of objection, then please feel free to call or write to any of the following people:

Mary Matheson Ailsa MacKintosh Sue Stewart

We would welcome comments and support from the community.

Portlethen is where we live - let's take care of it!

Smallprint All contributions are accepted in good faith and no responsibility is taken by Portlethen and District Community Council (PDCC) for their content. Similarly, the content of the articles do not reflect the views of the PDCC, unless this is stated expressly.

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PORTLETHEN S W R I

PORTLETHEN S.W.R.I. are looking forward to their new season of meetings, scheduled to begin on 8 September at 7.30pm in the Horsa Hut at Portlethen Community Education Centre. The topic for the opening evening is Security in the Home, a talk given by Grampian Police. Competitions are: Floral arrangement in an egg cup and Four Drop Scones.

Meetings are held every second Monday in the month from September to May. A varied programme of speakers and demonstrations are again on offer and include glass blowing, living wills and slide shows.

Posters are displayed in the library for each month. Membership fees are set at £6 per session, £1.50 per evening for visitors and 50p for tea and home-bakes.

A warm welcome is extended to all.

DEFENCE OF BRITAIN PROJECT

Towards the end of last year you may have read in the press that a national Survey is being undertaken to record the remains of Britain's recent military history. Scottish Local Authorities have been asked to co-ordinate the project within their areas and our local Co-ordinator for Kincardine and Mearns is Mr William Munro, Area Manager for Aberdeenshire South.

Mr Munro is planning to set up a network of interested volunteers, people who have an interest in Britains recent military heritage and ideally have some local knowledge in order to identify artefacts.

Do we have any Second World War buffs out there? If so and you are interested in this project, or have any appropriate knowledge, or are willing to assist in the collection and recording of information (on a strictly voluntary basis!), please contact:

William Munro
Area Manager
Aberdeenshire Council
Viewmount
Arduthie Road
Stonehaven AB39 2DQ

or Ailsa MacKintosh

LOCAL UPDATE

Planning

The Scottish Office has now returned the Structure Plan with minor modifications. This makes it unlikely that the new town at Banchory-Devenick will obtain Planning Permission. The allocation of houses in Portlethen until 2001 is complete and permission has been granted for the new Health Centre.

Copies of the plan, when printed will be made available in the library. A public enquiry will have to be held on the Local Plan which will probably require some updating due to the delay.

Education

The opening of the Nursery at Newtonhill will extend the numbers of places in the Portlethen Academy catchment area. Aberdeenshire's policy of education from the cradle to the grave will enable people of all ages to reach their real potential, widen horizons and have fun.

Environment

Money for local government is still very restricted and we are monitoring carefully all environmental issues. Care must be taken not to allow children near dangerous areas such as burns, the railways etc. Councillors and officials will move immediately if alerted to any dangers but can't be everywhere.

Local amenities

A reminder for after the holidays - Community Education and the Coffee shop provides a venue and a welcome for all ages, the Bourtree Hall caters for many Under 5s. The Y.W.C.A. Coffee Mornings on Wednesdays provide a welcome for coffee and lunch and each Wednesday a different sale takes place. These include books, toys, childrens clothing etc and provides an opportunity to meet people and exchange news.

I will be holding regular surgeries and will advertise the venue in The Mearns Leader.

Ann Tunstall
Councillor
Portlethen & Lower Deeside.

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Jennifer McLaren, I am nine years old and go to Fishermoss Primary School in Portlethen. I am writing to inform you that I think that the Portlethen Community should have a cycle route locally. I am suggesting this because a lot of my friends and I like cycling a lot and I dont know of any cycle routes anywhere. This is also important to my because my mum and dad dont like me cycling on the pavement in case I run somebody over.

Yours Sincerely Jennifer.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Pupils of Fishermoss Primary School were involved in a project about wheels which pre-empted no less than 47 letters with accompanying picture plans attached, being received. Many thanks to all of the pupils involved.

As the letters covered two subjects, I include a small selection (totally unedited) for your interest and response.

Future letters to the Editor should be addressed to:
Portlethen, AB12 4WA. I look forward to your comments.

Dear Editor of Clochanditcher

We would like some Roller blading facilities in the park and beside the school. Why dont you have smoother pavements to blade on, a ramp, waxed kerbs, a grinding pole and if you can you could make a Roller Blading rink? If we go on the road we might slip and fall. It is quite dangerous on the road. So could you try to get these things and it wont be dangerous.

The council can put some all over Portlethen because there are no grinding poles, waxed kerbs and hardly any smooth pavements. And there is not a roller Blading rink, so please and get these things and it will not be dangerous.

Thank you for reading this letter.

Yours sincerely Lee Dunn P5W

Dear Editor

Today I'm writing to ask you to publish our letters. We are really bored and have nowhere to go blading. Portlethen has absolutely no facilities for roller blading. I'm in Primary five and our teacher thought it was a good opportunity to write to the Clochandichter. One of our teachers, Ms Andrews has been telling us not to blade on the road because that's where accidents occur. But if we can't blade on the road where can we blade?

We have been thinking hard and here are some of our ideas we would like to see in Portlethen by the year 2000. We would like poles for grinding on, wax kerbs and maybe some ramps. We would be very grateful if we got a big blading rink which is smooth and has a few ramps to practice turns on.

These are very good ideas, these would keep young children off the road and make Portlethen a safer place.

I would be grateful if you could publish our letters and maybe let the council see how much Portlethen needs blading facilities.

Thanks again

Yours sincerely Samantha Wright (aged 10) P5W Fishermoss

Dear Madam or Sir

My name is Craig Johnstone I am 9 years old. I would like to see if Portlethen would be allowed a skate park (indoor) because all us skaters are skating in the streets and people are getting injured. there is an indoor skate park at Dyce but it is hard to get transport there. There will soon be an outdoor skate park but if it is raining or snowing we would not be able to skate outdoors. It is also at Nicol Park where some skaters arent allowed. So an indoor would be better. So is you can please do anything to help get an indoor skate park it would be much better and safer.

Yours sincerely Craig Johnstone

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Kirsteen Bell I live in Portlethen. As Portlethen has a lot of roads, I would like to request a cycle track of park for young and old cyclists to cycle in Portlethen in safety. If we cycle on the path, we have the risk of crashing into pedestrians. We are all hoping that a cycle track or park can be made to make cycling safer. I hope you can help.

Yours sincerely Kirsteen Bell

Dear Sir, Madam

Hi I am Lindsey McDonald. I am 9 years old. I go to Fishermoss Primary School. I think it would be nice to have a cycle park in Portlethen. I know it is very expensive but it is worth it. It is worth it because if we are on the pavement we could knock over people and our bikes are very big. On the road we could get knocked over. We have done half of Cycling Proficiency but then it stopped. We would be safer if there was a cycle park. But if you decide to build a cycle park please do not build it on the other half of the moss. the moss has still got some animals on it. I know there is a cycle park in Aberdeen but we would like one in Portlethen.

Yours sincerely Lindsey McDonald

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Saturday	12.00 noon - 2.00pm/6.00pm - 10.00pm
Sunday	12.00 noon - 2.30pm/5.30pm - 9.00pm

Gala Report

Gala week got off to a promising start with Wednesday evening's Car Treasure Hunt as, out of the nine cars, not one got lost - well not completely! The winners were an all-girl team - so what was that comment about women drivers?

On Thursday, the Academy was the venue for a most unusual and successful Fashion Show with an African theme. This event was rated as one of the highlights of the week by all who attended.

Fridays Line Dancing in the marquee also proved very popular and the colourful, good humoured crowd thoroughly enjoyed themselves with some energetic, fancy footwork and cool beers. Unfortunately, the adverse weather had its effect on the attendance of the Saturday night Ceilidh but those who did go along made the most of the good music and the bar facilities to enjoy themselves.

Surprisingly, this years Gala Day proved to be a record-breaker - the heaviest rainfall on midsummers day for 40 years! We were in good company as other Grampian events were also flooded out. I suppose that many of our participants must have thought that it was a mud-walking championship challenge and not a family fun day but, despite the atrocious weather, all our entertainers and a fair number of stallholders braved the rain and gave of their best with a measure of success. The marquee and Academy proved a blessing in that many events were able to go ahead under cover to avoid disappointment for performers and spectators alike.

It would seem unfair to single out any particular group for special mention as every organisation and individual involved did an excellent job in very demanding circumstances, rescuing what could have been a day totally destroyed by the weather. It has to be said, however, that recognition has to be given to our own local youngsters, from the shivering little Majorettes and fancy-dressed children for floats and bikes, to the stamina of the five-a-side football teams who let nothing prevent them from doing their bit. They all deserve credit for supporting what is, after all, their own local Gala. Congratulations to all.

Despite the months of preparation and financial help from all of our sponsors, nothing could be done about the weather and sadly this years Gala resulted in a substantial loss. This of course has the effect that support to the community from this source is severely affected. We do however, have other plans in the pipeline for other fund-raising events in the near future. Please look out for advertising of these and come along to support your community. Together we can do a lot to enhance Portlethen and District.

To conclude on a local theme, let us remember that events such as the Gala are for

the benefit of local people - AND THAT IS YOU! If you have an ideas or a little time to spare, come along and get involved. We always need new members on the Gala team so get in touch with any member of the Community Council.

We look forward to hearing from you.

NATURE NOTES - THE ARMCHAIR NATURALIST

In these articles and during talks, I often bang on about wildlife gardening. There is more interest in the subject than appearances might lead a pessimist like myself to believe. I saw a splendid garden in Portlethen a few days ago while delivering a newsletter. The owner had used plenty of red campion (*Silene dioicum*) which, apart from being an attractive native wild flower, has a long flowering season and is also a popular food source for bees and moths. The message that I am trying to put across is that not only does this gardening serve a useful conservation purpose, it also adds an extra dimension to gardening which can give the gardener extra pleasure from his or her plot of ground. Personally I am not very good at gardening and if it were not for the enjoyment of seeing more wildlife around me, I doubt if I would do more than keep things tidy.

Late last summer, while a friend and I sat in the garden one evening discussing the affairs of the world while drinking mugs of Lapsing tea, my friend pointed out a whitethroat working its way through the cotoneaster bushes. I looked at it and thought that it looked a little strange. My friend, who was by now looking at the stranger through field-glasses, suggested that this was because the bird was a lesser whitethroat. Now I have only seen a lesser whitethroat a few times before and none of these sightings were in Scotland. We watched the bird for some thirty minutes as it flew to the hedge, working it in great detail, picking off insects from time to time, twisting its head to check the underside of leaves. The bird was still there when we left.

What is this to do with wildlife gardening? Simply that I have the only mixed broadleaf native hedge in the street and for this bird my hedge and shrubs were an oasis in a desert. It benefited from the food and cover that I provided and I benefited from being able to watch closely and in comfort, an uncommon species. Our bird would have been a passage migrant travelling between its breeding area and its wintering area in Africa.

In a small garden, one does not need to go overboard and grow only plants native to the North East of Scotland. One can also grow exotics which are classed as wildlife friendly, plants like buddleia, most of the cotoneasters, fuchsias and red valerian. Wildlife friendly gardens really do contribute to conservation and also to our own health and well-being.

G.I.M

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EVERY WEDNESDAY

It started with a casual remark - "I'd like to be able to knit" and the response, "I could show you how".

We all dream of acquiring skills, painting that picture, presenting the perfect birthday cake, adding personalised touches to the decor and we have skills we could share with others, preferably in a relaxed atmosphere helped along by chat and a coffee.

The Really Useful Coffee Shop is providing such opportunities on Wednesday afternoons from 2.00-3.00pm. You are invited to come and try your hand at crafts (3, 10 and 17 September), knitting (1, 15 and 22 October), calligraphy (5, 12 and 19 November) and cake decorating (3 and 10 December).

This is in addition to the activities which TRUCS have been developing since it opened in February 1997 in Bourtree Community Hall. TRUCS is a non-profit making community project staffed by volunteers.

The Coffee Shop side has expanded to offer snack lunches from 12 noon - 2.00pm and the buying and selling of childrens clothes, toys, books etc. on a monthly rota basis is catching on. Its a good offer - the seller gets 75% of the proceeds! TRUCS is now also willing to help you raise funds for your charity if you bring the goods to the stall.

Zimbabalooba fashions will be on sale on Wednesday 24 September, Avon on 29 October and Dorling/Kindersley books on 26 November.

If you want more information about the programme (or would like to become a volunteer helper) contact Bourtree Hall on 01224 782472 on Wednesdays only, between 10.00am and 3.00pm, or alternately, ring 01569 730625.



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Portlethen has indeed been quiet this month with many people away on holiday. All too soon the schools will be back. It is disappointing that yet another temporary classroom is to go into the Academy to accommodate the rising school roll.

Although the Scottish Office has at long last returned what was Grampian Regional Council's and now is in part Aberdeenshire Council's Structure Plan, work on the new Structure Plan should be starting again! Development Planning is an ongoing process.

The standard of ground maintenance of public areas in Portlethen has been disappointing this year with the 10% overall cutback in all service funding being compounded by the poor summer. In the drawing up of new contracts there are efficiencies to be made in what is now one council area. This will overcome the situation where previously one council's contractor cut the grass on one side of a pavement and some other contractor for the other council did the road side of the same pavement. The supervision of all work done will then be easier to monitor and be the responsibility of one supervisor. Amenity areas, paths and play areas abandoned by developers and not handed over for council maintenance are going to be targeted for action.

The council has given planning permission, subject to Scottish Office approval, for a new Group Medical Practice building and associated car park area opposite the railway station to the north of Portlethen Parish Church. This was proposed for approval although against land use policy as the alternative site in Badentoy was unacceptable in roads safety and pedestrian use policies. Overall a balanced view was taken that the site of choice was in Portlethen's best interest.

Many people are disappointed that we have been unsuccessful this year in our bid to have an International Youth Festival evening in Portlethen. Last year it was very much enjoyed and appreciated by everyone. It was spectacular. As you will be aware, this is the 25th year, organised by voluntary groups and is completely dependent on financial sponsorship and help. We need to make a bid now for next year. I am asking for company sponsorship to ensure these happy-faced, talented young people brighten up an evening in Portlethen. People of Portlethen - if you don't own a company, you might work for a big company which might be willing to act as a sponsor. Over to you. See what you can do to help the International Youth Festival to come back here and spread some happiness. I hope you all had a wonderful holiday.

For advice or assistance please write or telephone: Cllr Mairi Nash

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Hope you had a nice holiday break.

I want to share with you some of the events that will be happening
in the church, over the next few months.

New Sunday School

We will be using new material from Scripture Union with a tried and trusted format
that will appeal to your children. If you think it's important for your children to
know about God, in a relaxed, safe environment, where they can have fun as they
learn, why not send them to Sunday School. Even better, bring them along, and
check out our church services while your children enjoy Sunday School. Sunday
School is at the same time as the church services 10.30 am.

Alpha



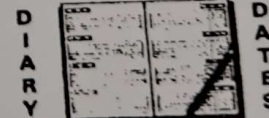
We will soon be running an Alpha Course at the church. Alpha is
a practical introduction to the Christian Faith. Over 5000 courses
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ring the church office on 782883

Look Out For OUTLOOK



Our new church magazine, OUTLOOK, will be out in October.

If you would like to know what is going on at Portlethen Parish Church, and you
don't get the magazine, ring the church office on 782883 and we will be happy to
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7th September Sunday School Start-Up 10.30am

28th October Harvest Thanksgiving Service 10.30am

9th November: Remembrance Sunday Service 10.30am

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