

CLOCHANDIGHTER

Portlethen's Community Magazine

EDITION 119 - Spring 2024





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Editorial



Here we are, Spring again, and (hopefully) we're in for some warmer weather. Before we forget that winter completely, I want to give thanks to that small group of wonderful volunteers who once again gave up their time to make Portlethen a lovely festive place to be, with the tree, the street decorations and the Santa Run. I'm sure you'll agree they did us proud!

With warmer weather in mind, it is good to see that there's some progress for the Allotment Association. It has been a long time coming. You'll find an update on p.41.

If Spring makes you want to bite the bullet and take up walking in our lovely part of the world, then there are a number of groups you could join. One such group is aimed at those recovering from knee and hip injuries/surgery. Raymond is hoping to set up Health Walks in Portlethen this month, for those who would benefit from such gentle activity, finishing with a cuppa at the Fine Piece Café. For more details, see p.25.

Of course, there are many groups and activities in our area, and it would be impossible to highlight them all on my one allocated page, but that is what the Cloch is for. There's plenty more inside!

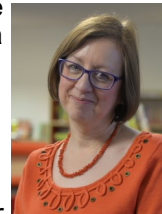
Not such good news, and covered by both Cllrs Catherine Victor and Mel Sullivan, is Aberdeenshire Council's decision to stop providing Out of School Care in July. This affects a great deal of families in our area. At time of going to print, there is talk of Out of School Care being provided by private companies, and a possibility of clubs being parent-run. I truly hope something is in place in time for there to be no gap in the much-needed provision of Out of School Care.

Any finally... I encourage you to read the stories of Fiona Jones on pp.34-35. Fiona is a local resident in supported living, and an ardent disability awareness campaigner. It is so good to see her work recognised, and hopefully taken further, on a national level.



Wishing you all a very Happy
Easter / Spring Solstice.

Alison Lloyd-Wiggins - Editor



Email the Clochandigher on clochandigher.editor@gmail.com



865 (Portlethen) Squadron RAFAC

What a fantastic start 865 (Portlethen) Squadron have had to 2024!

The Squadron started this year with the announcement that we have been nominated as Runner Up in the MacRobert Trophy - the award for the Best Squadron in North Scotland Wing Air Training Corps, RAFAC. This is a testament to the hard work and achievements of all the staff and cadets in the unit over 2023. Our congratulations go to the Winners at 161 (1st Highland) Squadron and our fellow runners up at 102 (Aberdeen Airport) Squadron.

This was followed by the announcement that CWO McKechnie will be jetting off to the USA in the summer to represent the Royal Air Force Air Cadets on the prestigious International Air Cadet Exchange (IACE). There was a close competition for spaces and CWO McKechnie is one of only 3 cadets from Scotland & Northern Ireland Region Royal Air Force Air Cadets to be selected! We are sure that she will do the Squadron proud and will have a great time.



Our third achievement this year came as it was confirmed that Sgt Matthew Davie has successfully completed his Drill Instructor Course and is now a fully-fledged DI and can now further his teaching for the cadets!

After a fantastic start to the year, we cannot wait to see what else 2024 brings us!

If you would like to join us, please drop us an email at 865@rafac.mod.gov.uk or pop along to the Air Training Corps on Muirend Road, on a Monday or Thursday evening 7.30pm-9.30pm.



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The Leathan, Cookston Road, Portlethen, AB12 4PT

Missing Cat - Mona

Mona has been missing since 16th December 2023 from Boswell Avenue, AB12 4BD. She is 3 years old, microchipped and neutered.

She has ginger splashes of fur on her back and down her sides but may not be noticeable if she is far away or dirty.

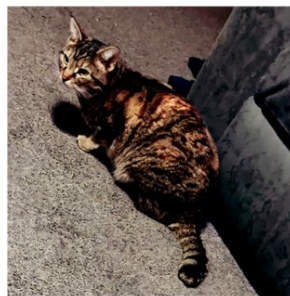
We have had no positive sightings of her so please check garages, sheds and any outbuildings, especially with the terrible weather we have been having.

She is now over due for her flea and worming treatment and is due her yearly vaccine in March. She has had the flicky section of her tail amputated so has a shorter tail than most cats.

Please message 07814442089 or 07495846012 with any possible sightings. We have a microchip reader so don't mind coming to collect a cat that could be her. Any possible sightings are appreciated.




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HOT FILLED ROLLS Bacon £2.90 Sausage £2.90 Lorne £2.90 Egg £2.30 Black Pudding £2.90 Extra Item 70p Soup £1.50			EXTRAS Softie 50p Chilli Mince £1.50 Cheese (slice) 60p	
CHIPS Chips £2.50 Chips & Cheese £3.40 Chips & Gravy £3.20 Chips & Curry Sauce £3.00 Chips Cheese & Gravy £4.00 Chips Cheese & Curry Sauce £4.00		DRINKS Tea £1.10 Coffee £1.30 Hot Chocolate £1.40 Decaff Tea/Coffee £1.30 Cans £1.20 Flavoured Water £1.00 Water £1.00 Cartons 70p		
COLD FILLED ROLLS BLT £3.00 Cheese £2.60 Ham £2.80		SWEET TREATS Sweet Treats 80p Cakes (as priced) Crisps 60p		

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If you're looking to make a difference in your community, sign up today to become a volunteer mentor at www.mcrpathways.org or scan the QR code opposite to register.



SCAN ME

House of Salvation Church, Portlethen. Scottish Charity No: SC045795

Greetings of love, peace, and joy to you.

As I write this, I reflect on some of the activities in which the Church engaged within the community over the past months. At Christmas, we distributed some hampers within the community and donated some to the Larder. As a Church, we believe strongly in giving back, and what better way to do it than to collaborate with others to give. Indeed, *“it is more blessed to give than to receive”*.



We organised a fun-filled children play day, termed Fun Factory, for ages 5 - 11 in the community. Fun Factory is an event which offers an array of thrilling activities, including engaging games, creative arts and crafts, exciting bouncy castles, delightful candy floss, and tasty snacks. It's not just about fun; it's also about learning, laughter, and creating cherished memories for kids in the community.



The next Fun Factory is scheduled for **9th March 2024**, at the Jubilee Hall from 1:30pm - 3:30pm, in **celebration of Mother's Day**. Whether you're going grocery shopping, need some time out or planning a day out with the kids to bond – Fun Factory is the place to stop by.

In moderate weather, you might have spotted a group of young (and perhaps not so young) ones in Hi-Vis vests, litter-picking on the streets. This is part of our desire to make a difference in our community. Aside from the beauty of making our community a cleaner place, it's an opportunity to share pleasant smiles, brief chats here and there, as well as sharing the transforming love and joy of Christ that we all need.



A favourite activity at Easter for the young folks is the Easter Egg hunt. This year, the Easter Egg hunt will take place on **31st March, 11am to 1pm**, at Portlethen Academy. It's open to all children within the community. Don't miss out on the fun!

The House of Salvation Church holds an uplifting church service at Portlethen Academy every **Sunday at 11am**. It is open to all.

Our services, lasting about an hour and a half, feature a short inspiring video for reflection and gospel worship - you are free to sit, stand, or even dance as most people end up doing! This is then followed by an engaging talk, using time-tested biblical principles to find answers to life questions. The service finishes with coffee and snack time which offers the perfect opportunity to connect with others and perhaps form friendship. Our ministers are also on hand at any time to offer a private session.

Contacts - Femi on 07932853611 or Joy on 07877103721

Email – pastor@houseofsalvation.org.uk

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With Christmas far behind us now, I'm sure you'll agree Portlethen was again looking festive, with the street motifs and Christmas trees. A big thank you to all involved in making this happen. We hope you liked the new motifs this year: we have now acquired some new ones for next Christmas too!

The Portlethen Santa Run 2023 raised £4400, which was split between the three primary schools and The Larder, each receiving £1100. We even got a mention in parliament, as a Motion of Thanks was given to the organisers and volunteers of the Santa Run. The Santa lorry also travelled further afield than Portlethen, going all the way to Peterhead to take part in their light up parade.

The Christmas Tree Festival was moved to the Jubilee Hall for 2023 and should be held there in future years. With one festival under their belts, the next one should be a breeze! The money raised from the trees and donations was over £200 and was donated to Cash For Kids. The Hall was looking great, with the refurbishment and the beautiful trees, very festive.

The wildflower patches will shortly be appearing "magically" (with the help of Ken Watson and Aberdeenshire Council). Portlethen Town Association will again supply the seeds, if required.

After the success of Portlethen Gala 2023, we are already putting plans in place for this year's Gala. Please keep an eye out on Facebook for Gala meetings. All our meetings will be held at the Golf Club, with kind permission from Margaret. If you'd like to get involved, then be sure to check Facebook for details.

Thank you to all of you who have given up any spare time to make Portlethen a nicer place to live and grow up.

Want to get involved? Drop us a message.


Darren Robertson, PTA Chair



Clochandighter Accounts


Transactions in the quarter to 31st January 2024

	Credit	Debit	Balance
Balance b/fwd 15/10/23			£5,082.16
Advertisers	£4,190.00		£9,272.16
Postage & stationery		-£48.00	£9,224.16
Donation - Portlethen Santa's Grotto		-£200.00	£9,024.16
Printers		-£3,373.00	£5,651.16
Christmas tree lights		-£300.00	£5,351.16

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Portlethen Medical Centre News Update



Future plans for Portlethen Medical Centre

General practice in Scotland is currently in crisis. There is a UK shortage of GPs which is even more evident in the North East of Scotland. While we are fortunate that we have avoided the worst of these problems, we are aware that there is currently longer to wait for a routine appointment than we would like. We also know that you can wait for a long period on the telephone to get through to speak to someone.

In order to improve access, we are working on a digital access system so that we can combine the best of new digital technology with traditional GP practice. This means that all contacts requesting an appointment with the practice will be triaged by a clinician. We will continue to be accessible by telephone for those that cannot use or access digital technology.

We have also appointed a new partner who will be joining the team in April 2024. We are also planning to appoint additional clinical staff later in the year to further enhance our team.

The plans for our new service are still in development however we want to ensure you are informed of our planned positive changes for the future. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page, practice website and information within the surgery for progress reports on the proposed changes.

Management change

Our Practice Manager retired from her post on 8th February 2024. Mrs Roberta Ross, previously our assistant manager, took up the Practice Manager post on Monday 12th February.



The Portlethen 2018s paid a visit to The Larder on Saturday 2nd December, to drop off provisions collected in November from the players and their parents.

The Larder (Portlethen & Surrounding Areas) supports 150 families every week.

They are always on the lookout for donations; please visit them at the Porty Cabin if you'd like to help.

For a list of items they currently require, please visit their Facebook page at

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

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Portlethen Moss Conservation Group



Registered Scottish Charity No – SC040350

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

Our Group's Projects -

Portlethen Moss, Portlethen Community Woodland & Community Wildlife & Sensory Garden

Climate Week North East 2024 15th - 24th March

Portlethen Moss - Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS)

The wet winter has been beneficial in raising water levels keeping the sphagnum mosses wet and the peatland alive. Sphagnum mosses can hold up to 8 times their weight in water and without them peatlands would not exist.

Sphagnum mosses play a vital role in the creation of peatlands, by storing water in their spongy forms they prevent the decay of dead plant materials which eventually forms peat. Peat forms at an incredibly slow rate, on average 1mm a year, it takes a staggering 1,000 years for one metre of peat to form.

Did you know that healthy peatlands can store up to 30 times more carbon per hectare than a healthy tropical rainforest?

This is why it's so vital for us to conserve what's left of our own peatland - Portlethen Moss Local Nature Conservation Site.

As part of Climate Week North East, Portlethen Library requested a representative from our group to give a talk about the moss - check out ours and the library Facebook pages for the date.

Community Woodland

On the theme of Climate North East Week, our group has been acknowledged for the work we've carried out to increase biodiversity and create habitat for declining pollinators in the woodland and as a result a representative from our group has been invited to take part in the Climate Week North East NESBiP's 2024 Seminar at the James Hutton Institute in Aberdeen,

New Community Wildlife & Sensory Garden

We planted around 3,000 bulbs back in December (see photo). The ground was very wet after all the rain, but we managed to get them all planted in under 2 hours.

As I write several substantial wooden features are in production for the site, these include a tactile notice board, 2 park benches, 3 wooden seating benches for children in the story corner, a picnic table with benches and 2 planters.

Lots of plants have been ordered and a small free tree pack is coming to us from The Woodland Trust, these will all be planted in March. We're looking forward to seeing the garden develop over 2024 and like our woodland it will improve year on year as it matures.



If you wish to know more about the group or if you want to become a member (new members are always very welcome) please do not hesitate to contact us through our Facebook page or at one of our events. Being a group member is neither onerous nor time consuming, we have 'hands on' events throughout the year that everyone is welcome to take part in. It's very rewarding, you can see the results of the work we do, and you know that you're doing something really positive for our local environment.

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

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

Please help us raise funds for these projects each time you shop online, at no cost to you whatsoever:

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Helping Our Endangered Hedgehogs



www.facebook.com/HedgehogsofPortlethen

If it's mild enough some hedgehogs will be out of hibernation by mid-February. These are usually the large males, who will have been hibernating since October, followed over the next few months by the females and young hedgehogs born late last year. Having lost around 25% of their body weight during hibernation, there's an urgent need for them to drink and eat. This is where the food and water we provide is lifesaving when natural food is scarce.

A hedgehog's 'preferred' natural diet is mainly beetles, caterpillars, and grubs, none of these are intermediate hosts for internal parasites. Sadly, tidy gardens don't offer sufficient habitat for these insects and hedgehogs are often forced to fill up on worms, slugs, and snails. While these foods make up a smaller proportion of their natural diet they are hosts for internal parasites and a hedgehog's natural immunity will become overwhelmed and unable to cope if they eat too many.

This is where you can help them by providing some 'good food', wet or dry cat or dog food (preferably kitten/puppy) is all they need, and a shallow bowl of fresh water – be wary of foods sold as hedgehog food, unlike pet foods, they're unregulated and can contain low value ingredients that are harmful to hedgehogs.

Providing supplementary foods (cat or dog food) complements their natural diet and helps them to stay healthy, plus you get the honour of seeing them visit your garden and in return they will keep garden pests under control for you.

Over the next couple of months, some hedgehogs can really struggle, hibernation takes its toll and any hedgehog that wasn't in tip top condition prior to hibernating, if it survives, will emerge in a very poor state. These hedgehogs are the ones that will be out during the day – as they're nocturnal animals out in the day at this time of year, no matter how well it may appear, is a sure sign that it's very poorly and its body will quickly shut down. If you see one out in the

hours of daylight you need to act fast, wear gloves to gently lift it, put it in a high sided box, keep it in a warm quiet place and call a rescue right away. Don't wait for a day or two, by then it will be too late to save it. Never try to treat or look after a hedgehog yourself - treatments for our pets are very often fatal to hedgehogs.

Check out the Hedgehogs of Portlethen & Surrounding Area Facebook page where there's lots of information, use the search tab to look for information and if you don't find the answer, send a message directly.

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News from the Shed

Portlethen & District Men's Shed and Garden is open again to our members after the Xmas and New Year Holidays. We are open to anyone who wishes to come along and see what The Shed does.

Our opening hours are Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10am to 1pm. Check out our Facebook page for more details. We are located on Cookston Road opposite the Police Station. Whether you wish to be actively involved 2 or 3 times a week or occasionally you will be made welcome.

The members continue to respond to requests from the local community. These range from garden planters, garden benches, garden furniture and other smaller items. The Shed is happy to repair or refurbish your garden furniture and other items that are within our capabilities, so just let us know what you need. Should you wish the members to make you an item or if you have a project you would like us to assist with, please get in touch and we can discuss your requirements.



As a result of our wooden poppy sales last year we were able to present a cheque to the yearly Poppy Appeal.

We continue to maintain links with local schools and community groups. At the end of last year we had a visit from a local Scout Troup and they made key holders.



Our gardeners planted sapling trees at the Portlethen Woodland Community Walk, which will benefit the area in the years ahead,

If you wish to join the Portlethen & District Men's Shed, please contact the email address below and ask for a Membership Form. If you wish to make a donation to Portlethen & District Men's Shed of timber or tools, please get in touch. We can arrange collection of your donations. Our thanks to everyone who donated tools and wood over the past few months.

So, come along for a blether and learn more about how to get involved. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any question or need assistance.

Jim Duguid, Secretary P&DMS
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Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Network is a charity-run organisation which provides services and groups to those living over the age of 50 in Kincardine and Mearns. We have a transport, shopping and gardening service and provide a range of groups.

We can be contacted on **01561 378130** if you wish to find out more about these.

Current Groups, available to everyone over the age of 50:

Digital Support Sessions

Do you have your own digital device that you require support to use? Bring it along to one of our sessions where we will have someone there to help you.

2nd and 4th Thursday of the month
Portlethen Library
10.30am – 12pm

Portlethen Brew & Blether

An opportunity to meet other people in your area, enjoy a warm drink and a fine piece.

3rd Thursday of the month
Glebe Court
10am – 12pm

Gardening Group

Did you know we are the ones who keep the train station in bloom? Our group desperately needs some help to continue to do this. You don't need to be an experienced gardener. We end our sessions with a refreshment and a blether - in the winter months we have other activities to keep everyone connected.

The group meet on a Tuesday morning and are currently enjoying winter activities, with the hope of starting back at the station in early spring. Get in touch if you wish to find out more.

If you require any of our services or would be interested in volunteering your time, please contact us at:

01561 378130 or office@mchl.n.org.uk

Health Walks in Portlethen

Are you recovering from knee or hip surgery? Would you like to meet new friends while going on a gentle walk and getting fitter?



You may have seen the posters in the Medical Centre, heard rumours or even met Raymond as he walks around Portlethen. Raymond has been doing walks all over the North East for 20 years, with 18 years leading different groups. He and his wife have decided to wind down a bit and would like to use their experience to help the community.

With the support of Mearns & Coastal Healthy Living Network, Live Life Aberdeenshire and Pathsforall, he intends starting the first Health Walk in Portlethen in March.

The walks would be on a Wednesday, starting at the Jubilee Hall at 10am, and last an hour, finishing with a cuppa at the Fine Piece Café.

If you think you might be interested, please contact Raymond on 01224 783627 or email mastrickwalkers@gmail.com





Dear Clochandighter Readers,

We would like to start by wishing you all a (belated) happy New Year and hope you have had a positive start to 2024. It has been lovely welcoming our pupils back and hearing their stories of the Christmas holidays. There is a buzz of learning around our classes and lots of chat about new projects and challenges.

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Hillside School have a very active group of Pupil representatives called the 'Anti Bullying Ambassadors' and they do a wonderful job of raising awareness of anti-bullying issues and supporting our school to become a supportive and inclusive environment.

On 13th-17th November 2023 we took part in anti-bullying week. The ambassadors organised our 'Odd Sock Day', which was focused on raising awareness of anti-bullying messages.

Also to mark this important week, each class had a visit from one of our parents, Miss Shirley, who delivered a fabulous presentation on 'Make a Noise about Bullying', which was the theme of the week.

Many of our classes even joined the national online events to promote learning about ways to eradicate bullying and how to find help if they were being bullied. Lots of important messages were shared.

From 12th to 16th February, the Group focussed on Children's Mental Health week.



National Maths Competition

In December, all of our classes took part in a national maths competition (Sumdog), completing questions at school and at home. Our pupils did a wonderful job answering thousands of maths questions, and regularly featured in the top 500 in the UK at different points that week.

Respect Award



This term saw the launch of our 'Respect' Award. Respect is one of our 3 school values developed and agreed last school session.

Our class teachers can nominate a person, group or class who have been demonstrating this value and they are highlighted in assembly. 'Respect' is incredibly important to us at Hillside

School and, if you see any of our pupils out and about in the community being 'Respectful', we would love to hear about it. Just drop us an email or let our office team know.

AFC Community Trust

This school session, we are delighted to be working alongside Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust. Our allocated representative is Cameron, who joins us at Hillside each Monday. Over the course of this school session he will be working with all our pupils focusing on things such as resilience building, emotional regulation respect and well-being.

Miss Lesley-Anne Munro and Mr Jordan Leslie,
HEAD TEACHERS, HILLSIDE SCHOOL

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Portlethen & District Community Council

Since the last Clochandighter, the PDCC have welcomed some new office holders. For clarity, these are the current office holders:

- Paul McLean - Chair
- Stewart Lees - Vice-Chair
- Amanda Ross - Treasurer
- Airlie Robertson - Secretary
-

Some of the things we've been up to:

- Worked with the residents of Findon on a petition to keep Findon Park zoned recreational.
- Represented Portlethen on the Meikle windfarm funding panel which saw several Portlethen groups awarded funding.
- Making preparations for the next Portlethen Market which will be at a new venue. Stay tuned to the Portlethen Market Facebook page for update.
-

We meet on the 4th Thursday of every month (bar December) at the Larch Room at Portlethen Academy from 7-8 PM. Our upcoming meetings:

- March 28th
- April 25th
- May 23rd
- June 27th



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Aberdeenshire Coastal Path – Joining Communities; by Communities; for Communities

There is a plan to develop a coastal path from the River North Esk near St Cyrus along the 90 or so miles of rugged Aberdeenshire coastline to Cullen just inside Moray. It was originally conceived as a celebration of the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the plan has the backing of the Lords Lieutenant as well as Aberdeenshire and the City of Aberdeen Councils and a number of other stakeholders. Funding will come from a variety of sources including, we anticipate, the Crown Estate (coastal community projects funded by, among others, the offshore wind farms), the Lottery and various other sources.

Our Kincardineshire coastline is full of wonderful scenery with steep cliffs, secluded coves and abundant wildlife including two wildlife reserves. It has a rich cultural history with castles of national significance and WWII defences through to smugglers' paths and numerous fishing stations. There is a rich and complex geology with the Highland Boundary Fault meeting the sea near Stonehaven, geologically dividing the Lowlands and the Highlands. And, of course, the route will provide a walking link between all the coastal communities to be enjoyed by visitors and locals, casual strollers and keen walkers (although it is not intended as a bike path or bridleway).



RSPB Fowlsheugh, photo by Caspar Lampkin

There are three main elements of the project: to establish the route; to engage with the coastal communities to inform, hear concerns and seek volunteers and information; and to establish a Trust which will oversee the future development and management of the whole path. Essentially, however, the path is a community focused project with the development and maintenance of the path being made possible by people from the coastal communities.

Our intention is for the majority of the path to be trodden grass with gates, steps, and bridges with gravel or tarmac being used only where already established. Sustainability will underpin the development and management of the path: sustainably-sourced materials for gates and bridges; recycled materials for signage, benches etc; the responsibilities of the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Leave no Trace to the fore.

In time, we intend that the path will offer a holistic experience and opportunity with the health and leisure benefits of the path being supplemented by cultural, historic, environmental and geographical information through the use of interpretation boards; economic opportunities for existing and potential coastal businesses; educational, conservation and volunteering activities.

Our small group, MerCHAT (Mearns Coastal Heritage Trail), was responsible for opening up the route between the St Cyrus Nature Reserve and Johnshaven - quite a challenging section due to ongoing coastal erosion - and was approached to extend our operation as far as Cove. Funding for this work has come from Macphie's of Glenbervie. There is another group, funded by Aberdeenshire Council, which is developing the route from the north of Aberdeen to Cullen.

MerCHAT has been working on this (part time!) since May 2022 and has so far surveyed about 90% of the proposed route from Angus to Cove. We have photographed and noted virtually every stretch in detail and are writing up reports to share with landowners. We have visited a great many (but not yet all) the landowners to discuss plans, to hear concerns, to offer solutions. And we have attended meetings of several Community Councils along this stretch again to share plans, discuss concerns, and recruit local volunteers as well as produce a quarterly Update (see opposite for details)

As suggested, this project is a community focused project and we are always looking for potential volunteers. Should you be interested in any of the following, please contact us via the email address below: Path Ranger (regular inspections of "your section"); path maintenance - perhaps learn to use a scythe; researching local history, geography, wildlife for interpretation boards; "behind the scenes" like writing Updates and Guides, helping with sourcing fund streams. It would be great if we could say that this Coastal Path is truly a coastal community achievement.

If you would like to receive our quarterly Update, please let us know and we will add you to our database.

Email: platinumjubileecoastalpath@gmail.com

Freemasons of Portlethen

Times are difficult for many families with the Cost of Living Crisis, and even harder in the run up to Christmas! So, the Freemasons of Kincardineshire helped by donating a cheque to five Food Banks in the area. From Stonehaven to Johnshaven, and Inverbervie to Laurencekirk, each one received £600 as a gift of support in the challenging times. On Friday 15th December Graham McKay handed over a £600 cheque to The Larder (Portlethen and Surrounding Areas), on behalf of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Kincardineshire.

In addition to giving £3,000 to local Food Banks, the Freemasons also gave a cheque for £3,000 to The Friends of Stonehaven Outdoor Pool, to help support this vital local amenity, and help with local jobs and local income through summer tourism.

One of the foundation stones upon which Freemasonry is built is that of helping others, helping those in need, and supporting those when times are hard. Being part of, and supporting our local communities, is something that all Freemasons take a great pride in, as well as an active participation. Freemasons raise money through Quiz Nights, Raffles, Dances, sponsored walks, etc, all going to support charities in their local areas.

The local Masonic Lodge, The Lodge of Portlethen No.1805 is active in the community and regularly participates in fund-raising events to support many local charities.

If you would like to know more about our activities, or about Freemasonry in general, then please contact lodge1805@gmail.com

Graham McKay handing over a cheque to the Larder (Portlethen & Surrounding Areas)



My speech at the Press and Journal Arena as part of the Scottish National Party Conference

by Fiona Jones, local resident and disability awareness campaigner

On Sunday 15th October, I went with my mum to the Aberdeen P&J Arena to give a talk on my experience of living with autism as part of a small event at the Scottish National Party Conference. I was invited to give a speech by the Communications Manager of the National Autistic Society, Suzi Martin, and by our local MSP, Audrey Nicoll, because I have been working tirelessly and hard to get our own area to be more autism-friendly. They said if we went to this event, my talk would highlight why we need things to be more autism-friendly in our area.



After collecting our official conference lanyard passes, we were met by Rob Holland, Managing Director of the National Autistic Society Scotland. We were shown to the room, enjoyed a lovely spread of food, and chatted before the serious work got started.

Our event was opened by Kelly Given, the Scotland National Autistic Society Chairperson, who spoke about why we need to promote autism in a good way so that things can improve across Scotland. Then it was my turn to give a speech about my experience of living with autism. I spoke calmly and clearly, remembered to follow the order of my speech, and managed to look at the audience when I was speaking, adding some funny stories to my speech, which got a great reaction from the audience! Heather from Enable then spoke about her experience of living with a disability. Unfortunately for me, I couldn't manage to hear the whole speech because the P&J Arena is close to the airport and an aeroplane flew over at that time, and this as well as the room having buzzing noises, caused me to feel upset by the noise and sensory overload. I had to be excused and missed some of the speech. Luckily, I was able to find some quiet space in the big corridor. I was grateful my speech was first, because this did not happen then, and I was able to deliver my speech with no issues.

Next, Suzi Martin spoke about why we needed a new autism commissioner and more people with autism shaping Scotland's future. Lastly, Maree Todd, Minister for Social Care, gave a short speech on how the Scottish Government is hoping to employ an official autism commissioner.

We stopped to answer audience questions and took pictures to promote our work on social media. Right at the very end, I was lucky because Rob Holland and Suzi Martin presented me with a lovely certificate to thank me for my speech. Then I met our own MSP Audrey Nicoll and, although she had been very busy, she expressed how proud of me she was. She introduced me to Emma Roddick who is the current MSP for equalities, and we chatted in the foyer in a quiet space about all my work and how we might collaborate in the future on disability rights work.

After that I headed downstairs to visit all the exhibitors. The one that meant the most to me, and from which I received a very warm welcome, was the official disability party section of the Scottish National Party. I met its members so that I could then officially join it and get my say in how disability can work together with the wider Scottish National Party. I also visited First Bus Aberdeen, and went inside the new bus which is hydrogen-based. I had my picture taken inside the bus and I was given free stuff. Then I picked up an official party conference brochure and when I opened it up, I was overcome with happiness because my name was featured inside it!

This was the biggest thing that has happened to me, and I am so grateful for this opportunity to share my lived experience on autism. I hope I reached out to the right people and that we can all work together in the future to make autism in a positive light.

My day at our Real Life Options Conference at Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline

by Fiona Jones, local resident and disability awareness campaigner

On 1st November 2023, I got up early and travelled in my Service Manager boss Craig's car, with my support worker Oye Lounge, to Carnegie Hall, Dunfermline. We were off to the conference and awards ceremony of our service company Real Life Options, known as My Conference.



When we arrived, Michelle (my service manager), Oye and I all went inside to a warm, cozy and inviting lounge where we had a very welcome snack of homemade little croissants and teas and coffees. Then we went downstairs to a nice room where we all sat together and met other service users, managers and big bosses who are all part of Real Life Options. We sat at different tables, so we were able to mingle and talk about the things we liked about using our service. After that, we enjoyed listening to other service users speak positively about what using the service meant to them. We took part in different table discussions about how to get involved in developing the service through Real Life Options Users' Involvement Group Real Voice. We also discussed what the organisation does well, etc.

Lunch was in a nice posh room and the food was very tasty.

After lunch, it was time to announce the awards. I was lucky because I was chosen as the winner of this year's Real Life Options Real Hero award! I went up in front of the audience and collected a framed certificate and a trophy and I received this from the guests this year, who were the people who had helped with PPE supplies to our company. I made a nice speech and I posed for pictures. I was so pleased because I was not expecting to get recognised for my work both locally and nationally. I have been working hard across organisations so that everyone gets their chance to have their say on how things should be run, and also working on making things better for autistic people across Scotland. My support worker and service manager were very pleased for me. We were also lucky because one of our staff, Karen Innis, won the Staff Award as well. Michelle accepted it on her behalf.

More inspirational videos followed, from people who used the service, and we listened to service users speak about what Real Life Options meant to them.

Lastly, I gave a speech on the day about my community, and I talked about all my work on disability awareness in my local area. I mentioned some groups that I have been involved with; I was not bothered by the audience - I felt totally relaxed and I even added in some very colourful stories that made everyone laugh! I even managed to interrupt a lot of the important bosses and make their speeches more interesting!

I stopped to take lots of pictures at the official selfie stand. I even managed to make a closing speech.

This was one of the best things that I have had the pleasure of attending because it was all very much service user-led, and all broken down very well so that we had plenty of resting quiet times in between the busy schedule. I made lots of lovely new friends and I felt that I made a useful contribution to improving the service. I really enjoyed my day. I am so happy that my dream came true! I went home happy but very tired. I wanted to say to my service manager Michelle thank you so much for my award and for making it so that I could attend this conference. I am not sure what my next big thing will be yet, but I will keep on doing my good work.



Kincardine Coastal Church of Scotland

Scottish Charity Number SCO11353

Locum Minister: Rev. John Watson

e-mail: johnmutchwatson2065@btinternet.com

Telephone: [01569 730604](tel:01569730604)

Church Secretary: portlethenpc@btconnect.com

Telephone: [01224 782883](tel:01224782883)

Hi to all readers of the Clochandighter magazine from the Reverend John Watson, locum at the new churches of Kincardine Coastal Church, formerly Newtonhill Parish Church and Portlethen Parish Church.

The future of any church is in the hands of the people it serves and, until a new minister is called, I will serve both communities to the best of my ability. I served a community for more than 25 years as a police officer in the toughest parts of our country, that was before becoming a minister. I have seen it all, done it all, heard it all and much more.

You folks out there, as parents or residents of the communities I serve now, will see me popping into places like Hillside Primary School, Fishermoss and Portlethen Schools, as well as the Fine Piece Café at the Jubilee Hall, and the nursing homes. That's part of my remit as well as conducting Sunday services at both churches - 9.30am. at Newtonhill, and 11.00am at Portlethen. You'll also see me in Tesco or Asda or Aldi, usually looking for a bargain, so please come and say hello.

I am a resident of Newtonhill and have been now for over 20 years. Remember this is your church, not mine, and I ask you to give me a go some Sunday. Don't write the church off because of what you might have heard, or experienced. I know of many who because of one person can write off the whole church. I can assure you that you will not find a more loveable bunch of people anywhere, people who are ready to help whenever help is needed. I can vouch for that 100%.

We have lots of fun in the church and we want to share it with anyone who feels the need.

If you are perturbed by what is happening in our world today, you are not alone. Come and hear what has sometimes to be said.

Can I close my little article by saying this...if you know of anyone who requires any help of any kind then don't hesitate to let me know. I may not be the genie of the lamp, but I can grant wishes.

May God's blessing be on you and your family today and always. My email address is johnmutchwatson2065@btinternet.com or leave a message on 01569730604 and I'll get back to you asap.

Best wishes

John
Locum Minister
Kincardine Coastal Church of Scotland



Please join us for our Easter services:-

Maundy Thursday 28th March 2024 at 7pm venue TBA

Good Friday - 29th March 2024 at 7pm venue TBA

Easter Sunday - 31st March 2024 at 9.30am (Newtonhill)



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Portlethen & District Community Allotment Association

Welcome to an update on the progress of our allotments at Hillside.

The picture shows the approximate area of rough ground with the hardstanding already in place for parking.



As a fully constituted group with a working bank account, a new committee was formed in November 2023 and the membership now runs to approx..250, all intent on taking forward the plans for our community.

We hold monthly meetings in the Asda Community Room. Dates of these meetings, and other up-to-date information, can be found on our Facebook page.

As I write this, we are currently on the cusp of leasing just over 6,000 m² (1.5 acres) of land from Aberdeenshire Council. This will have been physically set out on site the week of 5th of February by the Council's Property Department. It has been a long journey, but the benefits to our community will be huge, involving all schools and local stakeholders.

We would be most grateful for any financial support from local businesses. This would help get us get off the ground with infrastructure costs such as fencing, tools, polytunnels and water connections throughout the site. If your company would like to support a great community project, please contact our Chair, Cameron Deans, on pdcaachair@outlook.com

Should you have any questions, or need clarification, before you commit to supporting this community project, Martin Dear would be available to come and talk to your workplace. Please contact him on martindear57@gmail.com. You could be supporting positive aspects in volunteering and wellbeing for your employees, but also for the children and adults that live within the community.

With your help we can all grow together.

Thanks,
Allotment Committee

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aspc





1st Portlethen Scout Group has had an eventful start to 2024. Our Burns Supper & Ceilidh was a huge success with the majority of the young people in attendance definitely wanting us to do it again next year (Help! Anyone love organising a party?).

This past weekend saw more than 120 of us descend on Templars Park for our annual Adventure Day. Some of our Cubs and Scouts had camped overnight and were well prepared for the arrival of the day visitors early Saturday morning. Our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts spent the day orienteering, cooking over fire, making Viking bracelets, or doing some nature weaving and singing up a storm at our campfire. Our amazing support team served up a delicious lunch made possible thanks to donations from McIntosh Donald, Warburtons and Tesco.

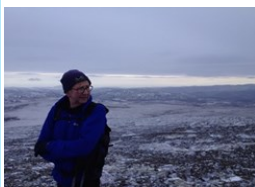
Some fascinating facts for you:

- 17 Scouts almost blown away on Friday night
- 14 Cubs inside
- 65 day visitors
- 128 burgers for lunch
- 120 bags of crisps
- 90 rashers of bacon (breakfast for our overnight campers from Cubs and Scouts)
- 386 marshmallows
- 77 hot dog sausages.
- 38 (!) mushrooms
- 1 leader's Nights Away Permit renewed!

If anyone finds Brian's crocs, let him know.

And finally, a special recognition written by our President, Brian:

Thanks John



John Morgan, a Scout Leader of many years, has decided the time has come for him to pack away his necker and woggle and have a well-earned break. I say have a break, but this is happening due to him moving house and home. Never an easy task when you've lived in any location for many years.

Who's John? Let me tell you...

...So, as is often the case with volunteer-run groups, we had dire need of help to run our sections. Cub Scouts at Bourtree were running short of adult help, and Beaver Scouts were in the same boat. We put out a call for help, pushed out some flyers (pre social media days, pretty much) and organised a meeting at Bourtree Hall, for anyone who was interested to know more about what the role involved. It was fairly well attended. Quite a few showed interest. Some offered to help where they could. Some could help when they were home from offshore, but couldn't say when.

This is all helpful and welcome. But, in the harsh world of reality, sometimes this is not enough for a good foundation. You need continuity. We asked if anyone could commit to weekly meetings.

John raised his hand. "I've a fair bit of free time, like hill walking, if that's any good ti ye!" (John knows the Cairngorms like the back of his hand. "Ach, it's fine to get oot fir a treval!")

He started at Cubs the next week. A great help. Beavers on a Monday night needed help. He started helping there as an Assistant Leader too. Leaders left the Beaver Section, John picked up the baton and got on with the job. No fuss. No bother.

John's recording of the kids badge work was all on paper. Handwritten every week. All accurate and in depth. Old-school works as well as any database if you work like John. Couldn't really be bothered about computers, phones and all that stuff. He may have a point there, if we are all honest?

Whether it was showing a 6-year-old how to tie a knot most adults would struggle with, or seeing the joy of a wee lad or lass flip a pancake for the first time and not have it land on the floor, it all mattered. These things last a long time in a young mind.

Those Haggis, Neeps and Tatties Scotch Pies at Burns Nights meetings were legendary.

Some of your kids will know John. They'll have been watched over by him when they were trying to light a cotton wool ball at Templars Park, they'd have been quietly checked when doing something they maybe shouldn't have, and kept warm at a camp by him keeping the fire stoked.

From all at 1st Portlethen Scout Group, and all those you've given up your time for John, all we can say is Thanks. You made a difference and for that we are truly grateful.

Keep Scouting alive and well in and around Portlethen.
1st Portlethen Scout Group

Scottish Charity Number: SC032167

Web: <http://1stportlethenscouts.scoutsites.org.uk/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/1stportlethen>



Portlethen Bowling Club

Our Annual General meeting, held on 28th January 2024, agreed the outdoor season will commence on 13th April, the opening of our green. Everyone is welcome.

Our HAT is now taking place on a Saturday afternoon at 2.00pm. Anyone interested in trying bowling can come along and give it a go.

The closing of the green will happen on 21st September 2024.

If you are interested in joining, our annual fees are: Adult £90, and Junior £30. More information can be found at www.portlethenbowlingclub.co.uk

On the social front, the clubhouse is open most Friday evenings from 7pm for a drink and catch up with friends. Non-members are welcome but must be signed in by a member.

Our next social event is a **Race Night** on 30th March 2024. If you are interested in attending, please contact us on the email below.

Our **Summer Fun Day Fayre and Open Day** will be on 27th July 2024

Firstly, we would like to thank our wonderful businesses that had stalls with us last year, and the amazing businesses that kindly donated to our raffle and towards the running of the Fayre. Over 500 people attended, and we are expecting even more this year!

This year, the Fayre will run on Saturday, 27th July, 12.00 noon - 4.00pm, with our raffle commencing at 4pm. We are looking for stalls again this year.

Please note that, because we are an outdoor bowling club, all stalls will be outside. We do however have room for gazebos. We will not have duplicate stalls, but are happy to have 2 baking stalls. If you would like a stall, or just more information, please contact us on the email below.

Regular posts regarding the event and our brilliant raffle prizes will be posted on the event Facebook page **Summer Fun Day Fayre**.

Any businesses wishing to donate something towards our raffle, please note you will in return receive a mention on our Facebook page and on our raffle sponsors' sheet on the day of the Fayre. Please get in touch by email:

portlethenbcevents@outlook.com

Portlethen Library

We hope that you've been enjoying our events, groups, talks, and books at Portlethen library this winter because if so...Spring looks set to be even better!

Here is a sneak peek at what's coming to our library:

Relaxed LEGO: A monthly event specially designed to provide a quiet and comfortable space in our conference room. Lego Duplo (bigger bricks for ease of handling) alongside standard Lego, ear defenders, and reduced bookings will make for a more peaceful playtime.

Bookbug with Makaton: A classic but improved! Stories, songs, and rhymes for kids up to 5, now with added MAKATON. We use hand signs in some songs and stories to enhance communication with the kids. These signs are also useful at home with the family!

Lifting the Lid: We are delighted to be welcoming this exhibition from the National Library of Scotland in April. Lifting the Lid is a celebration of Food and Drink in Scotland. Colourful panels, designs, pictures, recipes, manuscripts, and more showcasing Scotland's food and drink culture.

Bestseller Author Talk: Meet Victoria Hawthorne (a.k.a. Vikki Patis) on Wednesday, 1st May at Portlethen library. Historical fiction and suspense at its best! Vikki/Victoria is the author of *The House at Helygen* and *Return to Blackwater House*, among others, and she will be here at the library with us to celebrate the publication of her latest novel due in April 2024 *The Darkest Night*. Mark your calendars!



And don't forget our regular Lego Club, Crafts & Chats, and Book Reading Groups. Spring is looking exciting at Portlethen library.

Keep up to date with everything that is going on at
www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk

or visit our Facebook page
<https://www.facebook.com/PortlethenLibraryAberdeenshire>

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NEWTONHILL PORTLETHEN 50+ WALKERS

The Newtonhill & Portlethen 50+ walking was formed some 30 years ago, originally as two separate groups but combined in 2022. The group is part of the larger Grampian 50+ Network whose primary aim is to encourage people to get outside for a bit of exercise and a blether in the fresh air and beautiful countryside which surrounds us.

The group meets each Monday at 09:30am, alternating between Portlethen and Newtonhill, and we car-share from there to our chosen destination. Our walks vary from around 6 to 8 miles and are on well-defined tracks, though these can occasionally be muddy! Our destinations are often local in the Winter months but as the days lengthen and warm, we'll travel further afield, up to around 40 miles from Portlethen / Newtonhill. Last year's walks ranged from Inverurie to the North, Ballater to the West and Glen Esk to the South.

The group is very friendly and sociable, there's a steady stream of conversations on wide-ranging topics going on as we walk, and you find yourself chatting with different group members throughout the day. Generally, there'll be around 10 -12 on a walk and its quite a relaxed pace, we'll stop if there's something interesting to look at or a fine view to take in. There's always a stop for lunch around the halfway point of our walks and if we do happen to end up close to a coffee shop at walk's end, its not unheard of for us to indulge in an afternoon cake!



We're always keen to see new faces so if you're interested in a bit of exercise, seeing some lovely parts of the surrounding countryside and making some new friends why not come along and give us a try?

You can find out where we're walking and any other information by contacting our membership secretary Christine Moig on 07762 746710.

PLEASE NOTE!

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Please ensure your address books are up to date!



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 Facebook - Jubilee Hall Portlethen
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News from your community hall.

Well, here we are in 2024. We look forward to another year of celebration and growth, of building relationships and, unfortunately for some of us, there will be challenges, financial worries, and loneliness. The Jubilee Hall is here to host your celebrations, provide opportunities to get out and get some exercise, offer a safe warm space to meet new people, make new friends and share your experience with others.

In 2023, we completed a redecoration of the hall - no more holes and peeling paintwork. We sanded and recoated the floor with a beautiful clear varnish and upgraded the heating system to allow remote control and monitoring. We held a successful Open Day and have seen a significant uptick in bookings and enquiries. We are taking bookings now for parties planned in the summer and beyond.



Example table layout

If you have a significant anniversary or event coming up, why not book the hall? We have tables and chairs for adults and children, enough space for a bouncy castle, and facilities for food preparation.



Children's tables and chairs

If you haven't seen the hall since the upgrade, why not drop in for a tea or coffee and a piece of home-made cake on a Wednesday morning between 10 o'clock and noon, when the Fine Piece Café will be in full swing!

We are seeking funding for a few additional improvements. We planned to install a storage unit outside the hall, but we are having trouble getting the concrete slab laid. To work around the issue, we have identified an alternative solution involving the refurbishment of two rooms upstairs inside the hall. These two rooms, when upgraded, could be hired out as small meeting rooms, providing another potential income stream, or simply shelved out for storage.

In the past few days, we have received an Engineering Assessment, commissioned by Business Energy Scotland, supporting the installation of Solar Panels and Battery Storage. This equipment, when up and running, promises to cut our utility bills by around £3000 per year and reduce our carbon footprint to close to zero. We are excited about this development and hope to receive funding from the Scottish Government as part of their planned Target Zero initiative. Installation of the panels and battery storage is planned for the summer.

The hall is managed by a dedicated team of volunteers, with a wide range of age and experience. All of us share a desire to see the local community flourish and they give up their time to help provide a safe place for you all to get together to enjoy yourselves. If you feel you can help, please get in touch.

We are still looking for a **Committee Secretary** to keep track of our correspondence. If you have some time to spare and like the idea of supporting your local Community, please let us know. Contact us through our email; Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com.

RAG BAG - This is still proving popular and raises cash to help us keep our costs down at the hall. Your contribution of clothing and shoes (appropriately bagged and shoes tied together), is much appreciated.

Our email addresses:
Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com for general enquiries
 and bookings@portlethenjubileehall.com for booking applications.

We look forward to seeing you at the Jubilee Hall in the near future!

Dave Johnstone
 Chairman

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OUT OF HOURS Sat/Sun: after 17.00	£30.00	£25.00

Community Fundraising Events: Please Contact Committee
 General enquiries: Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com
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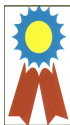
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Charity Number: SC014850

Bourtrees Pre-School Group in Portlethen has been in the local community for over 30 years!

What do we do?

We have a 2's group that runs every morning

We provide pre-school education to our 3-5 year olds - 5 days a week, 9am – 3pm

We are registered for 1140 hours funding & accept applications for eligible 2 year olds

We follow the same Curriculum for Excellence as all local primary schools

We are a Parent led committee who meet regularly to discuss the running of the group which gives you input during your child's stay

But most of all we offer a nurturing experience for your child that encourages and promotes imaginative and exploratory play whilst learning

We look forward to welcoming you and your child to Bourtrees Pre-school Group!

Please contact Lorna Robertson or June Thomson on 07763 199638
or bourtreespreschool@gmail.com for more information



Young at Heart **CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS** Young at Heart

Do you have any spare time on
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Weekly? Fortnightly? Monthly? You choose!!
Want to put a little bit back into our community?

Portlethen Young at Heart Group are looking for new volunteers
to help out with their lively group of elderly members.
We enjoy music, games, exercises, coffee, chat and lots of laughs!!



For more information please contact:
Cyril Bennett 01224 784833



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[Facebook "St Ternan's Episcopal Church"](#)

A Happy New Year to all readers from us here at St Ternan's, Muchalls. I suspect that by now you are well and truly over the Christmas and New Year celebrations.

Sundays: 10.30 am Eucharist Service

Wednesdays: 11.00am Prayer and Chat meeting



31st March - Easter Sunday
10.30am
Family Service

A Day of Prayers for Peace

On Saturday, 6th January, St Ternan's held 'A Day of Prayers for Peace'. This was well attended, not only by members of St Ternan's, but from other denominations within the locality.

"IF WE HAVE NO PEACE, IT IS BECAUSE WE HAVE FORGOTTEN THAT WE BELONG TO EACH OTHER."

St Teresa of Calcutta



Our church is open daily for those wishing to spend a quiet time in private prayer or meditation.

Our Community Room is available for hire, and this can be booked by phoning Sheila (01569 731608). Facilities are first rate, offering a well-equipped kitchen, toilets (including disabled) also baby-changing provision. Car parking is available, also provision for disabled drivers by way of a car park closer to the church.





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THE LARDER (PORTLETHEN AND SURROUNDING AREAS)



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The Larder at the Porty Cabin on Cookston Road (opposite Portlethen Primary School) is here to ease some of the difficulties for many individuals and families in our local community. The Larder offers fresh bread, eggs, fruit and vegetables, fridge, freezer and cupboard items, toiletries, cleaning and baby items, all for a small donation, if you can.

If you find yourself struggling with food cost and could benefit from extra help, please scan the QR Code opposite to place an order or visit our Facebook page and click the link to open a Google form to choose the items you are short of. We can also be contacted by email to c19portlethenhelp@gmail.com or by phone on **07376 133870**.

Did you know that The Larder is available to EVERYONE? Please come in and visit The Larder for a top up shop. We receive surplus fruit and vegetables weekly from FareShare and organic vegetables, when they are in season, from the farm at Bridge of Muchalls, through the [@oneseedforward](#) organisation. These items are for EVERYONE to benefit from, for a small donation, if you can.

In addition, we SELL fresh farm eggs, soup packs and bananas at a fair price. The Fareshare items are excess stock items donated by supermarkets and are distributed to us to stop them from being sent to landfill and prevent food waste. Please see our Facebook page for weekly updates on the food items donated or pop in to see for yourself. All monetary donations are then used to purchase fresh items weekly. We can accept cash or card donations.

The Larder is open **Monday 6pm-8pm, Friday 2.30pm-4.30pm and Saturday 10am-12pm**. Our volunteers are there to help anyone during this cost-of-living crisis and you do NOT need a referral from another organisation.

We are very grateful for any donations, large or small, as this enables us to spend our grant money and donated money on fresh items that we need to purchase. The residents, schools, churches, and businesses of Portlethen & surrounding areas are so amazing with all the support they give to us. Our wonderful and dedicated volunteers need a special mention too. We could not provide this service without everyone's help, so a huge thank you to our community!

The Larder Team



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News from Cllr Mel Sullivan



New year and lots of changes afoot – some good and some not so much. Budgets are squeezed again this year – council tax is frozen, and some compensation will be coming from the Scottish Government, but otherwise we have less money coming in for services and for vital infrastructure works.

The three-bin rollout across the whole of the shire is almost finished. Hopefully everyone is up to speed on what goes in the blue bin now and what goes to the orange bin. These bins are quite light, so if you have a problem on windy bin days, you can get free bin straps from Portlethen HRC (recycling centre). If you can't manage to get there, please let me know and I can drop some off. Speaking of the HRC, you no longer need to pre-book a slot at Portlethen if you are using a domestic vehicle.

Out of School Care (OOSC) is ceasing to be a council-run service at the end of the school year, which will affect the Portlethen Out Of School Club. Talks are ongoing with private providers to take over, and there is also the opportunity for a parent-run group to step in. I have put a lot of information on this on my website.

Live Life Aberdeenshire has a new membership model. As well as that, if you are an Essentials member (this is free for all Aberdeenshire residents), you will now get a **free** session of a highlighted sport or activity every month.

The pavement parking ban has now come into force. Unless the road is specifically exempt (there will be signs up), then you can no longer have any part of your car parked on a pavement. This applies to blue badge holders, but not to emergency services or in a few other circumstances. To find out more, or to request a road be considered for an exemption, please search 'pavement parking' on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

I'd like to thank all the members of our community who take an active interest in making our area a better place to live. The Town Association for doing the 'fun stuff' like Christmas lights, the PDCC for sticking with it through their growing pains, the Moss/Woodland group for giving us such lovely places to enjoy nature in, all those community volunteers and Scouts who planted thousands of bulbs last autumn, and many, many more folk who give their time and effort.

You can find me on Facebook as

'[Councillor Mel Sullivan, North Kincardine](#)'.

My webpage is <https://melsullivan.mycouncillor.org.uk>. You can sign up to receive my non-political weekly news emails. These include the latest planning applications and other local items of interest.

My email address is cldr.m.sullivan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk.

If you'd like to find out more about the Scottish Liberal Democrats, my email is mel.sullivanNK@gmail.com



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Councillor Catherine Victor

Here we are, Xmas gone and New Year as far away as ever again. I love this time of year though, it's all about looking to the future with anticipation as the spring bulbs peep their heads through the ground in the promise of a bright, colourful, and beautiful spring. Whether we get that remains to be seen.

We have had a few important decisions coming in front of us in the past three months. None more important than the future of Findon Park. This came before the K & M Area committee and, although I put forward an amendment against the change of use from recreation to residential, I lost to the motion from planning by 6 votes to 4 with one abstention and one non-appearance. That was a close vote, and it is now due to come in front of Full Council where all 70 elected Councillors will decide its future, that is if the application is not withdrawn in the meantime. We will have to wait and see but be assured I will listen carefully to arguments on both sides before I decide the best way forward for the community of Findon and Portlethen. That will always be my priority.

Our latest debate has been on the Out of School Clubs that the Council provided. Approx. 365 children attended these clubs in 15 different areas of Aberdeenshire. Unfortunately, these clubs, for whatever reason, were running at a loss. My own thought on that was; why? Why couldn't we provide this service at cost? If the private sector can make a profit on providing this service, why can't the Council break even? The other problem was communication, many of the parents were not consulted, so had not been able to put forward any ideas on how the service could be provided in a better way. The SNP opposition put forward their concerns on the hardship that the withdrawal of the service would bring to many families, especially single parents and parents living in more remote places. These were voted against by the admin group at the Education and Childrens Committee meeting on Thursday 1st February. The service will be withdrawn in July. I do hope that all those affected will find a solution and for those in North Kincardine, let me know if I can help.

I also need to apologise to any of my constituents that I may have offended by my post on the PDCC Facebook page last month. I have since found out that

many of you were not aware of the LLA meeting and survey called and held in the Academy on Monday 22nd January. I have now informed them of that fact and expect a much better form of communication to the public for their next planned meeting in April. I will see a lot of you there, I'm sure.

Until next time, thank you for your support and keep the queries coming.

Get in touch through: cllr.c.victor@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Tel: 07787 800678

or message me on my Facebook page: **Councillor Catherine Victor.**

Contact your Local Councillor

David Aitchison - cllr.d.aitchison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Shirley Burnett - cllr.s.burnett@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Mel Sullivan - cllr.m.sullivan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Catherine Victor - cllr.c.victor@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



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Fishermoss School

Eco Schools 7th Green Flag Award with Commendation!

Fishermoss School has been awarded its 7th **Green Flag Award from Eco Schools Scotland!**

Our school has also been awarded a **Learning for Sustainability Commendation** which is presented to applications which demonstrate exceptional accomplishments. Our whole school approach to climate action and environmental awareness aligns perfectly with the Learning for Sustainability Commendation. The assessor shared how inspired he was by our application and the outstanding achievements of our school. He added that we provided undoubtedly one of the most extensive Green Flag applications they have ever seen.



The assessor shared the following feedback:

"I have been truly inspired while reading about your journey and looking through your extensive supporting evidence. It is absolutely amazing that you have successfully engaged every year group, and quite possibly every pupil, in your Eco-Schools principles – recognised by the fact that you have completed an action plan for every stage! It is clear that you took the time right back at the start of your journey to really think about each of the ten topics and develop a fantastic Environmental Review. I like how you utilised your Global Warriors champions to form a whole-school Eco-Committee, which created a pupil-led approach to understanding climate action at Fishermoss. All this work has culminated in submitting a range of action plans which, along with all your amazing supporting evidence, demonstrate all the fantastic activities the pupils have taken part in during this journey. Overall, you have done a fantastic job and are highly deserving of this Green Flag Award, so congratulations once again to everyone at Fishermoss Primary. I am so impressed with all the amazing things the school has achieved through a fantastic range of a fun engaging activities which will clearly have positive lifelong impacts on your pupils and community."

**Participatory Budgeting-Success Story for Fishermoss
Primary 6 and Primary 7 Pupils!**

Aberdeenshire Council commissioned Young Scot to manage an online vote for a participatory budgeting exercise. This was branded as the 'We Decide... Children and Young People Voting for Change event'. Schools were asked to consider the participatory budget theme of **Climate Change & Sustainability**.

Aberdeenshire Primary Schools were encouraged to involve their Primary 6 & Primary 7 pupils to come up with exciting project ideas and apply for funding. Fishermoss Senior Pupils' project was to secure funding to equip our school with bikes and helmets and supporting tools and equipment to maintain them. These would be available for use during school time but also beyond the school day, to encourage family bike rides, peer bike rides and build on skills from previous Bikeability sessions. Having bikes will allow us to build on our Eco Schools journey and the vision of a safer, more carbon friendly environment by promoting using bikes. We believe that every child should have access to a bike, not just for the obvious physical and environmental benefits, but also the impact it can have on improving mental health. Cycling allows us to enjoy our beautiful surroundings and to encourage carbon reduction. Our senior pupils have successfully secured **£2000** for their project! We are proud of their efforts to secure these funds for their school.

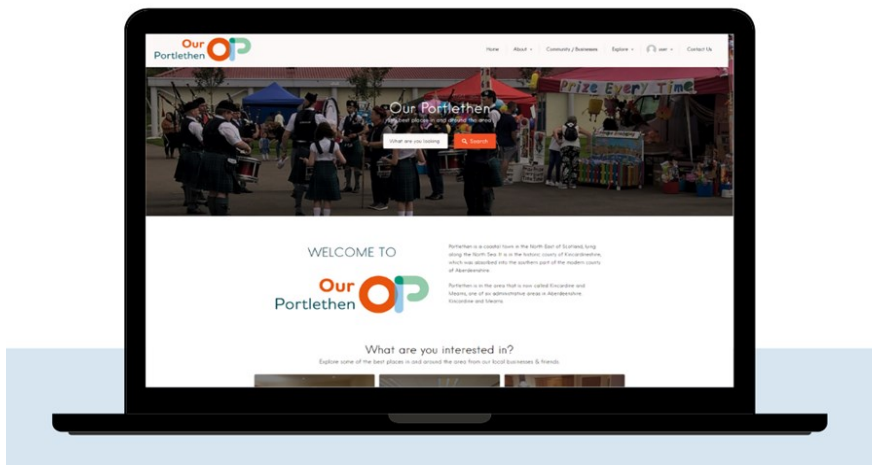


Fishermoss Teaming Up with Banchory Devenick Book Project!

Primary 1, Primary 1/2 & Primary 2 have teamed up with Banchory Devenick School to have stories read to them by their senior pupils. The school emails a short video of a story on a monthly basis and our classes send comments back. As Banchory Devenick is a small school, this gives their pupils the opportunity to target a much wider audience. **Primary 6 & Primary 6/7** have also teamed up with the school and are involved in sharing termly book recommendations.

Wishing you all a Happy Easter!
Margaret Ferguson
Head Teacher

Our Portlethen OP



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The service operates weekly with an Aberdeenshire Council wheelchair-accessible minibus

Wednesdays: 9.45 – 13.30 hrs

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All passengers have to be registered as an A2B member.

All trips must be pre-booked. Bookings can be made up to 7 days in advance, or up to 14 days for a medical appointment.

Call us on the A2B hotline number **01467 535 333**. Choose **option 1** for bookings, **option 2** for cancellations, **option 3** for general enquiries.



WHO WE ARE

We are a community of Christians who meet together to worship God, encourage and support each other in our day to day lives and share Jesus' loving care with groups in the Portlethen area

MOMENTS TO MARVEL

As we embrace the mountains and valleys in our journey through life, may there always be time to enjoy the surrounding scenery! May God bless you in these precious moments.

SUNDAY SERVICES

Every other week we meet at The Porty Cabin, Portlethen at 2pm for tea/coffee before a watch service at 2.15pm. On the alternate weeks we attend ACF's Union Grove building or watch online. You will be welcome to join us and details are contained in the PCF website (Portlethencf.com). This website also has links to the ACF site, and on the 'Let's Keep In Touch' page, you can sign-up for our weekly 'What's On' email.

**WE PLAN TO HOLD AN EASTER SERVICE ON SUN, 31 MARCH.
CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**



Mainly Music is a fun and interactive music programme for parents and caregivers to enjoy with their child from age 0 to 5 years of age. It meets on Tuesday mornings at The Jubilee Hall, Portlethen, from 10.00am to 11.30am, consisting of 30 minutes of singing and rhymes followed by a snack, free play, and a chat for the big people!

Cost is £3 per family per session.

Please contact Susan on 07513 387810 for more details.

PORTY CRAFTS

Our craft group meets at the Porty Cabin, Portlethen. Come and enjoy some creativity in a relaxed setting, with fellow crafters to chat with, and a cuppa and cake into the evening. We invite you to take your own projects along, for example: knitting, sewing or your own project choice. We also enjoy doing card-making, decoupage coasters and other crafts together. We meet weekly on a Thursday, from 7:00 - 9:00pm with a £4 fee towards costs per session.

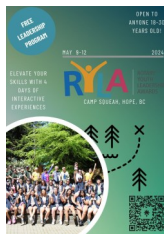
For more info, contact Frances on 07740 427 272.



WWW.PORTLETHENCF.COM / INFO@PORTLETHENCF.COM



Portlethen & District Rotary



RYLA:

We are now in a position to interview candidates for a place at the RYLA 2024 leadership week at Abernethy.

Candidates should be 16 or 17 at the date of the camp in July. Please speak to the young people in your family; for further information they should speak to their guidance teacher if at school and/or google RYLA1010.com. Our club Facebook page also has a link.

YOUTH: A report from our Youth Chair Carolyn McGhee:

Young Chef:

As I write, this weekend (3rd February) our Young Chef winner is representing us in the Rotary District final of the Rotary GB&I competition. Thanks to the H.E. Staff at Portlethen Academy for arranging our local heat and supporting our winning Chef as she progresses in the competition. Our judges were very impressed with the quality of all the entrants' meals.



Young Writer:

This year, we have received entries in all three age group categories, with pupils from Portlethen Academy taking part for the first time. Our judges are looking forward to reading our entries on the subject of "rebuilding", entrants were able to interpret the topic in their own way and we have a wide range of interpretations.

Primary Schools Quiz:

March will see P7 pupils from Portlethen School defend their title as Portlethen & District's Primary Schools Quiz Champions! Last year, it was a very closely fought competition between the five local primary schools (Primary 7s), all school teams showing a wealth of general knowledge. We are looking forward to seeing who will represent us at the area finals this year.

International.

Rotary Shoeboxes were dispatched and gratefully received by children and families in Romania.

One of our sponsored pupils from our project in Uganda has now passed all his exams and is now off to college, so we have a space to support yet another child through their education.

Community:

We held a small raffle and quiz at the Fine Piece Café in Portlethen and raised £170 for local good causes. We are also hoping to have a larger fund-raising event in early April, keep your eyes open for posters!

Crocus corms have been planted all over our area, Cove, Portlethen, Newtonhill and for the first time we assisted the Chapelton Community Association with planting theirs.






The annual District car raffle in the Bon Accord Centre raised £31,000 for Charlie House and Rotary good causes, and the car was won by a lady from Marykirk. The millionth ticket was sold since we started in 2000. The purchaser was a Christmas shopper from Shetland!


Social:

Members and partners enjoyed a Christmas meal in The Neuk, we had visits from our Area and District Governors and held a Touch of Tartan evening with haggis and music.

Contact details, via messenger on our club Facebook page or email acm739@btinternet.com.



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Portlethen and District Voluntary Community Ambulance Association



JOHN GODSMAN

Although this article brings sad news of the untimely death of John Godsmán, our Maintenance Coordinator, following a tragic accident, we are celebrating all the work he has done for our community and his involvement in the purchasing of our new Ambulance. From all the tributes we have read and heard, everyone said, “John always had a smile on his face” and I’m sure all the passengers who travelled to their appointments with John behind the wheel will agree. He will be missed very much by us all, however his legacy lives on in the people who have benefitted by the donation of his organs.

John had an illustrious career in Engineering, which took him and his family to all corners of the world over several years. When he returned to his hometown of Stonehaven, it was John’s sister-in-law Lyn King, the Practice Manager at Portlethen Medical Centre, who encouraged him to volunteer as a driver for the Community Ambulance. He first became a relief driver in 2016 and, before long, had volunteered to carry out maintenance on the vehicle when required. At the AGM in 2019, John was voted onto the committee as the Maintenance Coordinator where he made sure the regular servicing, MOT and 6-monthly tail lift inspections were scheduled. Every month he would take the vehicle down to his home in Stonehaven and thoroughly clean it and top-up the AdBlue. If anything went wrong or needed replacing, all we had to do was call John and he would sort things out at short notice. If he was not available, as he and his wife Sheila enjoyed many holidays abroad, he always knew someone who could help.

As you will see below, we took delivery of our new Ambulance in the first week of February, and it was John who finalised the specifications and was in regular contact with the vehicle supplier, ensuring all the fine details were communicated clearly and the internal fitting-out was on schedule. It is down to John that we now have the vehicle that exactly meets our requirements.

On a cheerier note, our new “Wee Blue” Ambulance arrived in the first week of February and has been on the road ever since. We would not have been able to purchase this vehicle without the generosity of some local businesses, community councils and individuals.

Our thanks go to Brio Retirement Living, Kepak McIntosh Donald, Macphie of Glenbervie, Michies Chemist and Meikle Carewe Wind Farm. The individuals who provided donations were local businessmen Colin Lawson and Graham Thom. From the local communities we received funds from Newtonhill Common Good Fund, Newtonhill Community Council, Portlethen Town Association, and lastly a grant from Aberdeenshire Council. Our thanks and gratitude go to all those mentioned above and to those who have regularly topped up our collection tins and left donations at the Medical Centre for us.



We are currently planning an Open Day in the Spring to celebrate the milestone of acquiring our new vehicle. This will pull together some key individuals who were instrumental in making this all happen one way or another. Updates and more photos will be included in the next edition of the magazine.

As usual, we are always looking for additional volunteer drivers to boost the numbers on our team.

If you can spare a few hours, either regularly or occasionally, please contact Hugh Wheelan on 07834 559547 (hwheelan1@gmail.com) or David Walton on 07468 883289 (j.d.walton@btinternet.com)

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The advertisement features a photograph of a modern building with a red brick section and large windows. In the foreground, there are vibrant yellow and pink tulips. The text is centered and uses a bold, sans-serif font.



Twenty-One Local Groups Benefit from Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund

In November 2023, funding worth a total of £36,599.30 was awarded to a range of local groups and projects in the area of benefit of the Meikle Carewe Wind Farm Benefit Community Fund.

RES, a leading independent renewable energy company, operates the Meikle Carewe Windfarm Community Benefit Fund to support local groups and projects. Funding is available for the benefit of not-for-profit groups and organisations in the Community Council areas of Crathes, Drumoak & Durris, Newtonhill, Muchalls & Cammachmore, North Kincardine Rural, Portlethen & District and Stonehaven & District. Administered by Kincardineshire Development Partnership (KDP), applications to the fund are assessed by a Decision-Making Panel made up of representatives from all five Community Council areas. The fund is available annually for the lifetime of the wind farm.

Successful applicants this round were:

Crathes Public Hall Trust - £3000; Drumoak Durris Warm Space - £1500; Drumoak & Durris Playgroup - £781.98; Drumoak School Council - £2500; Drumotters Swimming Club - £ 1100; Muchalls Village Association - £3000; Newtonhill Out of School Club - £1500; Lairhillock Parent Council - £294; Lethen Archers - £1590; 1st Portlethen Scouts - £2500; Stonehaven & District Horticultural Society - £956; Cowie Junior Netball Club - £1600; Stonehaven Fireballs Association - £839.84; Exercise After Stroke - £1113.48; Stonehaven Horizon Project - £1870; Maryculter Driving for the Disabled - £2000; K&M Youth Clubs - £574; Portlethen & District Voluntary Community Ambulance - £5000; The Larder & Covid Support Group - £2000; Stonehaven Amateur Swimming Club - £1500 and Kilwhang Ringers - £1380.

For more information please visit, www.kdp.scot or contact the KDP office on 07903 156864 and margo@kdp.scot

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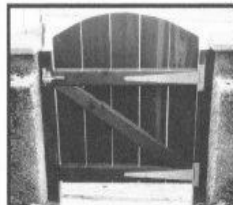
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Useful Addresses and Phone Numbers

Aberdeenshire Council Area

Office

Viewmount
Arduthie Road
Stonehaven
Tel: 01569 690541

Bourtree Hall

Booking Secretary
Angelene McKay
Tel: 01224 782734

Bourtree Pre-School Group

Bourtree Hall
Berrymuir Road
Tel: 01224 782472

Family Resource Centre

Portlethen Academy
Bruntland Road
Tel: 01467 537111

Fishermoss School

Berrymuir Road
Tel: 01224 472875

Franciscan Missionaries

16 Dunvegan Avenue

Hillside School

Newlands Drive
Tel: 01224 472850

Homestart

32 David Street
Stonehaven
Tel: 01569 767773

Jubilee Hall

Booking Secretary
Tel: 07396 339448

Portlethen Academy

Bruntland Road
Tel: 01224 782174

Portlethen Church Office

Tel: 01224 782883

Portlethen Library

Portlethen Academy
Bruntland Road
Tel: 01224 472870

Portlethen Medical Centre

Old Portlethen Road
Tel: 0345 0130720

Portlethen School

Cookston Road
Tel: 01224 472845

Post Office

Morrisons Daily
Unit 4-5
The Green
Berrymuir Road
Tel: 01224 783752

Social Work Department

Rowanbank Road
Adult Services
Tel: 01569 690532
Children's Services
Tel: 01467 537111

Need to speak to your local MP/MSP?

Andrew Bowie MP

House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA
Tel. 01224 766959
or e-mail andrew.bowie.mp@parliament.uk

Audrey Nicoll MSP

51 Victoria Road, Torry, Aberdeen AB11 9LS
Tel. 01224 876743
or email: audrey.nicoll.msp@parliament.scot
Twitter: @Audrey4ASNK

Useful Numbers

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HMRC Business Helpline:	0800 0159 559
Employers' Helpline:	0800 019 2211
Housing Helpline:	0808 800 4444
Helpline for Elderly People:	0800 12 44 222
Mental Health Helpline:	0800 83 85 87
Parents Helpline:	08000 28 22 33
Domestic Abuse Helpline:	0800 027 1234
Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline:	08088 01 03 02
LGBT Health and Wellbeing Helpline:	0300 123 2523
Find Business Support:	0300 303 0660
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Shelter Aberdeen:	01224 522851
Aberdeen Cyrenians:	0300 303 0903
Home Energy Scotland:	0808 808 2282



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Do you have something of interest you would like to share?

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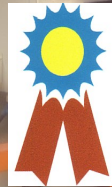
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