

CLOCHANDIGHTER

Portlethen's Community Magazine

EDITION 126 – Winter 2025



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Editorial

Welcome to the Winter Edition of the Clochandighter. By the people of Portlethen, for the people of Portlethen.

After a hot summer and a (mostly) mild autumn, what can we expect for Winter? More of the same? Or the other extreme, exceptionally cold and snowy? Whatever the weather, there are plenty of things to look forward to. I understand that not everyone celebrates Christmas (despite what the media would have us believe) but, whatever your beliefs, I hope you can enjoy some of the winter festivities out there.

Santa will be out and about on the Santa Run in early December (see page 12 for the dates), so do go out and join him.



There are also a number of Christmas Fayres, some of which I have discovered in time for this to go to press and these are listed on page 75.

You'll have noticed the picture of last year's Santa Run on the front cover, and a reminder that we should be thankful to, and proud of, everyone involved as it won 3rd prize at the Light Up Peterhead competition. Not least of course, Darren, who had the idea for this 9 years ago!



And talking of Darren, many congratulations to him for winning the Community Spirit Award at this year's Inspiring Aberdeenshire. A well-deserved accolade.

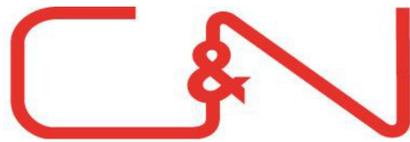
Last, but not least, may I wish you all the very best for the Festive Season.



Alison Lloyd-Wiggins - Editor

Email the Clochandighter on clochandighter.editor@gmail.com





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Back to Adventure: 1st Portlethen Scout Group Returns!

After a well-earned summer break filled with sunshine (and the occasional soggy sock), the 1st Portlethen Scout Group is back in action - and we couldn't be more excited! We're especially delighted to announce the relaunch of our Hillside Scout section, bringing fresh energy, new faces, and plenty of enthusiasm to our Wednesday evenings. Whether it's knot-tying, fire-lighting, or just good old-fashioned teamwork, our Scouts are already diving into the new term with gusto. Camps are on the horizon, and if history tells us anything, it's that marshmallows will be toasted, tents will be tested by the elements, and someone will inevitably forget their toothbrush. But that's all part of the fun!

We're always on the lookout for volunteers to join our merry band of leaders and helpers.

If you've ever fancied donning a neckerchief, wielding a clipboard, and uttering the phrase "That's not how you build a shelter," then our Wednesday (Hillside) or Thursday (Bourtree) sections might just be your calling. No experience is necessary - just a sense of humour and a willingness to embrace the chaos! So whether you're a parent, a former Scout, or someone who just enjoys the smell of campfires and the sound of laughter, come and see what we're all about. The kettle's always on at camp, and the adventure never stops. Be Prepared - to have fun!



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1st Portlethen at the Gala



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If you think you need door-to-door transport you may qualify. We can take you anywhere within Portlethen e.g. shopping, medical centre, the library or to connect onto another bus service. You can ask for a trip at any time between 9.45 and 14.30 hrs, but you will need to fit in with other passengers. Phone us to find out more about the service.

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.

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Its nearly Christmas time once again!

Quickly, before the Christmas stuff, I'd just like to say well done to the Gala Committee for all their hard work. They made £3500 profit, after costs, which has been distributed around our community to various groups. It's your town, your Gala; please get involved.

I'd also like to thank those of you who nominated me for the Inspiring Aberdeenshire Award. It was a great night and fantastic to see other like-minded folk doing similar things in their communities. If you can, do come and get involved in some volunteering – it's great fun and the people you meet along the way so often become friends.

In conjunction with the PDCC, the PTA have now taken possession of the old phone box on Cookston Road. This has been turned into a community defibrillator point with 24-hour access emergency-ready! The PTA will run and maintain it. Thanks go to Sign Designs Portlethen for providing the new graphics on the old phone box, to highlight its new purpose.

By the time this edition has hit your doorstep, the town should be adorned with our new feature to welcome you to Portlethen and our beautiful real, growing, Christmas tree that's really starting to look great, and is nearly as big as the other one was!

The elves should have worked their magic, and the Christmas motifs should be on the main street lampposts! There will be lots of fairs and events on this Christmas; please keep up to date on social media and posters locally for further information.

The Santa Run is also back this Christmas (see page 12), supporting all 3 local primary schools and our charity of choice. If you'd like to get involved, contact your school PSA who will be more than happy to hear from you.

Huge thanks to William Nicol, as the main transport sponsor, for still supporting my crazy idea (right from the start), and to Graham Chapman who gives his time to drive Santa. More information is available on the times and other sponsors who support it.

Have a great festive season and enjoy catching up with family and friends.

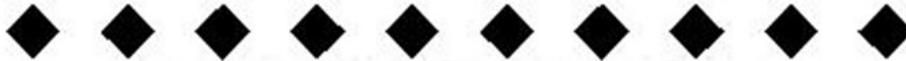
Thanks, Darren.

Clochandighter Accounts

Transactions in the quarter to 12th October 2025

	Credit	Debit	Balance
Balance b/fwd 01/08/25			£10,715.96
Advertisers	4,955.00		£15,670.96
Winter & Simpson Printers		-3,433.00	£12,237.96
Microsoft 365		-79.99	£12,157.97
St John Scotland - defib		-1,000	£11,157.97
Bank Charges		-8.50	£11,149.57
Christmas light parts		-154.80	£10,994.67
Postage		-40.00	£10,954.67
Defib stores/pads		-124.80	£10,829.87
Insurance		-234.76	£10,595.11

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Portlethen's Santa Run is back for 2025 - celebrating 10 years!

It is again being organised and run by Portlethen Town Association, in conjunction with Fishermoss Primary, Portlethen Primary, Hillside Primary and a local charity. The run will take place on the dates advertised, unless the weather is against us or we're short of helpers.

The profits will be split evenly between the schools and the charity.

This is for the benefit of all the community, and we will try our best to get round Portlethen on these nights, but bear in mind we are all volunteers and sometimes things may happen outwith our control, and we may not get to a certain road!

There will be updates constantly on Facebook throughout the run nights, so keep checking for details.

Night 1: Tuesday, 2nd December: Duffshill Drive, Hare Moss Avenue, Mosside Avenue, Craigleith Avenue, Craigleith Drive, Eskywell Place, Mosside Avenue, Sunnyside Drive, Mosside Avenue, Hillside Road, Hillside Avenue, Hillside Drive, Hillside Place, School Hill Road, Clochandighter Terrace, Clochandighter Drive, School Hill Road, Auchlee Wynd, Auchlee Gardens, Schoolhill Road, Hillside Road, Schoolhill Drive, Barnhill Gardens, Newlands Drive, Newlands Avenue, Stone Circle, **Hillside School**, Barnhill Drive, Schoolhill Drive, Bishopston Place, Bishopston Gardens, Bishopston Circle, Well Brae, Redmire Crescent, Balquharn Drive, Balquharn Circle.

Night 2: Wednesday, 3rd December: Clashfarquhar Crescent, Craighead Avenue, Cairnwell Drive, Whinpark Circle, Muirend Road, Bruntland Road, Fern Drive, Bracken Road, Bruntland Road, The Square, Cookston Road, **Portlethen Primary**, Rowanbank Road, Glascairn Avenue, Dunvegan Avenue, Mosside Crescent, Mosside Drive, Rowanbank Road, Glebe Court, Devenick Drive, Thistle Drive, Claymore Avenue, Thistle Drive, Ninian Place, Thistle Drive, Argyll Place.

Night 3: Thursday, 4th December: Bruntland Court, Oak Drive, Berrymuir Road, **Fishermoss School**, The Green, Ash Place, Easter place, Easter Drive, Bramble Way-Place-Road, Drumthwacket Drive, Lethen Walk, Bourtree Avenue, Gorse Circle, Alder Drive, Cairngrassie Circle, Cairngrassie Drive, Berrymuir Road, Broomfield Road, Broomfield Park, Boswell Road.

Night 4: Friday, 5th December:

5.30pm approx. - Leathen Park Care Home.

6.15pm approx. - Marywell - Wellington drive, Checkbar Gardens, Bothiebrigs Drive.

7pm approx. - Findon Area



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Portlethen Moss Conservation Group

Registered Scottish Charity No - SC040350



Our Group's Projects - Portlethen Moss, Portlethen Community Woodland, & Community Wildlife & Sensory Garden

Portlethen Moss – Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS)

Nature, thankfully, can be so resilient, the habitat that the fires destroyed is slowly recovering. It will of course take years, and the poor wildlife affected such as nesting birds doesn't bear thinking about. We will continue to do our best to preserve the moss and with the Kincardine & Mearns Ranger we have plans, in the new year, to carry out more peatland restoration work. A local company has offered to volunteer with the Ranger, we always welcome offers of help from companies, it's a great rewarding team-building experience for them too.

Community Woodland

As the woodland continues to mature, we saw the first acorns and sweet chestnuts on some of the trees this year. There's lots of berries and hips to feed the hungry birds over winter and shelter for them in the hedgerows. Keep an eye out for the arrival of 'winter thrushes' - Fieldfares & Redwings and if we're lucky Waxwings. Newts and toads were found in the woodland this year confirming that the biodiversity we've worked hard to create is attracting a range of wildlife. The WW1 Memorial orchard is ready for winter, with the wildflower areas cut, seed allowed to set then the cuttings raked away. We sowed more yellow rattle which will help the wildflower areas to develop.

Community Wildlife & Sensory Garden

The wildflower meadow area in the garden is still in its infancy, but where we had 2 wild orchids last year, this year we had 17! Like the orchard in the woodland, we cut the area and have spread more yellow rattle seed. Our plan to create 2 more large sensory borders either side of the picnic bench came after the success of the lavender border that we created back in April, which has literally been buzzing with pollinators for months and the relaxing aroma of the lavender adds to the sensory theme. We planted more perennial wildflowers and honeysuckles in September, thanks to Greenspace Aberdeenshire for the plants. This project is still early days as we continue to improve and develop the wildflower meadow, we look forward to seeing it improve year on year.

We often see the toddlers of the Bourtree Nursey when we're working there, the staff told us that they really enjoy visiting the garden and do so at least three times a week.

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 community projects each time you shop online, at no cost to you whatsoever, you'll be amazed at how many businesses support this - even Domino's Pizza

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Helping Our Endangered Hedgehogs

www.facebook.com/HedgehogsofPortlethen

British hedgehogs have declined by between 30-75% in rural areas since 2000.



By now, most hedgehogs will be hibernating, however some will remain active, often right through December. These are the juvenile hedgehogs, born late in the year, as they struggle to gain enough weight to hibernate. With their natural diet of bugs and grubs very scarce and hard to find, especially if the ground is frozen, they need our help. Keep it simple, a shallow bowl of water and one of dry kitten food, nothing else, beware of commercially-produced foods sold as 'hedgehog food' - they're unregulated and very often contain things that are harmful to our wild hedgehogs. Google searches on what to feed hedgehogs often pull up foods that are only suitable for pet hedgehogs - they're a different species with different dietary needs to our wild European Hedgehogs, and by providing dry kitten food you're giving them all the vital nutrients they require - high protein content and vitamins specially developed for mammals

There's no need to 'rescue' a hedgehog in winter unless it's out during the day. Rescues no longer overwinter every hedgehog that's active in winter, unless its poorly. Even small hedgehogs can and do survive hibernation, it's more to do with body shape than weight - for example a 500g small hedgehog will be perfectly proportioned, whereas an adult at 500g in winter will be a poorly one. If you see a hedgehog you're concerned about, get in touch with your nearest rescue for advice.

As always a hedgehog out in the day is not ok so if you see one, no matter how well it may look, 99.9% of the time it's a very poorly hedgehog and needs containing in a high sided box while you call The New Arc for advice Tel: 01358 701723.

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 you need send a message directly.

We are not a rescue, but can advise on how to help hedgehogs.

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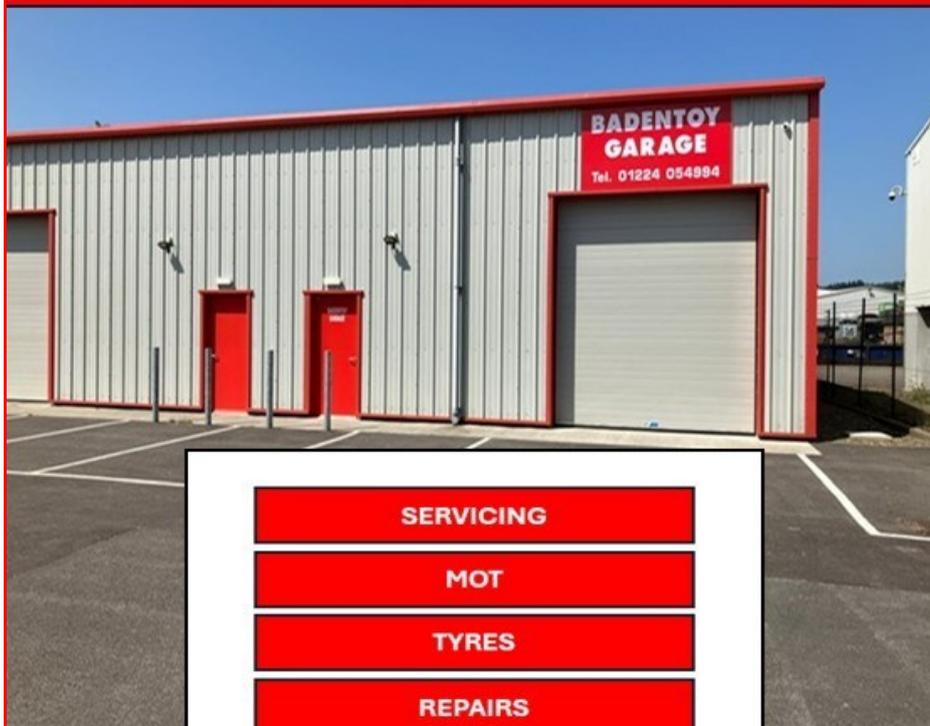
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Bacon Cheeseburger	£5.00
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Hot Dog	£3.60
Extra Burger	£1.80

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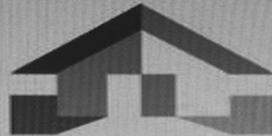
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The summer is behind us now and the abundance of produce is still being eaten and shared by our members.

Since March, we have had an immense success in members developing their individual plots as per their own vision. This has created a wonderful array of different visual and growing results that has contributed to the site development this year. With the autumn now in full swing (as I write this), it is about planning for next year to maximise the coming growing season.



It has been very heartening that all four schools in Portlethen have developed their plots with successes in producing a range of edible vegetables with any surplus given to the Larder.



Our youth club has also been involved with a patch on my plot to grow pumpkins for Halloween and, again, as I write this, they will have a good few to carve or raise funds with.

We are approaching our second AGM this November and will be looking to appoint new office bearers or re-elect existing if they choose to continue. As from Early August we became a charity and have four trustees appointed in these roles to oversee and meet the legal requirements of being a charity.

Our site still has development and infrastructure tasks to do, and for which we still need funding, and this is an ongoing task driven by Colin Pike for which we are incredibly grateful.

Any help with funding from our local businesses would help us enormously in expanding community access and usage. It would go towards our infrastructure (toilets and complete access road, and recycling polycrub roof water in troughs on the North side). We are awaiting our accounts being finalised for this past year, necessary for all our funding applications going forward.

One of the latest initiatives has been to put in a note of interest to have the site taken over by us as an asset transfer from Aberdeenshire council. You may remember that the land was donated to the council as community land by the original house-builders back around 20 years ago.



We now have a waiting list for plots and a limited amount still available that are used for holding much needed topsoil and school materials. These plots will be released to the waiting list as soon as we can. You can put in a note of interest via our Facebook page .

I would like to thank all the members who volunteered and donated materials over the past few months and helped with weeding, planting bulbs, trees, and making compost bays.

A big thanks to all who support us in various ways, including AM Smith, ABK Aggregates, The Co-op. Asda, Ewan the tree man, NESBIP, One seed forward, NESCAN.

We at the allotments look forward to the next phase of our development.

Martin Dear, on Behalf of our Trustees and Committee.

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As summer gave way to autumn, our church family has been joyfully active across Portlethen—building friendships, sharing hope, and celebrating together. In August, some young adults wrapped up the season with a relaxed evening of bowling and a shared meal - full of laughter, connection, and good food.

September followed with a powerful musical night at Portlethen Academy, where over 110 residents gathered for an uplifting evening of praise and inspiration.

We've continued our regular litter-picking efforts, helping keep our community clean and cared for, and our visits to Lethen Park Care Home remain a treasured part of our ministry - bringing music, prayer, and warmth to residents and staff alike.

Now, as the festive season approaches, we warmly invite you to our Christmas Carol Service on 21st December 2025—a joyful evening of music, celebration, and togetherness for all ages. Expect carols, candles, and a heartwarming atmosphere to usher in the season.



We meet for service **every Sunday at 11am** at Portlethen Academy. Come and be part of it!

Contact - Joy on 07877 103721 / 01224 516003

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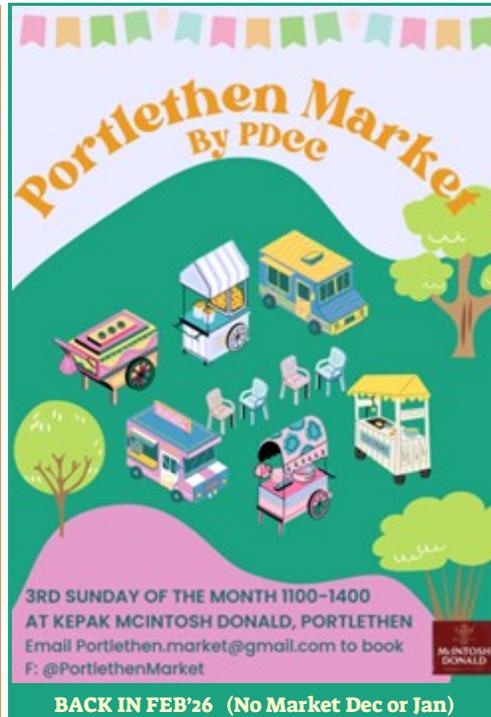
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Sadly, we must report that in the last couple of months we have lost of two of our stalwart members, who had over 60 years of Rotary service between them.

Ian Wolkoff joined the club in 1994, within months of it being formed. He soon made his mark by becoming club secretary, a position which he held for 18 years. Having been involved with IT with BT, his skills were greatly valued and he kept us all on our toes, helping successive presidents negotiate the bylaws and insisting that minutes should be no longer than one side of A4, no matter the volume of business. In 2014 Ian was awarded a Paul Harris fellowship for his Rotary service, only the third given by the club at that time. Ian's other interests included his love of Scouting, becoming a trainer and involved with the management of Templars Park.



***Ilan receiving his Paul Harris Fellowship
From District Governor, Keith Hopkins***

Robbie Middleton passed away last month after a long illness. Robbie was our founder president, having gathered together 24 new Rotarians to serve our local area, with the Rotary motto 'Service above Self' very much to the fore, he served three times as president. There is not enough space in this newsletter to mention all Robbie's attributes, his career was as a Master Mariner, becoming president of the Nautical Institute in 2002, and helping to set up the Aberdeen Seafarers Centre. Robbie loved his music, singing and playing with his band the Soggy Bottom Stompers and The Stonehaven Chorus. His greatest achievement in Rotary was to be awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship twice, in January 2008 and April 2021, and a Champion of Change in 2017 for his charity work for children in Bubaare, Uganda, a project still supported by our club. Robbie's faith was at the core of all his good works, his quiet advice and support will be missed by many.



***Robbie receiving his Champion of Change
award from Sir Iain Duncan Smith in London***

RYLA: As I write we are looking forward to an evening with friends and the families of our two RYLA graduates who spent a week at Abernethy in the summer. Maya and Lauren had the benefit of a dedicated 24/7 mentor, daily inspirational speaker, outdoor and indoor team leading skills during their fully sponsored week, a great experience they will remember for the rest of their lives.

Three of us will be attending the annual **District Conference** in Dunfermline shortly, always a chance to catch up with friends and listen to great speakers. We are also in the process of booking our Christmas meal.

We will be selling tickets for the **Charlie House** Christmas car raffle again, sadly not enough of us available to sit in Matalan this year but we will be taking our turn in the Bon Accord centre. If you would like to contribute, please contact the email address below.

Email: acm739@btinternet.com or message via our Facebook page, Portlethen and District Rotary



Portlethen Bowling Club

info@portlethenbowlingclub.co.uk

Another successful year for Portlethen Bowling Club has come to an end.

We are still open on Friday evenings, Saturday afternoons, and for social functions, plus we will be trying something new. On Wednesday evenings from 7.00pm, we'll be hosting a Games Night, with Dominoes, darts, cards, and board games. If you are interested, contact the Club for more information, or just come along.

Congratulations to our new Club Champions:

- Ladies Singles - Colleen Christie
- Gents Singles - Alan MacDonald

Well done on having a great season!

We now look forward to a number of social events: Presentation Evening, Christmas, and Hogmanay. These evenings are always well supported, and we hope to see as many of you as possible.

Walter McMillan, President



Kincardine Coastal

Kincardine Coastal Church of Scotland



Services

Kincardine Coastal Church looks forward to welcoming both old and new friends of all ages.

Sunday Morning Service in Newtonhill at 9:30 am with a later service in **Portlethen** beginning at 11:00 am.



Portlethen



Newtonhill

Christmas Coffee Morning

Will be held in Newtonhill Church on Saturday, 29th November with the inclusion of the usual stalls.

Festive Season Activities

18 Dec	6:30 pm	Newtonhill	Carol Singing around village Collection to Abernecessities
24 Dec	6:30 pm	Newtonhill	Nativity Family Service - Dress Up
25 Dec	11:00 am	Portlethen	Christmas Day Service

Soupa Tuesday Lunches

These enjoyable events continue to be offered in Newtonhill Church on the first Tuesday of every month. Everyone is very welcome to join us in the church.

£6 for soup, sweet and coffee.

The Girls Brigade



1st Newtonhill Girls' Brigade continues to meet every Monday evening in Newtonhill Church, beginning at 6.15 pm, with activities for girls from 5 years old and upwards.

They would be happy to welcome any girls from Portlethen too.

Support from the community is always welcome and, if you require further information, please contact girlsbrigade@newtonhillchurch.org.uk

The Guild



The Guild meets regularly in Newtonhill Church on a Wednesday. New members are always welcome to join us.

If you would like to get involved in any of the events or organisations listed above, please speak to anyone at the church or through our website

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Fiona Jones, Disability Ambassador, at Portlethen Gala



On Saturday 9th August, I walked over with my mum to Bourtree Park to take part in this year's summer local event, our Gala. This year there was a theme, and I wore my cowboy costume to celebrate that. I wanted to take part in the competition but was unclear of the times or where it was taking place, so I missed it, but I didn't mind as I was just happy to be walking around wearing my costume.

I looked around outside, took part in stalls for charity, and won some nice prizes of tasty chocolate! My mum tried to win wine on the stall, but she was not so lucky! Because the weather was so windy, my mum and I headed inside. One of the stalls had lovely wooden-made things. I bought a highland cow phone stand, and my mum bought a nice wooden sign for our friends who had moved house. We couldn't resist buying ourselves a nice cake for later on.

After all that we were in need of refreshments, so we went inside the Academy and each bought cake. Mum had tea and I had juice, and we enjoyed sitting down to rest our legs and recharge! The cake was so tasty (Julie made it herself) and it was so fresh and flavoursome.

After that we headed off outside and I leaned on the wall in front of the stage to watch, sing along, and dance to someone I know locally, Paul. He was being Elvis Presley and he sounded and looked great!

I did pass by the vehicles, and they did have a great selection, but because of the noise I stayed away.

My favourite part was Findon Flyball. The dogs were very fast and focused, and afterwards the owners let us fuss the dogs.

Oh! I had a nice surprise after the gala, when I found I had won a prize. It was the big black highland cow - so soft so cuddly!

I am so glad that we have this event as it's a brilliant way to enjoy yourself while supporting your local community. I will definitely come and support it next year and would encourage others to get involved.

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

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MEET THE TEAM
TAM CURRIE - SPECIAL
EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR



Portlethen and District
Voluntary Community
Ambulance Association
Scottish Charity Number: SCO 31829

I moved to Aberdeen from Edinburgh in 1980 to manage a motor factors. After eight years, I moved into sales, supplying products to garages and body shops, where I stayed for 32 years. My wife Annie and I settled in Portlethen in 1982, where we raised our two boys, Iain and Ewan.

Outside of volunteering, my main passions are genealogy, photography, and music. I've traced parts of my family history back as far as the late 1600s. I also play Scottish traditional music on the harmonica and Scottish small pipes which are like Highland pipes but quieter, with bellows instead of lungs providing the air - a blessing at my age! My wife might not appreciate all the practice, though -I've occasionally been sent out to the summerhouse with them.

I first joined the Community Ambulance team back in 2021, thanks to a chance chat with my neighbour, Colin Stratton, who was then Chairperson of the association. After the usual talk about the weather, he asked if I was retired and under 70. When I said yes, he suggested I consider driving for the local ambulance once a week. I liked the idea of giving something back to the community, so I agreed.

Initially, I was on the list of relief drivers, but almost straight away a Wednesday afternoon slot became available—and I've been doing it ever since. At first, my role involved transporting patients to and from the Medical Centre. With Covid restrictions in place, things were fairly quiet, which gave me a chance to get used to the routine.

As restrictions lifted, the Young at Heart Club restarted on Wednesday afternoons at the Community Centre, and I began taking members there and back. The club offers local seniors a chance to meet up for tea, biscuits, games, craft activities, guest speakers, and even music from Portlethen Academy pupils. They're a lively, welcoming group who often include me in their activities—and they've even invited my wife along on occasion.

I am also responsible for arranging the transportation and logistics for outings for various local groups including the residents of Brio Retirement Living at Chapelton, Newtonvale Sheltered Housing, and the Newtonhill Lunch Club at the Bettridge Centre.

One of the unexpected pleasures of volunteering has been getting to know the lovely team of volunteers who make the Young at Heart Club possible. There's always a need for more helping hands, whether as ambulance drivers or club helpers—and I can promise it's both rewarding and fulfilling work.

Our charity is always dependent on donations from individuals, local organisations, and businesses to keep the Wee Blue Bus on the road. We would like to thank the Leathan pub for their generous donation of £600 raised from their Neeps and Nerds Charity Match.

**Claire Shearer from The Leathan
handing over the contribution
to one of our team,
Hugh Wheelan.**



If, having read this, you have some spare time on your hands each week and would like to help out as one of our drivers, then, if you have a D1 on your driving license, give us a call; we are always looking for more volunteers to join us onboard.

**Contact Lee Drain on 07876 301062 (ldrain@aol.com)
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Dunnottar Pipes and Drums: A year of 'firsts'



Dunnottar Pipes and Drums' hectic 2025 summer season closed at Pitlochry Highland Games, on 13 September. It was the first time the band had been invited to this prestigious event of the highland games calendar and capped off what has been a year of 'firsts'.

The start to 2025 was mainly spent working on tunes, kit and instruments. Our first public engagement, following the Stonehaven Fireballs at Hogmanay, was playing to the 'Cycling for Doddie' team as they breezed into Stonehaven on February 7 after a leisurely 88-mile bike ride from Blairgowrie.

A number of pipers from the band took part in the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association's (RSPBA) Quartets Competition in Huntly in March, and then it was on to the first of many 'firsts' this year – the entire band's initial competition, at the RSPBA Championship in Banchory in May.

The band gave a great account of itself and was awarded fourth place. Even better, the Drum Corps picked up an awesome first place against stiff competition - a superb start.

This 'first' became a theme as we played in four more competitions through the summer before the World Championships: the Aberdeen Highland Games, the Garioch Pipeband competition in Inverurie, the UK championships at Ingleston, and the RSPBA event in Mintlaw.

The band placed creditably in all these competitions but a huge shout-out is due to the Drum Corps, which was awarded first place at each of these events - a phenomenal achievement. This resulted in them becoming regional champions. Their journey to becoming the Real Madrid of North East Scotland's Grade 4B drum sections was complete.





In August, the band embarked on its first competing trip to the World Pipeband Championships in Glasgow. We were delighted to take part in this huge extravaganza that draws 207 bands, including the cream of the piping world, to compete for the ultimate prize – to become World Champions in bands' respective categories, from Grade 1 to Grade 4B .

Bands travel from far-flung corners of the globe: France, Austria, the US, Canada, Australia, Oman, Zimbabwe, New Zealand. Even Peterhead.

Although not in the prize list the band acquitted itself extremely well and can be satisfied with competing in such a distinguished event. It was a long day – a 5.20 am start and a return back to Stonehaven around 10.30 pm - but to be part of it was fantastic.

As well as all this, the band continued to perform regularly at community events such as the opening of the Stonehaven Outdoor Swimming Pool, the Stonehaven Feein' Market, the Celebrate Aberdeen Parade, and Duthie Park Open Day.

Another 'first' saw the band as the initial customers of Stonehaven's Land Train, as we piped on it while it sped through the streets after a three-year hibernation. As a bonus, playing the pipes and drums whilst packed into the confined spaces of the land train introduced contortionism into the band's skill set.

The band also played at the Braemar Gathering, Aboyne Highland Games, Stonehaven Highland Games and Drumtochty Highland Games, in unusually pleasant conditions throughout the summer.

Dunnottar Pipes and Drums is having a well-earned short break from public performance before returning in November for winter events like Remembrance Sunday, the Switch-on of Stonehaven's Christmas Lights and of course, the Hogmanay Fireballs.

The band is available to hire for events, and is always looking for new members, both beginners and more experienced pipers and drummers, so please get in touch if you are interested at: dunnottarpipesanddrums@gmail.com

Portlethen Library

You are guaranteed a warm welcome at your local library this winter.

Portlethen Library is more than just a place for books—it's a hub for learning, creativity, and connection. Whether you're looking for Bookbug adventures for the kids, quiet study space, or fascinating talks, the library has something for everyone. Don't forget to look out for our Winter with Us sessions to get in the seasonal spirit.

Stop by to explore and see why the library is one of our community's most valuable assets.



Activities you can enjoy at Portlethen Library:

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10.00am-1.00pm **Rummikub Club** is open to everyone who wants to give it a try...other games are available.

3.30pm-4.30pm Get creative at **Lego Club** open to children up to 12-years. Under 8s must be accompanied by an adult.

Tuesdays

10.00am-10.30am **Bookbug** a chance to meet other mums and dads in the area and is a fun session of songs and rhymes. Grandparents welcome as well and look out for our quarterly Bedtime Bookbug sessions.

Wednesdays

1.30-3.30pm Our long-running **craft group** meet to discuss the issues of the day over a cuppa and craft, a great way to meet like-minded friends.

Alongside our weekly events, we also have Monthly events that you can get involved with.

Thursday **Book Group** as the name suggests, meets on the second Thursday of the month 5.45pm-6.45pm, a great way to discover new authors, meet new friends and have some fun.

World Cookery Book Group meets on the first Thursday of the month 5.45pm-6.45pm to discuss the latest cookbooks and share recipes.



Portlethen Library will be closed from 1pm on Tuesday 23 December until 10am on Saturday 3 January.



We also have lots of one-off talks and activities. For information visit our website

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As a church community we have a Eucharist Service on Sunday at 10.30am. Then on Wednesday at 9.30am (Bible Study), followed by Morning Prayer at 11.00am.



Services to be held over the Christmas period:

21st December 10.30am Carol Service
24th December 11.00pm Midnight Eucharist
25th December 09.30am Christmas Day Family Service

As the Walrus said to the Carpenter in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, "The time has come..." and so it is my turn to say "The time has come... to retire." In September I turned 70 and as our Bishop Andrew said... time to embark on a new season of life. I have been at St Ternan's, Muchalls and St James the Great, Stonehaven for nearly four years. The work in both of these Episcopal churches has been varied. Of course there are all the normal church bits you would expect, Sunday services, Bible Studies, weddings and funerals but there is much more to the role of church minister than what might be considered the norm. Those additional roles reflect the changes that we all see in society, for example Covid Lockdown, I seem to be having more and more conversations about mental health issues, and many of these conversations take place with individuals outwith the church. It must be said that my role has changed greatly over the last few years, just as life has changed.

We, Mike my husband and I, are very unsure as to what our life will look like as we adjust to retirement, or actually where we will end up living. And for the moment, at least, the two charges face a period of change as well. In reality, it is difficult for any of us to foresee the future and so there is an element of head down and trust in the Lord, which we do.

As for St Ternan's, in the very near future the process to find my replacement will begin. Normal practice is for there to be a gap between one priest going and another coming. In the interim, services will continue at both St Ternan's and St James in Stonehaven. Christmas will be celebrated as will the other festivals. Details of the services will be posted on Facebook and all the usual places.

Wishing you all the best for the future,

Mary Jepp

**ST TERNAN'S WISHES YOU ALL PEACE
AND HAPPINESS OVER THE FESTIVE PERIOD.**



News from Cllr Mel Sullivan



The twenties have finally arrived! All the new signs should be up, and the old 20/30 border signs taken down (if not, please let me know). Downies was missed the first time but is now in the process of getting traffic order for 20mph signs.

Another change that's coming is how grit bins are treated. Ones that are in the 'right' place will stay. Ones that are in the 'wrong' place can be adopted by a community organisation – they will then be responsible for filling it, etc. The snow warden scheme is staying.

Christmas lights will be staying the same for this year, but the policy will be going out to communities for comment and changes. I'm hoping that a good balance can be found between letting communities have much more control on how many and where they would like festive lighting and not costing the council any more money (because there really isn't anything extra to go around).

As always, 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

Contact your Local Councillor

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

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

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

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Entertainment. So
good!**



**Next year's Gala is on
Saturday 8th August 2026.**

It doesn't "just happen".

**The first planning meeting for the
next Gala was held on 7th October.**

**If you would like to get involved, or
just offer to help on the day, keep an
eye on the *Portlethen Gala* Facebook
page for dates of the next planning
meetings.**

We hope to see you there!

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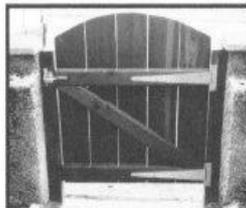
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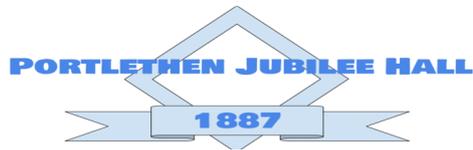
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Email - Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com
Facebook - Jubilee Hall Portlethen



News from your community hall

In the last edition I had the pleasure of recognising the amazing individuals who make up the Jubilee Hall Management Committee. I was pleased to see a couple of them recognised for the work they do in support of the local community, not just through their support for the hall, but in the wider community. Julie Hay, who runs the Fine Piece Café and Lunch Club was recognised for her efforts in 2024 and Darren Robertson has picked up the same accolade through the Inspiring Aberdeenshire Community Spirit Award for 2025.

It is interesting how the same names come up again and again when attention turns to those who make a real difference in our community. Should you feel inclined to get involved in the running of the Jubilee Hall, drop us a line.

I would also like to highlight one of our committee members who has decided to step back and focus on her family rather than the entire community in Portlethen. Alison Duncan was the Treasurer when I took on the chairmanship of the Management Committee a few years back. She looked after our finances during an extremely busy time when we were spending a great deal of money on the upgrades, including a new heating system. With grant funding coming in and large chunks of cash going out to a variety of local contractors it was vital to have someone of the calibre of Alison keeping tabs on our accounts. When she passed the role to our current Treasurer and focussed on our energy consumption, she was able to save us a significant amount of money, by keeping our suppliers onside through the submission of regular meter readings, negotiating optimum tariffs and pushing back when the supplier tried to bill us on "estimated consumption".

She will be sorely missed. I notice that she is not giving up all her civic duties though and her treasury skills are now being utilised by the Portlethen Town Association [and the Clochandighter - Ed].

It was my pleasure to present Alison with an Aberdeen City Gift Card on behalf of the Hall Committee.



In other news, we continue on our conversion to be a Scottish Charitable Integrated Organisation. Our application documentation is well under way, and I hope to submit the significant volume of paperwork in the next few weeks.

More on this in the next edition.

Finally, looking forward to the Festive Season, can I suggest you get your booking forms in as soon as possible for your Christmas and New Year celebrations to avoid disappointment. The hall diary is filling up fast.

In the meantime, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a joyous Christmas and a healthy and peaceful New Year.

Dave Johnstone,
Chairman

Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com

BOOK THE HALL

The booking rates for the Jubilee Hall are as follows:

- Rental of hall: £20 per hour
- A projector, screen and high quality sound system are available for an extra £20 per booking.

Contact our email address to book the hall, or for general enquiries:

Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com



*a very
HAPPY
CHRISTMAS
to all our readers*



The Lodge of Portlethen No. 1805

*On the roll of
The Grand Lodge of
Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Scotland*

Hi, to everyone.

I would think most of us will have had holidays, though many will have just stayed at home, probably glad of the break and hopefully all fully charged and with good memories. Then of course we had Halloween and Guy Faulks and now the big push for Christmas, shopping for presents and for the Christmas dinner, and a week later, Hogmanay - a few will have an enjoyable night, some with sore heads later in the day, but no matter what you do at this coming period just spare a thought for any of your neighbours on their own, even if you just enquire how they are keeping.

Update

Apart from a few visitations, the Lodge has not been up to much since the last edition. The project to update the Bourtree Community Hall is all but finished, with a few minor jobs to complete. That will allow the hall to be used by the community for parties and get-togethers. The Hall Committee will be writing about the hall in one of the editions.



Defibrillator

There is a Defib outside the Bourtree Community Hall door, for community use, should it be required. You'll need to call the emergency services, ask for the Ambulance Service, and give them the location, after which you'll receive the code to open the box. There will be classes run to explain about using the De-fib. These will be free to attend, and you'll leave confident that you could use the De-Fib successfully. These classes will be advertised soon.

Prostate Cancer awareness

The Province of Kincardineshire has two well-versed gentlemen, total volunteers, who are willing to talk to any group, at an agreed time, about Prostate Cancer. This also includes women's groups because typically, men might ignore the symptoms whereas the ladies of the house might notice changes and get them to the Doctor for the test. I mentioned before that the Grand Master Bro Ramsay McGee had tasked the lodges to raise awareness and money for Prostate Cancer Scotland, and I'm happy to report that the total money raised is now over £2 million. What a great achievement!

Provincial Charity Ball

The Provincial Charity Ball will take place on 14th November and is normally a good night with quite a lot of money being raised for two local charities, said charities being presented with cheques by The Right Worshipful Provincial Grand Master of Kincardineshire, P.M. Bro Graham A. McKay later in the year. Last year the proceeds went to the Stonehaven R.N.L.I., who assured us that the donation would be used in the Stonehaven facility. £5000 was raised, with £1000 going to each food bank in the Province of Kincardineshire, (Portlethen, Stonehaven, Laurencekirk, Inverbervie and Johnshaven).

Welcome back

Now just a reminder, there are many Freemasons within the Portlethen community. We would like to stir up a little memory in the minds of those Masons who have fallen away from their Mother Lodge for whatever reason, family commitments, work commitments, moving away or maybe just out of the habit of attending. We hope you are not on your own just twiddling your thumbs or just doing some gardening to pass the time away; we would like to cordially invite you to visit our Lodge. We meet on the first Friday of each month, so if you are at a loose end, do come along. We would be happy to see you and hopefully this would get you out the house for a while, make new friends, enjoy a cup of tea /coffee and sandwiches/sausage rolls, and a good blether with likeminded Brothers, some of whom you may already know. Don't be bashful, drop me a line - you will be met, introduced to all, and hopefully have a good evening with us.

YOU WILL BE MADE VERY WELCOME

Welcome

As always, our invitation goes out to all Honourable men of like-minded thoughts to come and join us, just give me an email and I will arrange for you to meet some brothers who will answer as many of your questions as they can.

Until the next addition, we hope you have a good time at Christmas and a very happy New Year!

Stay safe and we wish you all good health and happiness.

Allan Malcolm, Secretary

Email: 1805lop@gmail.com

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News from the Shed

Portlethen & District Men's Shed is 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 next to the Party Cabin. 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 mentioned in the Autumn Clochandighter our Men's Shed has outgrown our current Shed and we formally requested that Aberdeenshire Council transfer the unused Social Work Building, as per Scottish Government Community Asset Transfer Legislation, to the Portlethen & District Men's Shed (PDMS) so that with our expanding membership we could support our members more effectively and more safely in a more spacious and modern environment. We would also be able to support other Portlethen Community Groups more effectively than we can at present.

I am happy to say that, at a formal meeting in September with Aberdeenshire Council Officials, Aberdeenshire Councillors, and PDMS representatives, all 11 Councillors present agreed that the Social Work building should be transferred to the PDMS. The case has now been sent to Aberdeenshire Building Services for their input and we hope that the matter will be concluded in mid-November.

Here are a few of the projects we have worked on recently for the local community.



Rebuilt garden bench



Refurbished gate



Repaired gate

If you wish to make a donation of timber or tools to Portlethen & District Men's Shed, 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.

If you wish to join the Portlethen & District Men's Shed, please contact the email address below and ask for a Membership Form, or come along for a blether and learn more about how to get involved.

Jim Duguid, Secretary Portlethen & District Men's Shed

Email: secretary@portlethenmensshed.co.uk



Welcome to the Bettridge Centre, your friendly local leisure centre in Newtonhill, here for you and all your family.

With regular pre-school, after school, sports and keep fit classes; dance, yoga and martial arts; singing and craft groups, lunch club and social occasions – we welcome everyone of all ages and all abilities.

And when you want to celebrate a special event, we can offer you the venue you need at a price you can afford. Our friendly, professional staff are here to help you make it a day to be remembered.

New Party Packages!

Our popular Saturday Coastal Play Parties have been relaunched and they're booking up fast – check out our website's Parties page to find out more. DIY parties are also available with a wide range of equipment to hire.



The centre is fully accessible and has disabled toilet and shower facilities. With easy transport links via the A92 and the bypass, plus free car parking - make life simple for your guests by holding your event here.

To find out more about us and what we have to offer, visit www.bettridgecentre.org.uk, follow our Facebook page or call **01569 731320** during office hours, we'd be delighted to hear from you!

THE LARDER (PORTLETHEN AND SURROUNDING AREAS)

#THELARDER #FORTHECOMMUNITYBYTHECOMMUNITY



The Larder at the Porty Cabin on Cookston Road (opposite Portlethen Primary School) is getting prepared for another busy period. Winter 2025/26 is likely to be a struggle for many individuals, pensioners and families as the cost of energy increases yet again. The Larder is here to ease some of these difficulties as no one should have to choose between “Heat or Eat”. We offer fresh milk, bread, eggs, fruit and vegetables, freezer, fridge and cupboard items, toiletries, cleaning and baby items and pet food, all for a small donation, pay what you can. We are open **Monday 6pm-8pm, Friday 2.30pm-4.30pm and Saturday 10am-12pm**. Our volunteers are there to help anyone needing some extra support and you do not require a referral from another organisation.

If you do find yourself struggling with increased food and utility costs and could benefit from extra help, please scan the QR Code in our attached poster to place an order. You can also click the link on our Facebook page to prebook and choose the items you are short of via the Google form. Alternatively, pop in or contact us on c19portlethenhelp@gmail.com or 07376 133870.

There are still many people in our local community who do not realise that The Larder is available to **EVERYONE**, not only families that are struggling financially. Please come in and visit The Larder to see the organic vegetables donated from the farm at Bridge of Muchalls through the Oneseedforward organisation and the fruit and vegetables received weekly from FareShare via CFine. These items are for **EVERYONE** to benefit from, for a small donation, pay what you can. We also sell fresh farm eggs, soup packs and fruit packs at a fair price. The Fareshare items are excess stock items and are distributed to us to stop them from being sent to landfill and prevent food waste. Please see our weekly Facebook updates on the food items donated or pop in to see for yourself.

All monetary donations are then used to purchase fresh items weekly. This QR Code can be scanned if you would like to donate to The Larder Funds. The Larder also accepts donations of non-perishable food items, toiletries, cleaning and baby items and any type of pet food.

Thank you to everyone in the local community that has helped and supported The Larder this year, we could not have done this without your help!



Have a lovely Festive Season and Best Wishes for 2026!
The Larder Team



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MEALS

Portlethen Larder

CUPBOARD ESSENTIALS

FRIDGE ITEMS

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Supporting the community who may be facing hardship in a dignified way.

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Stopping food waste in our community by offering surplus food.

FRESH FARM EGGS

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Open to all.



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MON 6-8, FRI 2.30-4.30 AND SAT 10-12

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Fishermoss School

'Being the best we can be'
Respect-Honesty-Responsibility-Kindness-Hardworking

Delivering the Curriculum 'Oot and About in the Autumn Term'

Primary 7 took a trip to **Montrose Air Station Heritage Centre** as part of their World War II Social Studies class project.



Primary 7 also attended **Aberdeen Science Centre** to consolidate previous learning on renewable energy and our Eco Schools work!

Primary 4 & Primary 4/5 are responsible for organising our participation in the **Rotary Shoe Box Appeal** this year, as part of their work as **Global Warriors**. Pupils did a super job sharing their presentations at assemblies and they ensured we had all the information we needed about the Shoe Box Appeal. The classes are developing their skills for the 'World of Work' such as planning, organising, communicating, working with others and taking **responsibility** as they take the lead on the Shoe Box Appeal at Fishermoss.



Primary 4/5 have been busy working on their class **Eco Action Plan** and completed a litter survey in our playground while also undertaking a litter pick!



Fishermoss Allotment.....Some of our senior classes have enjoyed a stride up to our school allotment in Hillside to do some gardening work and harvesting. This has been such a valuable learning experience for them all. There has been great excitement digging up vegetables, cooking with them back at school and even selling them.

The benefits of our allotment are endless.....**Physical benefits** with digging, planting, weeding, and watering, spending time outside in fresh air; **Science learning** with hands-on experience with plant lifecycles, weather, insects, and ecosystems; and **Nutrition awareness** with pupils learning where food comes from, encouraging healthier eating habits and an appreciation for fresh produce.



Harvest Time!



Jars of Fishermoss Beetroot were sold at the Portlethen Gala!



Cooking Time!

Primary 6 pupils making Beetroot and Chocolate muffins and preparing vegetables.

Primary 5/6 decorated bags to sell the vegetables at school! The pupils took orders from staff and provided a special delivery service! Some vegetables were also on sale in the hall for parents after our sponsored walk!



Pupils removing sunflowers seeds from sunflowers planted in Spring, ready for feeding birds in the wintertime

Primary 7 enjoying some Autumn sunshine in Portlethen Sensory Garden!





865 (Portlethen) Squadron: A Season of Achievement

As autumn sets in, 865 Squadron continues to thrive. The past few months have been full of activity, showing our cadets' and staff's continued commitment to excellence, leadership, and service.

To round off August, two members of staff attended the National Air and Space Camp - a flagship event of the Air Cadets, where they helped deliver a range of aerospace and synthetic flying subjects. Their involvement highlights the squadron's strong contribution to training and development at a national level.

We were also honoured to welcome the Lord Lieutenant of Kincardineshire, who presented Flight Sergeant Kirsty Woodley with her certificate of appointment as the Lord Lieutenant's Cadet. This is a proud achievement for both Kirsty and the squadron, reflecting her dedication and outstanding service.



September brought more reasons to celebrate. Members of staff travelled to represent 865 at Regional Competitions Day, where the squadron was officially presented with the certificate and trophy for Best Squadron in the Scotland & Northern Ireland Region. The award was presented by the Regional Commandant, Group Captain Khan, and received by our Officer Commanding, Flight Lieutenant Sarah McLennan. This recognition marks an incredible milestone for the unit, paying tribute to the hard work and dedication of both staff and cadets on the unit.



Later that month, three of our cadets travelled to RAF Lossiemouth for an arms drill training weekend. There, they learned how to perform precise drill movements while carrying a rifle — a challenging skill that demands discipline and teamwork.

Just a few weeks later, the same cadets represented 865 as part of the Wing team at the Regional Arms Drill Competition, held at HMS Caledonia. Competing against squadrons from across Scotland and Northern Ireland, they showcased the high standards of drill and professionalism that define our unit.

It's been a busy and rewarding few months for 865 Squadron, and the momentum continues as we move into the rest of the training year.

We are always looking for more staff and cadets, so if the above sounds interesting and you would like to get involved, please contact us on:

865@rafac.mod.gov.uk or follow us on Facebook at **865 (Portlethen) Air Cadets**



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MOVIE NIGHT

First Friday
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At 07:00pm

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Featured Film: **SEE HALL NOTICEBOARD**

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LAST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH
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LOCATION: JUBILEE HALL, PORTLETHEN

CASH PRIZES!

Fundraising for the Jubilee Hall

£1 entrance + £10 for 10 games

18+



Hillside School and Nursery

It has been a busy start to the new session, please enjoy reading some highlights from Hillside School.

Hillside Meta-Minds Business Breakfast

Breakfast, welcoming representatives from a range of local organisations and businesses. The event provided a fantastic opportunity to connect with our wider community, strengthen existing relationships, and build new partnerships.

A highlight of the morning was a presentation by our enthusiastic Pupil 'Metaskills Champions.' They confidently shared the work we have been doing across the school to develop Metaskills - such as creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving - and how these are being linked to the world of work. Our pupils did an excellent job showcasing how these important life skills are embedded in our learning and how they help prepare us for future opportunities.

The purpose of the event was to open up dialogue with local partners about how they can support our school community - and equally, how we as a school can support them. It was a valuable morning of collaboration, inspiration, and forward thinking.

We would like to thank everyone who attended and look forward to continuing to build strong, lasting partnerships in the months ahead.

Community Café

We're delighted to announce the return of our popular Community Cafés this session at Hillside School. These events are a fantastic way to bring our school and wider community together in a warm, welcoming space. We would like to extend a heartfelt invitation to everyone in our local community - parents, carers, neighbours, and friends. Please feel free to drop in for a tasty treat, a hot drink, and the chance to see our wonderful school in action.

Our next Community Café will take place on **Wednesday 20th November, from 9.30am to 11.00am**, and will be led by P7BF. The theme for this event is Anti-Bullying, and our pupils will be sharing important messages and learning around this topic.

We hope to see you there!

A Visit From a Real Life Aquanaut

Our Primary 6s and 7s had a visit from a Scientist and Aquanaut, organised by TechFest. Adele Luta is a scientist, innovator and TEDx speaker; with her previous career at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Johnson Space Flight Centre as a certified Mission Control Centre flight controller and astronaut instructor, she has supported over 90 spacewalks. Now at Oceaneering International Inc, she is supporting exploration efforts in extreme environments such as outer space and under the sea. Adele is an aquanaut, sea-plane pilot, and coral restoration volunteer scuba diver. During her visit, she shared some of the scientific and engineering challenges to living, and explored extreme environments while interweaving stories from her career. Both pupils and staff were fully engaged and excited by Adele's visit and loved the Q&A section where they learned even more. Thank you to TechFest and Oceaneering for this fabulous opportunity!



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Friday 19th December
Portlethen Academy
7:30pm

*A community carol service
featuring local primary school
choirs*

Christingle Service

Sunday 21st December
Jubilee Hall, Portlethen
10:30am

*Find out what an orange,
candle, ribbon and sweeties
have to do with Christmas*

*Christmas Treats and coffee van
will be on site!*

**We gather every Sunday at 10:30am
Jubilee Hall, Portlethen**



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portlethencf.com





It is hard to believe that Term 1 is already complete, and, as I write this, the October holidays are now upon us. It has been another incredibly busy time in Portlethen Academy, but we are delighted to share some pupil and whole-school successes and achievements with everyone in the local community. Thank you for your continued support.

Mr Drennan, Head Teacher



School Improvement Plan (Session 2025-26)

We previously shared our Standards and Quality Report (Session 2024-25) which detailed the improvements we had made across the school last session, through all our self-evaluation work. We are extremely proud of the progress we have made, which is testament to the continued hard work of all pupils and staff across the school.

We are now delighted to share our School Improvement Plan for the year ahead (Session 2025-26) <https://bit.ly/PAImpPlan25-26>. In this you can see our aims for the session, and the involvement of all staff, pupils, and parents/carers through each highlighted section. This is available to view on our newly updated School Website, which is also our one-stop shop for all aspects of school life.

Whole School Sponsored Walk

On Friday 19th September 2025, all Portlethen Academy pupils and staff participated in our whole-school Sponsored Walk in our local Durriss Forest. This was our first Sponsored Walk in two years, and only our second walk post COVID.

Thankfully the weather was kind to us, and a really good temperature for walking. Thanks to the hard work of Mrs Campbell-Robertson (DHT), Emily Chesshire (Whole-School Technician) and our School Office Team, everything was well-organised for the day which is a logistical puzzle with so many pupils and staff involved.

Our S6 Year Group were Marshalls again this year, and the fancy-dress standard was strong as you can see in some of the pictures. A really enjoyable day for the whole-school community and a big thank you to everyone involved.

Donations are still coming in, and we would encourage everyone to chase these up as swiftly as possible for our return to school next term. All money raised will go towards

reducing the costs for school trips and transport which will benefit all pupils, alongside a proportion of funding being donated to a local charity, to be chosen by our S6s.



Modern Studies Trip – Scottish Parliament

On Thursday 2nd October 2025, Senior pupils in Modern Studies participated in their annual trip to the Scottish Parliament to bring their Modern Studies learning to life. However, this was no ordinary experience for them, as this time they got to participate in the First Minister’s Questions.



Pupils were astounded to hear and see some of the interactions in real-time, and we know this will be a very memorable experience for them. Some of their testimonials are below:

“Visiting Parliament was a very interesting and informative experience - it was fascinating to see politicians discussing and debating the matters we hear and read about. It was very well organised and I enjoyed the experience very much.” – Kaeden McKay S5

Oreva Obuarakporo S5 described the experience as *“... one of the most interesting 45 minutes of my life!”*

Well done to everyone involved and thanks to Dr Graham, Miss Hill and the Humanities Faculty for organising.

Career Ready Programme – Pupil Recognition

We are delighted to recognise and share the achievements of Lewis Bennett S6, who was part of the Career Ready programme last year. Lewis joined Maritime Development Limited (MDL) as an intern, and has worked so hard under the leadership and direction of his mentor, Ryan.



Lewis has truly been empowered by the programme, growing in confidence and personal growth, and now feels excited about his future plans. A huge thanks to Erica (Career Ready) and to Ryan at MDL. Well done, Lewis!

Active Schools - Sports Ambassador Conference



On Tuesday 11th September 2025, two Portlethen Academy pupils – Forbes Johnston and Olivia Duffy (both S4) - attended the Young Ambassador Conference for Sports Scotland, as our Portlethen Academy Ambassadors for the year ahead.

They were fully engaged in all activities and we received some fantastic comments from colleagues about their participation and leadership skills. They have come back to school with lots of ideas to work on across our school, and will be ably supported by Sam Gall and Lucy Paterson.

Thanks to Rebecca Ripley (Active Schools Coordinator) for providing them with this opportunity.



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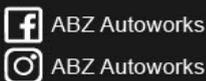
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at Portlethen Academy

We also have two outings per year (Summer and Christmas).

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thehappygoods57@gmail.com



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Girlguiding

Girlguiding Coastal North has Rainbow, Brownie and Guide units in Portlethen and Muchalls.



All of our sections enjoyed a trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park in September, for Roar and Explore, an event where Girlguiding members took over the park for the day!

Our Rainbows enjoyed a trip to Chapelton Allotments recently, they have also enjoyed a visit from the fire service and learnt lots about fire safety!

Thanks to new volunteers coming forwards, we now have two Brownie units in Portlethen. Our Wednesday night Brownies is a new unit and has enjoyed learning what Brownies is all about. They also recently held an adopt a pet night, which the Brownies all really enjoyed! The Tuesday Night Brownies have enjoyed completing their Eco Awards, doing book swaps, litter picking and collecting for the food bank.

All of the Brownies in the District attended a sleepover in September too at Cairndee, near Fettercairn. They learnt how to pitch tents, cook on fire and enjoyed singing around the campfire. For many it was their first night away from home, and with 50 children present, it was a fantastic opportunity for them to meet Brownies from other units too.

Our Guides have been as busy as ever, enjoying various trips and camps. Some of the Guides attended a week-long jamboree over the holidays and even enjoyed a night in the soft play area next door when storm Florence meant tents had to be taken down to avoid breakages! The unit also held a weekend camp in May and are looking forward to Christmas camp in November.



Thank you to the Meikle Carewe Wind Farm who gave us a grant for outdoor equipment, allowing these camps and outdoor adventures to take place.

Within the unit, the Guides have been working on their explore challenge badge, making maps and setting routes for different patrols to follow, and a challenge to find their way back to the Jubilee Hall following being taken to an unknown location blindfolded!

We are always looking for new volunteers to allow us to offer Girlguiding to more members. Volunteers can take on a variety of roles to suit everyone! Please head to our website to register your interest.





Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Network is a charity-run organisation which provides services and groups to those over the age of 50 living 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, living in their own home:

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 try and help you.

1st Thursday of the month

Portlethen Library

10.30am – 12pm

Portlethen Sunshine Club

An opportunity to try something new while meeting new people. We invite you to come along and try some crafting, play games and to have a good blether and a cuppy. Everyone will be made to feel welcome.

2nd and 4th Monday of the month

Portlethen Community Campus – Larch Room

1.30pm – 3pm

Gardening Group

Do you know we are the volunteers 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 meets on a Tuesday morning at 9.30am at the train station, but soon will be meeting at the Men's Shed (around 10.30am) to enjoy some winter activities, which will include some crafting, talking, and plenty of cuppies and sweet treats! We will then think of starting back at the station in early spring next year. Get in touch if you wish to find out more. Everyone is welcome to come along.



Mearns FM – Your Community, Your Voice This Winter

As the nights draw in, Mearns FM is celebrating another year of community spirit, connection, and local pride. Our volunteer team has supported over **35 community events** this year; from galas and fundraisers to school projects and music nights, proudly amplifying the voices that make the Mearns, Aberdeen City, and beyond such vibrant places to live.

Radio by the People, for the People

Mearns FM is powered entirely by volunteers as presenters, producers, and behind the scenes helpers, all giving their time, skills, and enthusiasm to bring you local stories, great music, and essential updates. Every voice you hear represents the heart of our community.

This year, we have expanded our reach through a **new DAB licence**, meaning more listeners can now tune in across the Mearns, Aberdeen, and surrounding areas. Add that to our availability on **Radio Player, Radio Garden, Sky Link, and online streaming**, we are connecting more communities than ever before.

Join the Team – Volunteers Needed!

As we grow, so does our need for passionate people to join our team.

Presenters – We have some weekday, evening, and a few weekend slots open. No experience required – just enthusiasm, reliability, and a love for music and people.

Traffic Monitors – Regularly travel in or around Aberdeen? You can help share real-time updates to keep listeners informed across the region.

Sales Volunteers – Support our sustainability by helping local businesses advertise with us. Mearns FM offers some of the most competitive and community-focused packages in the North East.

Every volunteer makes a real difference – and we make sure their contribution is recognised and celebrated.

A Station with Purpose

Mearns FM isn't just a station – it's a shared vision built on local voices, collaboration, and community pride. Every hour of broadcasting reflects our mission to **connect, inform, and inspire** across the North East.

If you would like to get involved – as a presenter, volunteer, business supporter, or contributor – we would love to hear from you.

- 📄 Visit: www.mearnsfm.org.uk
- 📄 Community engagement: studio@mearnsfm.org.uk
- 📄 Presenters & students: volunteers@mearnsfm.org.uk
- 📄 General enquiries: secretary@mearnsfm.org.uk

Some Christmas Fayres in our neighbourhood!



Apologies if I have missed your Christmas event. These were the ones known to me at time of going to press - Ed.



Portlethen Local Place Plan Survey – Interim Update & Next Steps

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Portlethen Local Place Plan survey! By the time you read this, the interim update, the survey, will be closed. Hopefully you took part and made sure your insights help shape the future of our community.

Why we asked for your feedback

Your feedback will help us identify priorities for:

- Community facilities and amenities
- Green spaces, parks, and play areas
- Transport links, walking routes, and cycling paths
- Housing, development, and design quality
- Local economy, skills, and employment opportunities

We'll use aggregated findings to draft the Local Place Plan, which will be finalised and published by April 2026. Your feedback will directly inform funding bids, planning applications, and community-led initiatives over the next decade.

Interim Findings

With 26 responses received at time of writing, several clear themes have emerged:

- Top priorities: Community facilities, transport and connectivity, youth and education, green spaces, and local economy.
- Progress since 2019: Most respondents feel only “somewhat” or “no” progress has been made on previous priorities, especially youth activities and public transport, and the key themes from the 2019 Community Action Plan are still important to the community.
- Recurring suggestions: Calls for a stronger town centre identity, improved public transport, better parks and green spaces, activities for youth, and support for local businesses.
- Concerns: Litter, road maintenance, and the need for a community hub are frequently mentioned.

Next Steps for Portlethen

- Survey responses will be analysed and key themes identified.
- A public workshop will be held to discuss draft recommendations.
- The Local Place Plan will be finalised and published by April 2026.

Thank you for helping us build a stronger, more connected Portlethen. Stay tuned for updates and opportunities to get involved in the next stages!

Useful Addresses, Phone Numbers, Emails

Bourtree Hall

Bookings
E: thebourtreehall@gmail.com

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
E: Jubileehallportlethen@gmail.com

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

Portlethen Academy
Adult Services - Tel: 01569 690532
Children's Services - Tel: 01467 537111

Swimming Pool and Academy Sports Facilities

Oak Drive
Tel: 01224 472873



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Do you have something the Community should know about?
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