

STRATHERRICK & FOYERS NEWS

April 2023 Issue Number: 42



FLUSH WITH
SUCCESS AFTER
A 12 YEAR WAIT

STRATHERRICK
PUBLIC HALL
RE-OPENS ITS
DOORS



100 TONS OF
TIMBER
DISTRIBUTED
FREE

and... Fond goodbye to a legend

SPRING MAGAZINE SPECIAL

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Stratherrick & Foyers News! In this issue you will find community news, stories and events, as well as updates from the Board on projects and grants awarded. If you have any photographs, recipes, stories or news that you would like to share with the community, please send them through to strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk.

Currently the Trust twice yearly magazine issues are posted to all addresses in Foyers and Stratherrick. For our monthly newsletters, these are available online, with a small number of printed copies available to collect around the district. If you would like to be added to our electronic mailing list please contact Caroline, our Project Co-ordinator at pc@sfctrust.org.uk.

Gareth Jones
Chair, SFCT

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The Stratherrick & Foyers Magazine is published twice a year – online and on paper. Any opinions expressed are not the views of the Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust and any businesses mentioned are not endorsed by the Trust.

CHAIRS BULLETIN

At long last, the warmer weather is breaking through, bringing with it the first stirrings of Spring. Unless you have lived in the Highlands, people have little idea of how long the dreary winter actually feels! Such a relief to see the daffodils finally breaking through. You will see in this month's special edition of the magazine, some remarkable things are happening in the community too. Well done to everyone involved in the new toilets at Foyers which open this month after a very long slog by volunteers – 12 years in all to get the job done.

They now stand as tangible evidence of the need for local communities to take much greater control of the world in which we live. The decision by the local authority to stop funding public toilets has caused environmental problems throughout the Highlands. The answer to the problem was 'solve it ourselves.' When the first flush is pulled, the responsibility for the building won't stop there. They will need cleaning, re-stocking, repairing, insuring, opening,

closing, re-painting, fund-raising and so on. This will be managed by a combination of volunteers and full-time staff from the Community Council and Stratherrick and Foyers Trust.

In another part of the Strath, a second remarkable thing has happened. Many thanks to Alex and Janet Sutherland for their generous donation of 150 tonnes of timber to the community. Dozens of you made the journey to Alex's croft with trailers, cars, wheelbarrows, prams to collect cut logs. Heartening too was the number of people collecting firewood to deliver to other people who will benefit from free firewood.

It is a perfect illustration of how a community can organise to help itself. With millions of tons of timber surrounding our homes (and the windfarms), how difficult would it be to become self-sufficient in fuel?

I bet you don't know what a Polycrub is! Go to page 31 to find out. This is the third remarkable thing happening in the Strath. The Polycrubs will enable a community growing programme to get underway by providing a sheltered area to grow vegetables and flowers. If this

pilot is successful, these storm strength growing spaces will be provided to any community that asks for them.

Again, you wonder, what would it take for this community, surrounding by hills that support vast populations of game, to provide far more of its own food. With an increasing inability by local and central government to provide adequate public services, now is the time for the local community step up. And the foundations are being laid. The fourth remarkable thing to happen is the publication of the Stratherrick and Foyers 'Local Place Plan.' This is your plan, created by you setting out what you want to happen on your doorstep. It is a simple start and the plans will grow as our ambition for the beautiful place where we live grows too.

Over the next few months, the Trust will lead a conversation which has a simple question at its heart – can we as a community become self-sufficient. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who thinks the answer might be yes!

Gareth Jones
Chair, SFCT

LITTER PICK 2023!

Litter just isn't a nice subject, and picking up litter that other folk have chucked out their cars or left in laybys is not as glamorous as attending the Oscar ceremony in Hollywood.

You have to admire those in our community who year after year take part in the litter pick along the lochside and elsewhere, filling black bags with cans and fast-food waste, glass bottles and stuff that just shouldn't be there.

This year 12th March was the date chosen by Sian Glanrid Jones to gather the troops and get the clean-up underway, with the help of Fiona Cairns who organises the Dores teams. Sian and Fiona motivate and organise the whole thing, year after year, and the result is impressive, with more and more ground being covered each year. The litter pick started out covering the Foyers to Dores road and now extends out to Whitebridge, along the top road including Errogie, Gorthleck and Torness and lots of the small lanes that connect all these communities.

Sian said 'This year we had over 50 volunteers and collected over 150 black bags of litter. We even found a washing machine which will be collected by Highland Council in due course.'

Sian added 'It is not just about getting our roads looking their best for the primroses or the visitors, its about maintaining a clean environment in a place we all love and call home. We can stop waste from entering the loch we can reduce the effect of plastic pollution. Removing waste also benefits wildlife and every glass bottle collected means it is less likely a child or animal will be injured. As a dog owner myself, I'd hate to see cut paws and noses caused by broken glass bottles.

Of course, picking litter as part of a group is also fun, and we meet up afterwards at Cameron's Tearoom at Glenliath. A grant through the Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust covers the cost of tea and cake, and Morag's fire is a welcome sight for us all.

If you are interested in joining next year's litter pick, look out for Sian's Facebook posts next February.

The Highland Council weighed the rubbish and over a tonne of litter was collected! Amazing work everyone!





FOYERS TOILETS ARE OPEN!

Some 12 years ago, the poor state of the public toilets at the Falls of Foyers made it into the Community Council's minutes and over the years, many people in the community have put lots of volunteer hours into getting to the stage we are at now, with a modern toilet block open in Foyers. The new building features four toilet cubicles, all with their own door and an accessible toilet with baby changing facilities along with a storage room.

A lot of thought has gone into making the building low carbon and as environmentally friendly as possible with extra

insulation, low water usage taps and toilets, LED automatic lighting and an air source heat pump to run the underfloor heating and hot water. The doors were made locally in Inverness and the kit was built on-site.

The project also has the addition of a caravan/camping waste disposal point. This location will form part of a network of waste disposal points that will help save the environment as it gives a safe place for this waste to be disposed of. The final part of the project is an electric charging point and Highland Council will be fitting that in the car park and we have applied for another grant to fit a bike rack.

Although the project was the baby of the Community Council, this has been a joint project with the Community Trust and both teams have worked collaboratively together to get this project over the line. The building is owned by the Community Trust as due to the structural set up of Community Councils, there is personal liability with the office bearers if any buildings are owned by them, but the Community Council will manage the running of the toilets so the teamwork continues for the benefit of the many visitors and members of the Community that now have these facilities to use.

Huge thank you to all the funders that made this project possible. They are - the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund, Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust, SSE Stronelairst panel, The Energy Saving Trust and The Highland Council. We also received a grant from Visit Inverness Loch Ness for signage and this is currently being worked on.

A special mention and thanks to the builders, Compass Building and Construction Services Ltd who have been fantastic throughout and the finish of the build is superb. Last but not least, thanks to the professional team; architect Scott Donald and Calum Sandison of Kearney Donald Partnership and Quantity Surveyors Jim Workman and Tommy McQuade of Morham and Brotchie Partnership who have not only given us a really well designed building that looks brilliant but also kept the project on budget!!

Sharon Ferguson
Admin, SFCC

'ISN'T IT GREAT WHEN A PLAN COMES TOGETHER?'

When Alex and Janet Sutherland said they had spare timber which could be cut for firewood for the community, I wondered how the Trust might help make this happen.

Little did I think that with the right ingredients we could all end up with one of the most successful community projects I have been involved in.

Success was down to everyone contributing what they could, and over 100 loads of free firewood have now gone out across Stratherrick and Foyers. Logs are stored away and drying slowly for next winter and so many people have worked together to make this happen.

So where did the trees come from? Who all put their shoulder to the wheel and what has been achieved?

For the past 50 years trees have grown slowly on Alex's croft land at Allt na Goire. The trees on the neighbouring Forestry Commission land which was planted after the Second World War were due for harvesting. When Alex Sutherland asked Adam Lewis from

Munro Harvesting in Dingwall if he could fell his trees too as a favour to the community, Adam quickly agreed. Soon the trees were down and piled at the track side by Munros. What a great start!

The next link in the chain was Kyle Wallace. Kyle was a godsend. His business is hiring out his firewood processor which he operates. It transforms tree trunks into logs. His machine is a Farmi 36 which saws the trunks into regular sized logs and then splits the logs, all in one go. Kyle's machine also has a conveyor to clear the logs either to a heap or direct into a waiting trailer. Did I mention that Kyle himself seems to work for hours without getting tired?

REACHING FOR THE STARS

Roxy Elgar (formerly a pupil at Stratherrick School) worked as a patisserie chef for a while after graduating from City College Glasgow, but decided to apply to Glasgow University to read English Literature. She has since been offered a place and starts in September 2023. She is now a very competent climber and mountaineer, regularly climbing 7b+ at the EICA Ratho. This is Roxy on a crag in Dumbarton.

Hugh Elgar-Bond



BABY NEWS FOR RODGER & JENNY

Jenny and Rodger of Hillhead, Inverfarigaig are excited to announce the safe arrival of Luna Grace Mitchell, born on the 11th of January 2023 weighing a healthy 8lb 1oz.

Kyle is just a one-man band and he and his machine needs some back up. When the word went out from Janet that volunteers were needed, they materialised. I can't list them all, for fear of forgetting someone, but it was a great opportunity for the Trust's indefatigable Facilities Officer Matt Rhodes to get to know so many helpful local folk, feeding the machine and helping load the waiting cars and trailers.

As Trust Manager, my small job was to try and avoid the biggest traffic jam that Stratherrick has ever seen by giving people collection times or slots. I'd like to say it worked perfectly, but it didn't. There was a community bonus to this, seeing locals having a good craic together while waiting for their loads.

No car or trailer – no problem! Friends and neighbours were quick to come to Allt na Goire for loads for older folk round about them. In fact, some of the delivery people didn't even take logs for themselves as they were already well provided for.

Finally, the wood is out, the sheds around Foyers and the Strath have been filled for next winter and a local resource has been shared. If there ever was a project where everyone contributed and everyone benefitted, it was this one. A final thank you on behalf of the Trust and the community to Alex and Janet for their very generous contribution to our community.

Tony Foster
Trust Manager, SFCT



IN MEMORIAM

IAN MACASKILL



Friends of the Strath were saddened to learn of the passing of Ian MacAskill, Ardochy/Whitebridge. He passed away peacefully at home on the 20th of December at the grand old age of 93 years, surrounded by his loving family. Ian was one of the Strath's oldest residents. The vast numbers who turned out to pay their respects were testament to how fondly he was regarded. The family were touched by the outpouring of sympathy and were sorry they were unable to meet with everyone on the day, due to the sheer volume of mourners. The eulogy was written and delivered by Margaret Fraser, Ian's sister-in-law, who Ian always referred to as 'Eddie's Margaret'. There have been many requests for copies of the eulogy, so the family have kindly agreed to share it here. The family would like to sincerely thank everyone who sent messages of sympathy in varying ways. These gestures are kindly received and mean such a lot at this difficult time.

Eulogy

Ian's father, originally from Skye, had settled in Crianlarich before moving to Killin, Whitebridge, where Ian was born at Torran Dubh, a small two-roomed cottage with fanks adjacent, his father being employed as a shepherd. Both parents worked hard to support the large family.

When Ian was just two years old the family moved down the glen to Meallagie. Ian attended Knockchoilum school, later known as the Burnt School. The most vivid memory of school days for Ian was when the school went on fire on 13th June 1940. That's quite a story in itself. Sadly, Ian's father died a young man, and Ian had to leave school at the age of 12.

Ian's first job was with Hambro Glendoe, who had grazing at Killin where Ian had to herd the newly clipped hogs. He had started work where he was born. Ian next

worked at Dell with Alan Kennedy. Then, at the age 14, he was asked to go as cattlemen to Knockie for Colonel Grant. One of the daily tasks for Ian was to help Sadie Moles, later Sadie Chisholm, in the dairy. They remained lifelong friends often reminiscing fondly of their days at Knockie "in past the Red Braes".

Leaving Knockie in 1949 Ian worked for Angus Matheson Gorthleck Mains from his home at Meallagie, as his father had done before him. Ian would tell how his father would drive a point of sheep for sale from Meallagie down through the strath, stopping overnight at the Drovers' Stance on Ashie Moor. The next morning they would continue on down the Essich road towards Inverness. Ian spoke very highly of "Golly's man". Angus was a kindly man, sharing the harvest of plums from Gorthleck Mains with the MacAskill family and lending his horse and cart to take in the peats at Meallagie. I am sure Angus, his grandson, has come here today. After Gorthleck Mains changed hands, Ian was offered a job at Ardochy with the Campbell family and moved there in the mid 1950's. Ian was in charge of 2 cows and 600 sheep.

It was in 1949, when he was aged 19, that he met Dulcie. He always said that he had first seen her when she was driving the cows home from Killin, but Dulcie recalls that their first proper meeting was at the Tin Church Hall in Foyers. They were married in 1956 and this December celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary. They lived at Ardochy for 11 very happy years before moving with daughters Ann and Eileen to the present family home.

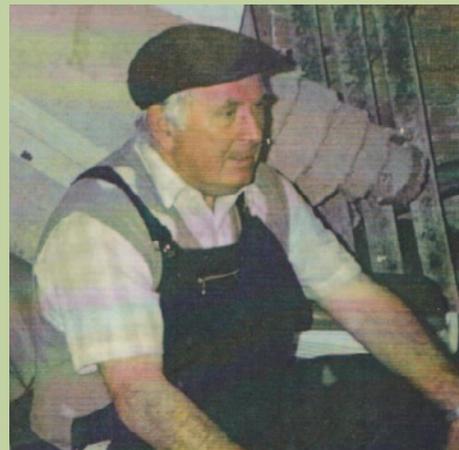


Daughter Dulcie arrived a few years later. The three girls were always very dear to him, and Ian was highly thought of by their partners. The arrival of grandchildren: Laura, Carron, Calum, Phoebe, Katie and Isla brought him great joy. Then great grandson Jack gave him much happiness too, calling him "Old Grampa".

Ian was a wonderfully sociable man who loved a party and enjoyed a wee dram.

Indeed, for his 90th birthday, he had a big say in what he wanted to be organised.

In Whitebridge Hotel he would meet many folks from various walks of life as well as tourists. He was often asked for local information and many were amazed by his clear memory stretching back so vividly over many years. Ian was a big-hearted man, helping as a member in the Braxy Ball Committee. He enjoyed music too, listening to "Take the Floor" regularly with a stash of sweets at his elbow. Ian always wore bib-and-brace dungarees which usually required to be shortened.



On one occasion when he was preparing to go to a sheep shearing competition at Dunmaglass, Dulcie had to shorten the dungarees. However, she cut off far too much and when he tried them on, they looked more like shorts than trousers. This caused a lot of hilarity and some choice words. He wasn't a happy man, but he solved the problem himself, with Copydex! He glued the denim together and the dungarees were saved. He went on to win the sheep shearing competition and brought that trophy home on several occasions.

Unless it was very hot, he always wore a tweed jacket on top of the dungarees. If you can recollect seeing him thus dressed, you will remember the jacket pockets seemed to be sagging and bulgy. His daughters say he was almost like a magpie picking up bits and pieces – string, binder twine, rope, staples, etcetera, anything that he could put to good use. "It might come in handy". Once when putting up the trampoline, one of the springs was missing. It turned up in Ian's pocket.

Ian was not a man to travel far. He did go to Edinburgh to see Calum in hospital, to London (his first flight) for a family wedding, and to visit friends in Ireland. To the marts; Inverness, Fort William, Dingwall, and Stirling were a day out for Ian. It was the A-team together!

The family would particularly like to thank the local volunteers and Boleskine Community Care who provided increased help after a spell in hospital which allowed Ian to stay at home. The family are grateful to both teams, not only for their attentive nursing care, but also for being good company to Ian. One of the tributes received by a family member was that losing Ian from the community was like the loss of the Queen to the nation.

I will now add a few words from myself; When I first knew of Ian he was referred to as "Pickford". Not hard to guess why! He was only too happy to get the float on the lorry for a flitting – not just into or out of the Strath but to various other places like Cairndow, Butterstone, and Pityoulish to name a few. He was very obliging in helping people get installed in their new home with their goods and chattels.

Many here today will know what it is to work in the fank, where tempers can be frayed, arguments break out, and differences of opinion abound! But with Ian, not just out of manners, everything was calm and we would be laughing. He respected your opinion.

Ian was always well-mannered, whether it be at the meal table, loading or unloading hay, straw, tatties, neeps or livestock. He never disagreed be it old yowes, gimmers, or a puckle hoggs, whether at Ardochy, Knockarroch, Brachkashie or Dalachalpain. It was the sheep that were the thrawn ones - instinctively born with obstinacy. Oh yes, it was at Dalachalpain a collie dog nipped into the picnic basket that Dulcie had provided, grabbed and swallowed the whole cake of butter that was for spreading on Dulcie's lovely scones. I don't know if Ian changed the dog's name to "Lurpak" or "Anchor"! It remained "Fly" I think. I don't know what Ian's explanation to Dulcie was when she asked "What happened to the butter Ian?"

When the last sheep bounded free from the fanks and the gate was shut, you felt triumphant. A job well done – no hassle with Ian. Ian you are triumphant now, you have conquered all – well done! You have led a good life. You came round the corner with a whistle and leave us with a smile in our hearts. We are grateful – thank you!

Eileen Martin



MACASKILL – THE LEGEND

Back in 1929 (Nineteen Hundred & Twenty Nine), our story it began,
A baby boy had just been born
In a wee house in the glen
No-one knew then, what he'd become This baby boy named Ian.
Some say they broke the mould that day
With a legend in the making

The years rolled by and soon that boy
Was grown into a man,
His schooldays now behind him, MACASKILL had a plan!
To work the land and be outside was what he'd come to know,
You'd find him outside day or night in sunshine, wind or snow!

The time had come to find a wife,
And the search did not take long
One night when both out dancing
He thought he had found The One!
Dulcie was the lucky lass who caught MacAskill's eye
That was 60 years and more and the story still rolls by.

Memories of days gone by
Their children now are grown
Still thoughts still turn to yesterday
And the times they had all known.
(There was) Tattie picking, lambing....The Fergie Tractor too
A faithful Collie by his side
A crofter through and through!

His other love was Ardochy
A place he still held dear
Many happy days spent there
Filled his heart with cheer
No mobile phones or internet
But the times they were a changing
But MacAskill always stayed the same
No matter the occasion!

How the years have come and gone
Oh where did they all go?
Through all he has achieved in life,
never walked alone

But, Now the Ardochy sun is setting
God saw you needed rest
We know you're in a special place
As God only takes the best.



TASTY TOMMY THE CHRISTMAS TURKEY IS STILL WAITING IN THE WINGS!

So, what does a renowned Head Chef choose for his own Christmas Dinner?

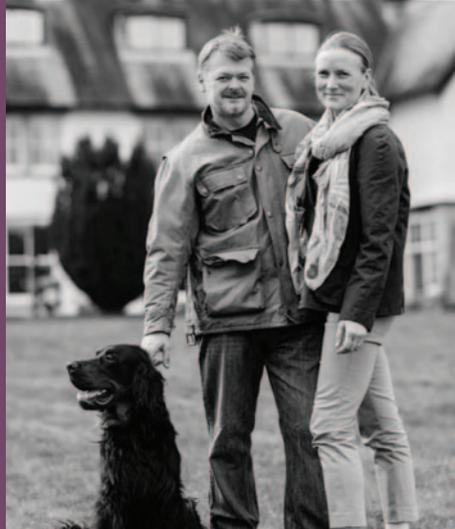
When Sean Kelly, Head Chef and joint owner of the Lovat Hotel in Fort Augustus was wanting a special Christmas meal for his family he ordered a turkey from the Masons at Lyne Mhor Croft in Gorthleck. Like many folk in the Strath, he knew that the bird would be centrepiece of his family's own Christmas celebration.

A busy hotel doesn't run itself, and Sean and Caroline Kelly just never got round to picking up their special bird in time. What with keeping guests fed and warm and offering the hospitality the Lovat is known for, the turkey is still at the Lyne of Gorthleck in late January!

Jane Mason, who runs Lyne Mhor croft with husband Adam said 'I'm sure Sean's special meal will take place soon and he will enjoy his home reared turkey. At Lyne Mhor we make sure we always produce the finest food for all our customers. Our turkeys are so popular we now have over a dozen orders for next Christmas already.'

Jane and Adam are both passionate about farming, crofting, and education. Lyne Mhor croft welcomes visitors and opens its doors every year for Open Farm Sunday. Jane added 'It is so important young people know how their food is produced and see the care and effort which is needed. Our croft shows what can be achieved with a small holding of just 3.5 acres.'

Meantime, if you want to check out the range of products from Lyne Mhor Croft visit their Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/Lynemhorcroft>



Sean and Caroline Kelly took over the ownership and running of the Lovat Hotel at Fort Augustus in 2015. The hotel is heated by woodchip fuel from South Loch Ness.



Jane and Adam Mason of Lyne Mhor Croft are keen participants in the annual Open Farm Sunday event.



Lyne Mhor croft is known as a breeder of rare Oxford Sandy and Black pigs.

Contacts

Jane Mason 01456 486 738

Sean and Caroline Kelly - The Lovat Hotel, Fort Augustus 01496 49000
www.thelovat.com

LYNE MHOR FARM OPEN DAY

We are opening our Croft to visitors again for the yearly Leaf Open Farm Sunday.

SUNDAY 11TH JUNE 2023

10 AM. TO 4.30 PM

LYNE MHOR CROFT, GORTHLECK

We'd love to see you here on our croft then!

<https://www.bigbarn.co.uk/producer/inverness/lyne-mhor-croft-27796/>



FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH
THE WILDSIDE CENTRE WHITEBRIDGE
11AM-12:30PM
#SHOPLOCAL AND SAVE ON FOOD MILES!

LYNE MHOR CROFT



IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE INVOLVED IN LOCAL PRODUCE DAY PLEASE EMAIL: ADMIN@SFCTRUST.ORG.UK





GUIISO DE PESCADO ANDALUZ

(ANDALUCIAN FISH STEW) BY
FLOYD IZZAHERO

This is a dish inspired by a visit to the small Andalusian town of Carmona some years ago, when a charming lady in my company arranged for an intimate supper to celebrate yet another birthday. It represented the local version of a paella, but is of a very different texture from that which you may expect, being of a much more “fluid” consistency. I recommend it as a hearty supper, using readily available local fish, and best eaten with fresh crusty bread and a glass or two of “something” chilled, white and very dry.

Preparation time: approx. 20 minutes
Cooking time : approx. 45 minutes.
Serves: 4

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 small onion (diced)
- 2 Cloves garlic (peeled and sliced)
- 125gm Paella rice
- 100gm Cooking Chorizo (sliced)
- 1 Tbsp Tomato Puree
- 1 tsp Paprika
- 1 small glass white wine (125ml)
- 1 400gm tin chopped tomatoes
- 500ml fish stock
- 1Tbsp lemon juice
- 500gm selection of fish – cod, haddock, prawns, hake – whatever you like, chopped in 2cm pieces
- Sea salt and ground black pepper
- A little chopped parsley

To serve: Crusty bread and lemon wedges

Method:

1. Warm the oil in a large saucepan
2. Gently fry the chopped onion and garlic until soft, but not coloured.
3. Add chorizo and continue to fry until releasing oils and juices
4. Add the tomato puree, stir and fry for about 1 minute
5. Add the Paprika, stir.
6. Add the rice and fry over lower heat to coat for 1 minute, stirring to prevent sticking
7. Add the glass of wine and allow to bubble and reduce slightly.
8. Add the Fish stock and tin of tomatoes
9. Add lemon juice
10. Simmer over low heat to allow rice to almost cook (stirring occasionally), about 20 minutes
11. Add all the fish of choice to gently cook, five minutes should be enough
12. Season with Salt and pepper
13. Scatter over chopped parsley

The dish should look like a cross between a soup and a stew. Serve in dishes with lemon wedges and crusty bread.

LOCH MHOR WEDGES

Low cost and tasty, Loch Mhor wedges are very popular with young and old alike.

Ingredients

- 8 to 10 Medium to large potatoes (even ones that have been around for a while)
- Olive Oil
- Paprika
- Mixed herbs
- Garlic Salt
- Grana Padano (a lower cost alternative to Parmesan cheese) grated.

Method

Cut the unpeeled potatoes into largish wedges and place in a Pyrex bowl. Add some generous shakes of paprika from

a herb rack jar and also add the garlic salt and a few dashes of Mixed Herbs. Pour a generous portion of olive oil from the bottle over as many of the wedges. Move the wedges around the bowl so they are all covered in the oil and paprika. It will take a few minutes to make sure the wedges are all coated.

Put the oven on at 200 degrees

Prepare two flat baking trays, perhaps with a sheet of aluminium foil. Carefully place each wedge on the trays resting its curved bottom. Put the wedges in little lines close to one another. Once they are all on the trays, run along the rows of wedges adding a little more paprika powder.

Place both trays in the oven on the top and bottom shelves. After 10-15 minutes take them out and carefully shake a line of the grated Grana Padano (or Parmesan) cheese along the lines of wedges. Replace both trays in the oven, swapping shelves. The wedges will be ready in another 15 minutes or so.

These wedges make a great and filling accompaniment to many meals.

Why are they called Loch Mhor Wedges?

Well, serve your guests with the wedges from the first tray, and once they have eaten them all they will ask for second helpings. You can then say you have Loch Mhor wedges ready for them to enjoy!



STRATHNAIRN SEAFOODS

MOBILE FISH VAN

David Still of Strathnairn Seafoods operates every Thursday throughout the Stratherrick and Foyers community area. His rough times and locations are as follows:



LOWER FOYERS:	8AM
FOYERS MEDICAL PRACTICE:	8.30AM
FOYERS STORES:	8.45AM
WHITEBRIDGE HOTEL:	9AM
GORTHLECK HALL:	10.30 – 10.45AM
ERROGIE:	11.30 – 12NOON
TORNESS:	12.15PM

Please note that these times are variable dependent on the numbers of customers at each stop. If you would like to suggest a different stopping place, or would the van to come to your house, please contact David via email – David.still@hotmail.co.uk or message him through the Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/people/Strathnairn-Seafoods-Highlands/100083259516488/>

AULT NA GOIRE MUSIC VIDEO ONLINE

Leon Konink from the Netherlands is a visitor and family friend. He has just released a music video featuring a composition inspired by Ault na Goire and Loch Ness. Leon plays acoustic and slide guitar on the track, and also a small table drum. His music takes some inspiration from Mark Knopfler. You can listen to Leon's music at this YouTube weblink <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o419rJYZSQ4>

Margie Elgar-Bond



THE DOG TAKES A WALK AND HITCHES A LIFT ON THE NO 16 MENAGERIE BUS!

I've never felt I was taking the dog for a walk, it is always the dog taking me, somewhat reluctantly. What is very apparent is that there is also an animal conspiracy around here to train humans to not only take them for a walk but to facilitate a Bus Man's Adventure Holiday as well. Nothing is more apparent than going for a walk and then getting the bus to do a "circuit" to town, only to find other dogs have influenced their owners to do just the same. To make matters more interesting, on one bus my dog took me on, there were quite a few dogs sitting quietly enjoying their outing. They didn't bat an eyelid to the fact that a cat boarded the bus, having persuaded her owner to take her for a ride on the bus, even if she did insist on travelling in her rather snazzy cat cage, held dutifully by her compliant "owner". Obviously it was to be expected in the animal world as bus travel is for all! The Menagerie Bus was driven with care by Ray the considerate driver - not too fast on the bumps and corners to upset the animal passengers who happily engaged in social interaction from the comfort of their "seats".

Margie Elgar-Bond



Moony

HUNTING BESIDE THE LOCH – Q&A WITH AUTHOR, ABIGAIL SHIRLEY



In December 2022, Abigail Shirley approached Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust to let us know that she was just about to publish a book set in fictional Balnair Estate, which was inspired by Loch Killin, and to ask if we would be keen to assist with the publicity. Intrigued, our Project Co-ordinator, Caroline, got back in touch with her, and early this year, received an advanced copy to read and review.

She caught up with Abigail shortly afterwards to discuss her inspiration for the book and to discover more about her:

Tell us about yourself, and how you became an author?

Back in 2009 I was living abroad, feeling a bit homesick and slightly anxious in a completely different culture. That was when I began to write my first book. It was an outlet for my emotions and an escape. It took me years to finish it and even then, it sat in a file on my computer unread by anyone expect me and my close family. Then in 2020, when we all were in lock down, I decided to self-publish the book. It was badly edited, and I rushed the whole process, but despite that, I immediately got really positive feedback from friends and others who were reading it. They were all asking me to write more.

That first book, One Fine Lady, turned into an historical fiction series of 3

books all set in 19th century England. Hunting Beside the Loch is my fourth book, and a venture into a new genre and style.

I've remained self-published, but over the past 3 years the publishing process for my books has improved. I now have a great little team of editors and proof-readers that help me. Because I'm self-published and also self-promoting, my books have not yet reached a particularly large audience, but it's not numbers and sales figures that matter to me. The reaction of my small group of readers has been overwhelmingly positive and it's that reaction that has motivated me to keep writing.

I've read Hunting Beside the Loch and really enjoyed it. Why did you choose Loch Killin as the basis for Balnair Estate?

In September 2021 my husband and I took a trip around Scotland with our truck and roof tent. We spent some time with friends in Inverness and they took us out to Loch Killin. As soon as we arrived, my breath was taken away with its beauty and I completely fell in love with the place. Within a few hours I had found inspiration for a story.

Who inspired your characters?

I think it's important that readers can easily identify the individual characters in a book and that they are all distinctly different. When outlining a story I first decide what different personality types are needed, and then build my characters around that. It's hard to specifically pinpoint the inspiration behind individual characters as I never base any single characters on people I know. However, it's probably fair to say that, like most writers, I take from elements of real life and add it to my books. Therefore, there are some aspects of a character's profile that may relate to someone in the real world. For example, in Hunting Beside the Loch, Laura's mother suffers from Early Onset Alzheimer's. I know a family who have been affected by this condition and I felt that including it in the book would add to the story by making Laura's situation more real to the reader and therefore help them to connect with her more as a result.

How did you research the aspects of working on an estate and deer stalking discussed in the book?

Today we have a world of information available online, but nothing can beat

real life experience. I had no experience of deer hunting prior to writing the book but thankfully I have a friend who stalks regularly. He spent a lot of time helping me to understand the technical information and I was able to accompany him on a stalk and handle the rifle and the equipment myself. This all helped. I also read a lot about the ethics of deer management in Scotland and the important role that it plays on estates and within the communities.

Covid-19 is a running theme throughout the story – why was it important to you to incorporate the pandemic?

When the pandemic began I think most of us assumed it would be just a short blip. Few of us foresaw the way it would eventually touch every aspect of our lives in the way it did. I didn't feel that I could write a contemporary book, written during the pandemic years, without including it. The challenges that the lockdowns and the restrictions put on our relationships with others and our own mental health is real and so I felt that it was important that I included it in the book.

You've chosen a slightly different way of writing a murder mystery as we know who the victim is at the beginning of the story. Did you know what happened to him before you started writing?

This was probably the biggest obstacle I faced as I was beginning the project. I don't want to give away any spoilers in my answer to this question, but I shall explain as best I can.

I had decided on who the killer would be and their motive behind the killing when I was first inspired to write the book. What I was struggling to work out was how they would do the deed.

It took a lot of brainstorming with my friend Pete (the hunter) to create a plot that really worked and also allowed for me to plant clues and red herrings accordingly.

This is a different genre for you, do you think there might be more murder mysteries to come?

I have a new admiration for authors who consistently churn out quality murder mysteries. This has been, in some ways, the most difficult book for me to write. So much planning needs to go into the details and then a huge

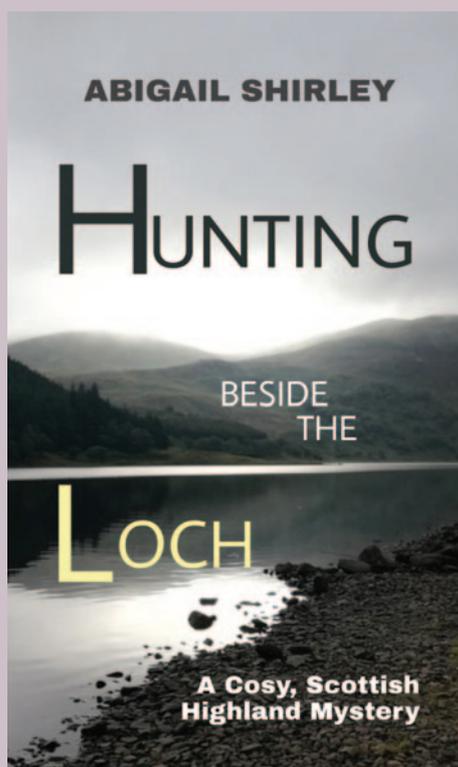
amount of editing is needed afterwards. I enjoyed the process immensely, but it was harder than I had anticipated. At the moment I don't have any fresh ideas for another mystery but, 'never say never'. A new plot might come to me tomorrow and then I'll be off again!

Will Balnair, or its neighbouring communities, be a location you will use again?

I think there is a huge potential for more books based at 'Balnair'. It's a part of the country that people love to read about and I hope that readers will connect to the characters I've created.

A member of the proofreading team has already told me they want to read more about this group of people, and I can see how the 6 main characters could be easily featured in other books. Although I haven't started writing anything new yet, I can definitely envisage a small series based around Balnair. Watch this space!

You can find out more about Abigail and buy her books, including 'Hunting Beside the Loch' here – https://www.amazon.co.uk/Abigail-Shirley/e/B089M9NSWP/ref=dp_byline_cont_ebooks_1



OUR COMMUNITY OUR FUTURE

THE DRAFT LOCAL PLACE PLAN!

The **draft Plan** is now available for comment, based on the Community Action Plan priorities and what over 120 people said at events in November.

It shows how each of our villages, and the area as a whole, could change over the next few years.



Scan here!

www.communityfuture.net/local-place-plan

Take a look and give us your reactions by 17th April 2023

Hard copies can be seen in Foyers Stores, Camerons Tearoom, The Hub and the Wildside Centre.

Your responses will shape the **final Plan in April**.

This is the community's plan for the community's future. Help get it right!

WILDSIDE BABY & TODDLER GROUP

The Wildside baby and toddler group has successfully secured funding from SFCT to kick start 2023. We have booked a messy-ness session for the 1st of July for all the families, and we have bought a small bouncy castle with an exciting ball pit to add to our collection of toys. We are planning a Coronation and Halloween Party and are currently looking at some outdoor toys for sunny days! We are hoping to fundraise at community events throughout the new year as they have proved successful in 2022 and helped us fund additional events. We meet every Thursday morning at the Wildside Centre from 09:30 – 11:30.

If you would like to join our Facebook Group you can find it here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/229485654727152>

We have also started a fitness session within this timeframe for those that want to a bit of gentle exercise to kickstart the day. It is a very informal group with lots of chats and laughs for the kids and the adults and we would love to welcome any parents, carers, grandparents to pop along.

Jenny Tompkins



HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT OF HOW YOU COULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Even if you already have a job, becoming a carer and joining a local care team is a great way of giving to our community. An hour or two on an evening or at the weekend, you choose.

You could make such a difference to someone and help them to remain at home.

Sunflower Home Care offers quality training, an hourly rate that reflects the valued work of a carer and excellent terms and conditions.

It's simple, email: chair@boleskinecc.com or phone the BCC hub on 01456 486274 and leave a message, or drop in for a coffee and a chat.

We will put you in touch with the Sunflower 'care coordinator' and you can take that first step to making that difference!

MARCH							APRIL						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa	Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
26	27	28	29	30	31		30						

	Moovin About	1pm		Art Therapy Group	2pm
	Cinema	2pm		NHS Baby Clinic	
	Music for Health	2pm		Footcare (by appointment)	
	Coffee Morning	10.30am		Hairdressing for all*	2-4pm
	Board Games/Cards	2pm		<small>* (by appointment 07900 323 0333)</small>	
	Broth 'n Blether	12-2pm		Youth Meeting Place	7-9pm
	IT help (by appointment)			Bin Days	

Boleskine Community Care, The Hub, Unit 2, Lower Foyers Industrial Estate, Foyers, Inverness IV2 6YB

13 STRATHERRICK PUBLIC HALL HAPPENINGS

By the time you read this all the internal repair work at Stratherrick Hall will have been completed - new plaster-board to the kitchen ceiling, the Ladies and Disabled toilets, both committee rooms and part of the store. Prior to the plaster-board work additional roof insulation was fitted to various areas, and new improved and energy-efficient lighting has been fitted in the Ladies and Gents toilets, the kitchen, and the front committee room. Taping & painting was then carried out throughout all the areas that had suffered from water damage or staining, and the kitchen is now also furnished with a new Stainless Steel Table to meet the latest hygiene standards required. This means that the Hall is now "Open for Business" and is once again fully available for Community use.

For any groups or individuals wishing to use the Hall please contact Jo Cameron, the Bookings Secretary, on 01456 486293

The Committee are delighted with the quality of work that has been carried out throughout the building, and would like to thank all the tradesmen involved for their professional workmanship. Our thanks also go to Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust for funding this repair work, and for their continued ongoing support to this important Community Asset.

Looking to the future the Hall Management Committee are now drawing up a list of further improvements, mostly to the building exterior and the surrounding policies, and will be liaising with the Trust to ensure that Stratherrick Public Hall will continue to provide a welcoming venue for many Community gatherings and events for the foreseeable future.

Hugh A Nicol,
Chair - Stratherrick Public Hall Management Committee



INDOOR CARPET BOWLS

Every Tuesday afternoon
2-5 pm

The Wildside Centre

A fun, social afternoon of bowling, tea, biscuits
and a blether.
It's certainly a laugh!

For more information contact:
Alison on 01456 486 586
Janet on 01456 486 688

INDOOR SHORT MAT BOWLING

This picture shows some of the folk who regularly attend the Indoor Short Mat Bowling sessions at the Wildside centre at Whitebridge.

We have an average of twelve people who come along. Why don't you join us and try your hand at indoor bowling, or just pop in for a chat and a cuppa. You will be very welcome.

The session is on Tuesday afternoons from 2pm until 5pm.
For more information ring Alison on 486 586 or Janet on 486 688.



FRIENDS OF THE INVERNESS ROYAL ACADEMY (FIRA)

Friends of the Inverness Royal Academy (FIRA) is the local youth group in Stratherrick and Foyers and we run a youth club and activities that are open to any young person from P7 to S6 that attends any High School, not just those that attend the Royal Academy. If you have a child in education of that age and you are not receiving our emails please email - contact.fira@aol.com

We are now running the youth club at The Wildside Centre, Whitebridge once a month and the dates coming up are Thursday 23rd March, Thursday 20th April and Thursday 18th May. 7pm - 8.30pm. All welcome!

We have not managed to get another date for skiing yet but hope to do so soon.

If you have any ideas for the youth club or activities for FIRA to do, or if any parents want to volunteer to help, please get in touch.

FIRA team

LOCH NESS LUVVIES

Loch Ness Luvvies were formed in 2012 by two ladies in Foyers. Until the recent pandemic, The Luvvies staged a yearly full-length play alongside many community events such as Burns Suppers, several cabaret evenings and a celebration for the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee. At the moment, The Luvvies are a compact bijou group; but what we lack in numbers we more than make up in enthusiasm.

Although a small ensemble we have managed to win two trophies at the Scottish Community Drama One Act Festival (Moray Firth area). The more recent was for our performance of "Just the two of us" last month in Nairn. Our win was the inaugural Claire Cameron trophy for stage presentation. We hope to compete again next year.

We are centrally based in Stratherrick Public Hall. We would welcome anyone who wishes to join us. Just contact Jo Cameron (Chairperson) at 01456 486293 or jocameron47@outlook.com.

Jo Cameron



FANCY SOME SOUP?

Come and join us for lunch between 12 and 1:30pm every Monday at the Wildside Centre.

Soup to Go is all about bringing our community together. Each week our friendly volunteer staff provide a choice of two hearty soups, freshly baked bread, homemade cakes, tea and coffee all the for cost of £3.00.

Don't have time to stop for lunch? We offer a collection service, so you can pop in, say a quick hello, and grab your order to go. If you are not able to get to the Wildside Centre due to exceptional circumstances, then our lovely volunteers will deliver your lunch to you.

Ordering your lunch in advance is essential to allow us to provide enough for everyone. Menus, containing all the details of how to order, are posted in advance around the Strath, and on the Soup to Go - Stratherrick Facebook page. All dietary requirements can be catered for, just let us know in advance.

But, our community lunches are about more than just food. Every week we have local musicians who play for us; we have a small lending library of donated books; we have bingo, games or quizzes too. The main thing is coming together, getting to know each other better and sharing good times.

Fancy volunteering? Everyone is welcome to be a part of Soup to Go. We have many ways you could be involved – from donating ingredients; putting out tables and chairs; delivery driving; looking after our lending library; to writing us a quiz! If you have any ideas about something you could contribute, then we would love to hear from you.

For more information or to place an order, please contact

Pam Simpson on 01456 486 364
or
Lyn Woods on 01456 486 786

Please call before 6pm on Sunday.



Following on from our Ukraine Appeal in Spring 2022, where we successfully collected £700 in donations, Soup to Go decided to sell beautiful items that were made and donated for our charity appeal by our local Wild Crafts crafters.

From mid October through to mid December, we sold various craft items on our Christmas Gifts table at our weekly lunch service. At the Winter Wonderland as well as providing a variety of cakes for refreshments, we also had a stall selling the donated crafts.

We invited all our regular Monday diners to put the name of their preferred local charities into a pot and the winning charity, Multiple Sclerosis, was drawn by Matthew Rhodes, the new Facility Manager for the Wildside Centre.

On Monday 23rd January Leigh-Ann Little, the CEO, and Jenni Donnelly, the Operational Manager from The Oxygen Works in Inverness, came to the Wildside Centre to meet our regular diners and to tell us of their work supporting neurological conditions including Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinsons.

We were delighted to host them at our version of a Burns lunch, which was complete with a surprise visit from Ernie the Haggis who performed a very amusing Ode from the Haggis!

After lunch we presented Leigh-Ann and Jenni with a cheque for £715 and further

donation of £20 was given to them by one of the diners.

We hope that these donations will help The Oxygen Works Ltd continue with their invaluable work in support of Multiple Sclerosis

The Soup to Go team and the Wild Crafts crafters would like to express our utmost thanks to all of you who purchased crafts and donated towards this very worthy cause.



Left to right: Pam Simpson, Leigh-Ann Little, Jenni Donnelly, Lyn Woods



Ernie the Haggis



Winter Wonderland Market



Soup to Go/ Wild Crafts Market at Winter Wonderland

DORES AND BOLESKINE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



SC 013579

Interim Moderator - Rev Scott McRoberts
Session Clerk – Mr I King

Services of worship at Boleskine Church, Drumtemple are at 10.30 every Sunday morning

Now the first flowers are out, the signs of spring are on their way.

Though the start of the winter snow meant that the planned Community Carols at Gorthleck Hall had to be cancelled, we hope next Christmas we will be able to get together and sing carols. There were quite a few Sundays where we had to cancel our services at



Boleskine Church due to weather but it was great to be able to have a Church service on Christmas Day, in a lull between the snow falls.

As we look at the new life coming with spring, we look forward to celebrating Easter. There is always a very warm



welcome to anybody who would like to join us, every Sunday at 10.30 at Boleskine Church, including that special Easter date of 9th April, with coffee, biscuits and a chat after worship.

Fiona King and Olaf Olsen



STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL AND NURSERY PARENT COUNCIL

The parent council has been very busy over the last few months. Firstly, we have been very busy fundraising, starting with the Loch Ness 5K followed by the Wildside Christmas Fair, which was a very good event run by the community. Also, the children from Stratherrick and Foyers schools sang some Christmas carols which were outstanding. It was also good to see that the wider community and Santa turned out to support the children. The money raised by the committee exceeded our expectations - big thanks to all the fundraisers and everyone who made a donation.

Whilst the committee have been fundraising, we have also been organising events for the children. One of these events was the pantomime at Eden Court, all the children loved Peter Pan and two of the children were selected to go onto the stage with the cast. Without funding from Stratherrick & Foyers Community Council micro-grant and fundraising by the Parent Council this annual event would be costly to the parents as the ice cream can be very expensive at Eden court.

The nursery did not go the panto as they had an invite to see Santa at Simpsons winter wonderland. All the nursery children were very excited to see Santa again after seeing him at the Wildside. Messy Ness also attended the nursery. They all loved learning and getting messy with this local company.

It's great to see the starting of the works for the new safe routes to school in Gorthleck, which has been 4 years in the making. A big shout out to Cllr Fraser (local councillor), R Bartlett (Highland Council), Mr Graham (Headteacher) and the committee old/new on bringing this project to a crescendo. However, this is only the start of the project and as a committee we will be overseeing this project with keen interest as the safety of all children are our main priority.

We are looking forward with a spring in our step as we have had our grant application approved by the Trust which will support us to the end of the school year. We are planning some major events for the children of Stratherrick school and nursery that will focus on developing their social and mental wellbeing.

Paul Bain,
Chair, Stratherrick Parent Council



STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL UPDATE

In December we were busy at the Winter Wonderland singing with Foyers Primary pupils and also selling crafts at the stall. This was such a great event we can't wait to be back for this year's event.

Also, in December we had our very own school Nativity - everyone had fun learning lines, making the sets,

dressing up and performing (even the staff had starring roles). One of the highlights was our nursery dressed as sheep! They were so 'Baa'rilliant!

After the hectic, fun and rewarding end to last term January and February can sometimes be quieter! This has not been the case!

We started our annual swimming lessons at the Aquadome in Inverness. All of our Primary aged pupils go to these lessons as we feel it is a really important skill to develop where we live. And the sessions at the pool are adaptive to the needs of the children's skill level which makes it fun and

rewarding. These last until Easter so it gives them a great opportunity to improve their confidence and swimming ability. This wouldn't be possible without the Parent Council's help in funding the transport each week. So thank you to them and also for the grant that they were awarded from the Trust which helps with this.

The parent council also helped book Messy Ness with the money awarded. This was a great opportunity for the nursery children to get in a mess learning, investigating and having lots of fun.

We are loving our traditional Scottish music sessions with Feis - these are really interactive and fun. It is a great opportunity for the pupils to have a music specialist into school to deliver lessons and they are all enjoying it so much. Pupils are learning traditional Scottish songs and playing instruments. It is so important that traditional music is celebrated and kept alive in this way.

Unfortunately, we had to close a few times in January due to the snowy weather! It still wasn't as bad as the winter of 2011 when the snow really didn't disappear from November to Easter! It has been really chilly though! So thankfully the nursery has kept warm by making us yummy Hot Chocolate!

Thanks for your time!

All at Stratherrick Primary and Nursery





NEW MEMBERSHIP GROUP FOR 2023

A big thank you to everyone who supported us in 2022.

We are adding a new layer to The Neil Mackenzie Trust, this year. Some of you will already know our plans. We are forming a “membership” group, and we hope to start with as diverse a group as possible, including both supporters and recipients. We want to bring people together – in person or online – to have fun, bring ideas, and ultimately help to move the benefits of Trust forward. We are particularly looking for local people with an interest and knowledge of all things outdoors!

We hope to have our first summer event, this summer, which will likely be

a get together at Brin, in Strathnairn, where The Neil Mackenzie Trust is based. This might include, for example a meal, BBQ or picnic, a multi-generational walk, a short presentation from recent recipients, and time to discuss anything outdoors – not just the Trust! We also expect to have a bi-annual newsletter which will include trip reports and more details of how we operate. We think that this is a good way to increase interaction with the Trust. Please drop us an email if you are interested.

theneilmackenzietrust@dr.com If you would like to join please rest assured that at this stage nothing will require a large commitment in time or money, but just an interest in what the Trust is all about. More details about the Trust can be found at www.theneilmackenzietrust.com All we will be asking, if you join us, is a small donation - anything from £1 upwards - and a contribution of food towards the get together if you come.

For the Record:

Since The Neil Mackenzie Trust was set up just over seven years ago, we have raised nearly £40,000, with the help of

friends, family and supporters. As well as being able to build some reserves, we have assisted 50 expeditions and outdoor skills training courses with grants ranging from £75 to £3,000. Destinations for expeditions have included North America, Greenland, Iceland, Europe and Africa, as well as here in Scotland. Training courses have included Winter and Summer Mountain Leader, Mountain Biking, Rock Climbing and RYA Day Skipper courses. Visit the website to see reports from recipients and how they have benefited from our assistance.



SOUTH LOCH NESS HERITAGE GROUP

The South Loch Ness Heritage Group will be holding an event in Stratherrick Hall on Thursday 30th March. It will be the Alister Chisholm 1923-91 Tapes, last played locally in 2005. Recordings of the late Alister's memories of Stratherrick throughout the 20th century and before, with many contemporary photographs. The event will be run at two separate times, an afternoon one at 1:30pm and an evening one at 7:30pm.

Cheryl Heggie School of Dance
Sgoil Dannsaidh

LOCAL
Wildside Centre

WHO
Beginners 3yrs+
All Welcome!

WHEN
Tuesdays 4-5pm

Highland Dancing Classes

Class Vision
To develop rhythm, dance, coordination and confidence

Funded and Supported by
SFCT
Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust

Class Info
£3 child
£5 family
Per class
(Block of 10 from 18th April)

BOOK HERE!
www.bookwhen.com/cherylhaggie

FOYERS PRIMARY SCHOOL

At Foyers Primary we have been celebrating Chinese New Year by learning about our Zodiac animals and the celebrations that take place. We had a Chinese inspired lunch where we even used chopsticks. Along with Adourie we celebrated Burn's day by sharing poetry and songs. We had a traditional lunch together.

We have been learning about shape in numeracy and had fun creating pull up 3D objects. Our topic this term is Seas and Oceans and we are creating diaramas, looking at the layers of the oceans and conducting experiments expolring the different properties of the nature of water. We are planning an outdoor learning day at the beach before the end of term.

We are looking forward to next term, when our topic will have a focus on the local area. We would love to hear from anyone who feels they could share their knowledge and experience of our local area, past, present or future. Please get in touch with us at the school (01456 486612) if you feel you can help.



FARR PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

Red Room

The Red Room had a super visit to The Newton Room on the UHI campus. Our project this term is about how technology has changed our lives. We have discovered that we are in a Robot Revolution a bit like the Industrial Revolution long ago.

On this trip we began by thinking a robot was something we played with. However, by the end of our trip we thought robots could be programmed to do jobs we, as humans, find dangerous or unsafe. We discovered that sequencing of programmes help robots drive buses right here in Inverness, from the UHI to Tesco. We discovered that robots like Curiosity travel to Mars to find out information to help our planet.

Robots are in use by local Highland businesses and help in mountain rescues. We also learnt that a forestry company uses robots to cut timber to exact textures and sizes, and lastly we saw how robots work with dangerous chemicals.

We made our own robots and programmed them to follow a sequence - Wow we enjoyed our visit so much!!

Blue Room

This term we are studying WWII: The Homefront. We have enjoyed learning about the reasons for war and evacuation. To accompany our topic, we are also reading 'Goodnight Mr Tom' and we are thoroughly enjoying exploring the characters and their relationships. In March we will be visiting Cultybraggan Camp, near Comrie to learn more about PoWs. We have also had an opportunity to handle WWII artefacts and look forward to collecting a WWII resource box from Inverness Museum at the end of the month.

Yellow Room

The Yellow Room have enjoyed their new topic, Ancient Egypt. They have learnt all about the pyramids, Egyptian houses and the River Nile. They have enjoyed learning fractions in maths, finding fractions of numbers as well as shapes. They discovered that we talk about fractions a lot in real life. The Yellow Room thoroughly enjoyed going on a class trip to MFR where they were able to see how a radio station works and have a go at recording things themselves.

Kirsty Guthrie
Head Teacher



Some Stratherrick pupils now travel to Farr Primary for lessons.



WILD CRAFTS

The monthly Wild Craft Workshops are as popular as ever. Last year we had workshops on crocheting storage baskets, making gift boxes and packages, rug making, air dry clay pots, paint pouring and free-style drawing, soap making, card making, making Christmas Crackers and Christmas decorations.

Wild Craft Workshops take place on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge, from 10:30am until 3:30 pm in winter or 4:30pm in summer.

Workshops are open to everyone over the age of 5 years however children under 12 years must be accompanied by an adult.

You can come along at a time that suits you and stay as long as you wish.

If you come for the full workshop, remember to bring a packed lunch.

There is no charge for the workshop, but you will be asked to bring some materials you need relevant to the workshop, e.g., fabric, glue, paper.

Some materials will be available on the day but as these come from my own personal stock there will a cost price charge for any materials used. We also have a donation jar for tea/coffee and biscuits.

So far this year's workshops have been Soap Making & Soap Carving...

...and Bowl Making & Simple Decoupage using recycled wool and fabric, jars, coffee cups and glasses.

Why not pop along and try your hand at something different?

We have an exciting programme of workshops again this year!

Lyn Woods



Soap making and soap carving



Decoupage using recycled wool and fabric, jars, coffee cups and glasses

WILD CRAFT WORKSHOP PROGRAMME 2023

DATE	WORKSHOP	EQUIPMENT NEEDED
18th March	Make a Cushion	Old Shirt, Cushion Pad, Coloured Treads, Embellishments? Sewing Machine, Scissors, Tape Measure
8th April	Flower Arranging & Needle Felting - Bunny	Vase/Container, Green Oasis, Small Piece Chicken Wire, Flowers & Felting Needles, Wool Roving's,
13th May	Garden Sculpture	Old Chicken Wire, Old Paper, Bubble Wrap Tin Foil, Cement, Old Board (to carry item home)
10th June	Willow Garden Obelisk /	Willow Whips, String, Secateurs
8th July	Macramé	Macramé Yarn, Wooden Dowels, Wooden Rings, Beads?
12th August	Air Dry Clay	Air Dry Clay, Mould, Cutters
9th September	Candle Making	Candle Wax, Candle Dyes, Wickes, Fragrances, Clothes Pegs
7th October	Puppet Making	Balloons, Old Newspapers, PVA Glue,
11th November	Christmas Decorations & Gifts	To be advised
9th December	Christmas Decorations & Gifts	To be advised

SPIN & CHATTER

The Spin & Chatter group has been going for several years now. We are a friendly group of like-minded folk who enjoy spinning and it's lovely hearing the whirr of the different wheels, the chatter and laughter.

If you are an experienced spinner, a beginner, or if you would like to learn how to spin yarn, why not come along to one of our Spin & Chatter meetings.

We have also been joined by several knitters and crocheters and their presence complements the yarn production. If you would like to learn how to knit or crochet, why not pop along.

Spin & Chatter meets fortnightly on Tuesday evenings. We meet at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge from 6:30pm till 10pm. Come when you can and stay for as long as you want.

If you would like more information about Spin & Chatter ring Lyn Woods on 01456 486786.



SPIN & CHATTER MEETING DATES

MARCH	14th	28th	
APRIL	11th	25th	
MAY	9th	23rd	
JUNE	6th	20th	
JULY	4th	18th	
AUGUST	1st	15th	29th
SEPTEMBER	12th	26th	
OCTOBER	10th	24th	
NOVEMBER	7th	21st	
DECEMBER	5th	19th	

NEEDLES & PINS

2022 was another successful year for Needles & Pins.

Several new members joined the sewing group. Sewing skills improved and confidence grew, which was evidenced by the many various sewing projects undertaken and successfully completed. Group members were also busy making items for the Wild Crafts craft table at the Winter Wonderland.

So, what have we been doing this year?

We have been recycling some old curtains to make Slouch shopping bags. Members have been making blouses, table runners and coin purses. Knitters and crocheters have been making socks, baby blankets, and working on a group community project, we will tell you more about this in the coming months.

Needles & Pins is a relaxed, friendly group who enjoy making things, sharing their knowledge, the chatter and the laughter.

If you can sew or would like to learn how to sew, or you knit or crochet or would like to learn how to knit/crochet, why not come along one Tuesday evening. We meet fortnightly at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge from 6:30pm till 10pm. Come when you can for as long as you want.

Lyn Woods

NEEDLES & PINS MEETING DATES

APRIL	4th	18th	
MAY	2nd	16th	30th
JUNE	13th	27th	
JULY	11th	25th	
AUGUST	8th	22nd	
SEPTEMBER	5th	19th	
OCTOBER	3rd	17th	31st
NOVEMBER	14th	28th	
DECEMBER	12th		



No, not a police line up! Several of us line up at the end of each meeting to look for any dropped needles or pins.



Pam's lovely top



Angela and Mags with their Slouch shopping bags and Sue with her table runner.

RECYCLE JINTY'S JAM JARS

As you know, the cost of everything is rising so fast these days and that includes the cost of glass.

Soup to Go currently recycle paper and card, soft plastics, pill blister packs and we thought we could help Jinty's Jams by recycling glass jam jars for her.

Jinty can reuse small clean, jars and lids that have no commercial branding on them. She would then thoroughly clean and sterilise them ready for use. Please note, coffee or large jars are NOT required.

Soup to Go have a labelled box for your clean jars behind the counter in the entrance hall of the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge. You can drop your jars of on Mondays between 10:30am and 2pm when Soup to Go is there, or on Warm Wednesdays when Wildside is open to the community from 9:30am to 5:30pm.

ARE YOU RUNNING A CLASS OR ACTIVITY?

We are updating our 'What's On' Calendar for Spring and Summer 2023! Do you have a class running in the community? An event? Something people might want to get involved in?

Then please email your information to communications@sfctrust.org.uk and we will get you included. For information on 'What's on in February' head to <https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/whats-on/>

Jillian Barclay,
Communication & Events

STRATHERRICK CLAY TARGET CLUB

Stratherrick Gun Club was founded in the 1890's and was originally called Stratherrick Glass Ball Club. It has been located at various sites over the years but settled at Lyne of Gorthleck in 1922 where it stayed for 52 years, then moved to Druim Temple in 1974 and finally in 1983 at Abersky, Torness where it is now.

In 2008 the club erected a second-hand cabin and toilet block. A genny was purchased to supply power to the cabin and 3 electric traps with an acoustic release system. These purchases have done us proud until recent years.

In 2019 we applied for a grant from SSE to help purchase new traps and a new acoustic release system. This funding was given but then Covid hit, and the pandemic shut down most sports. After sitting dormant for the next two years, we got up and running again in 2022 but had a lot of maintenance to do to get the place ready before any shoot could take place. We held a charity shoot in April which went well but wasn't short of its problems. The traps let us down and new ones we had ordered were delayed so we just had to make do with what we had.

The old generator caused us unexpected problems and the scramble was on to borrow a couple to keep the shoot going. It was then apparent that we needed a new generator or something better – connection to the national grid. We had been informed of grants available from



Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust, so we decided to apply to enable us to connect to the grid and therefore not have to rely on an old genny! The process was simple, and help given from the team where required. We received the funds in June and the payment to SSEN was made the next day. In early September we finally got the power in, and an electric supplier was chosen then full connection was made. Such a huge day for the club – no more running around filling generators with fuel, switches tripping when the microwave was put on and traps failing to fire as the kettle was boiled.

We held a Christmas shoot on 27th December which 20 entered the competition and they all won a prize. Lots of others were on hand to help with administration, teas and even some tuition with a 'have a go' trap which was set up. It was a great day, despite the snow, made all that much easier with our new electricity supply. The clubhouse was warm and inviting, a joy to be in.

We are now in the process of building the club back up and introducing new members with the help of a Facebook page. Hopefully we will have the club up



and running this year without any problems and new members can shoot alongside our old faithful's, the international shooters and those new to shooting. Our new DTL traps and a Rabbit Trap will keep us entertained – without the breakdowns!

With the funds received from Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust, our club, believed to be one of the oldest in Scotland, shall continue to supply a safe and happy environment for all clay pigeon enthusiasts as well as somewhere for the young ones to learn and hopefully progress in the sport. We are grateful for the funds from the Trust as without them, the Club may have struggled to stay active.

For more information you can request to join our Facebook group here - www.facebook.com/groups/3159518770926316/?ref=share_group_link

Or email the Club Secretary, Lesley Matheson, at stratherrickclaytargetclub@outlook.com

Lesley Matheson,
Secretary



BOLESKINE SHINTY REPORT

Boleskine Camanachd are looking forward to the new season which starts with an away trip to Aberdeen on Saturday 4th March. It is always exciting to get back on the road after the close season and get onto grass pitches. Training has been on-gong through the winter at the Astro pitches at Inverness Royal Academy but the players are now itching to get going and start the season with a flourish.

This year we have a new strip sponsor – Gavin MacDonald Flooring <https://www.macdonaldflooring.com> and we are grateful for his willingness to sponsor the team for the foreseeable future. The club would like to take this opportunity to thank William Fraser Haulage who has been our main sponsor for the last 9 seasons and for his continued support.

It is important for the club to attract new sponsors as costs of equipment, referees, travel and changing facilities all continue to rise. We are fortunate to have the on-going support of several sponsors (M&M motors, Inverness Tyres, Robertson Crop, Jamie Hunter, Tomatin Distillery, Peter Gow, William Fraser Haulage) as well as donations to club funds from supporters and well-wishers. This season we also welcome Compass Building & Contract Services Ltd on a 3-year sponsorship deal. All sponsors and donations are much appreciated by the club.

If you would like to contribute in anyway to Boleskine Camanachd club – whether as a sponsor, donor, volunteer or player – please get in touch. catrionafrazer@tinyworld.co.uk

Below is a list of our home fixtures this season to which you are all welcome. Up-dates on club news, League and Cup results can be found on our Facebook page - Boleskine Camanachd Club.

Catriona Fraser

BOLESKINE HOME FIXTURES 2023 SEASON

Throw up at 2:30pm unless stated

11th March	Boleskine v Strathspey
25th March	Boleskine v Kilmallie
1st April	Boleskine v Aberdeen Uni. (Sutherland Cup)
8th April	Boleskine v Lochaber
20th May	Boleskine v Strathglass
10th June	Boleskine v Aberdeen Uni
17th June	Boleskine v Inverness
24th June	Boleskine v Lochcarron (2pm)
5th August	Boleskine v Caberfeidh (2pm)
12th August	Boleskine v Lewis (1:30pm)



ETAPE

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUTHERLANDS AT CALEDONIAN CONCEPTS

– the organisers of the Etape Loch Ness cycle event on Sunday 23 April 2023

The Etape Loch Ness is the closed road cycle sportive following the 66-mile route around Loch Ness starting and finishing in Inverness. We would like to thank all the local communities, residents and businesses along the route for their support and patience. The event has raised over £1.6million since 2014 for MacMillan Cancer Support. Many other charities have also benefitted.

Temporary Traffic Restrictions

We have kept traffic restrictions to a minimum to ensure the safety of participants and other road users. Roads will be closed in both directions to create a safe traffic-free environment for the event. You can download a summary of these below to see which roads will be affected.

<https://www.etapelochness.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/ETAPE-2023-community-A5-flyer.pdf>

If you or someone you know has an essential journey to make, please let us know by email info@etapelochness.com and we will work with you to find a solution wherever possible.

Would you like to volunteer?

The event could not happen without the support and commitment of our amazing volunteers. If you would like to join our team, experience the event and raise money for a local charity of your choice, or your community group, then please get in touch with us now. <https://www.etapelochness.com>

We hope you will be able to enjoy the spectacle and atmosphere on event day. If you live in the Whitebridge, Foyers or Inverfarigaig areas why not get out and give the riders a cheer as they go past, it really does make a difference! For more information click here. <https://www.etapelochness.com/event-info/spectator-info/>

Malcolm and Caroline Sutherland
Caledonian Concepts.



T ARNOTT MOFFAT MEMORIAL RUN

Over sixty sociable motorcyclists are due to converge on Foyers again this summer. The seventh annual T. Arnett Moffat Memorial Road Run is set for Sunday 16th July 2023. Road bikes, trail



and trials bikes and even motorbikes with sidecars will set off from Dochgarroch and stop for lunch at Cameron's Tearoom. The rally commemorates T Arnett Moffat a renowned Scottish trials rider from the 1950's and 1960's. A video with historic still photographs and scenes from the 2017 road run is at this link. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZOesWpjSCo

If you want to take part or chat to those having their lunch at Camerons, visit their facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/events/1136663767032316>

Steven Watson,
Community Liaison Officer, SFCT



FIT FULL SUMMER TO BE PLANNED

Spring 2023 update from SOSA2019
Now, just in case some of you aren't aware, SOSA2019 is a local community organisation, formed three and half years ago, with the objective of offering opportunities to local folk to get out and about, try a little healthy activity and to meet and socialise with other locals, when they might not otherwise have a chance to do so.

The way we do this is to encourage and support our members to try out an outdoor activity, that they may never have tried before – and very importantly, the level of expertise is absolutely irrelevant. We have found that it's great fun to try something new, in the company of others who are all in the same boat. Activities we have organised or funded include skiing, climbing, sea-kayaking, archery, outdoor navigation,

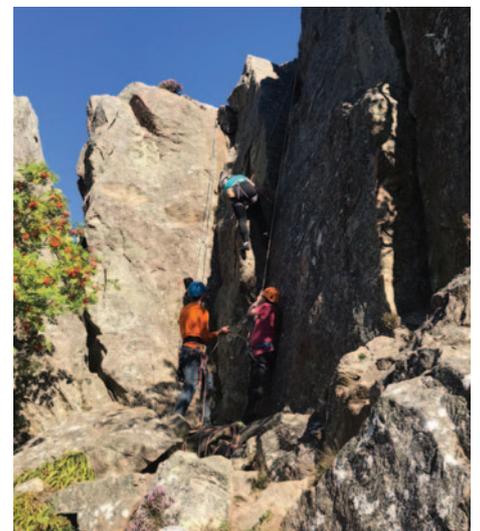
canoeing, as well as an outdoor First Aid course – in case of mishaps!! Our activities are organised in two ways. Firstly, should a sufficient number of members all wish to try something together (and some activities are rather expensive!), we use grant funding to subsidise the overall cost so that members pay a reduced price, making things more accessible. The second way is if qualifying members wish to book activities themselves, we are able to offer a subsidy to them, again, making their activity more reasonably priced – and who would refuse that, the way things are these days?

We are very grateful to Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust, as well as to the Community Council, for their financial and practical support that makes all these things possible. We have very few rules and regulations and the members (who must be over eighteen) are encouraged to research, suggest and organise activities. Our membership currently numbers around sixty, and come from all walks of life, with a full range of ages and abilities – the message being that it doesn't matter a jot how good you are at something - it's more important to just give it a try and have a good time.

If any of this might be of interest to you do get in touch at the email address

below – or even better, why not come along to our Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm on Wednesday 29th March, to be held at The Wildside Centre, Whitebridge. We'll keep the formalities brief, and after that there will a glass or two, a few tasty tit-bits, a chance to catch up with old friends and maybe make some new ones! We are a very informal and friendly bunch – and certainly don't take ourselves too seriously – if you'd seen me trying sea-kayaking, you'd know why! Maybe see you on the 29th?

Best wishes, Peter.
Contact us at: sosapiste19@gmail.com



STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY COUNCIL UPDATE



2023 marks the 50th year of Community Councils. I think this should also mark 50 years of amazing volunteer effort since the first cohort of community councillors were elected to 'fill the gap' that was created when the previous most local tier of governance - that eclectic mix of county, burgh and town councils - were swept away in the interests of (presumably) efficiency, as paid staff were replaced by Community Councils with members that are all unpaid. Community councils are the most local tier of statutory representation in Scotland. They bridge the gap between local authorities and communities, and help to make public bodies aware of the opinions and needs of the communities they represent and yet all expected from volunteers! We are very fortunate to receive Community Benefit in this area and we have great support from the Community Trust which has enabled the Community Council to pay for a part time administrator for several years now. This not only allows the Community Council to do a lot more (see the exciting Foyers public toilet news!!) but also takes some of the pressure and workload off the volunteer members who have busy working lives. We also have fantastic support from two of the local councillors that cover the Stratherrick and Foyers area, they are Cllr David Fraser and Cllr Chris Ballance. Both follow up lots of items that are brought up and help resolve community issues.

The Community Council covers all the statutory items in the Community, like a mini version of the Highland Council but with volunteers. Roads and planning feature highly on every agenda; roads affect almost everyone's daily life (in the Community Action Plan roads and transport was the most discussed action) and planning can be a very emotive subject. Planning applications can vary from a single house to a landscape changing energy scheme, the latter comes with literally hundreds of pages of documents that need to be considered. There is more about this on the article about local energy schemes being planned.

All community council meetings are open to the public but we also encourage anyone to raise something that they would like an answer to or something they want discussed even if they can't make it to a meeting. You can do this by emailing to – email.sfcc@aol.com or speaking with any member of the Community Council. The current members are –

Patrick Haston (Chair), Simon Hargreaves (Vice-Chair), Stephen Steiner (Treasurer), Gill Gray, Craig Lightbody and Mark Hindley.

Meetings are on the last Tuesday of every month, apart from July and December. We are still running a hybrid style meeting so anyone can join online if they request to do so, using the email address above. We use the Wildside Centre at the moment but hope to rotate and use the Stratherrick Hall too once we organise video conferencing in that venue too. All welcome and maybe we should have cake at every meeting this year to celebrate the wonderful volunteer effort

Sharon Ferguson,
Admin, SFCC

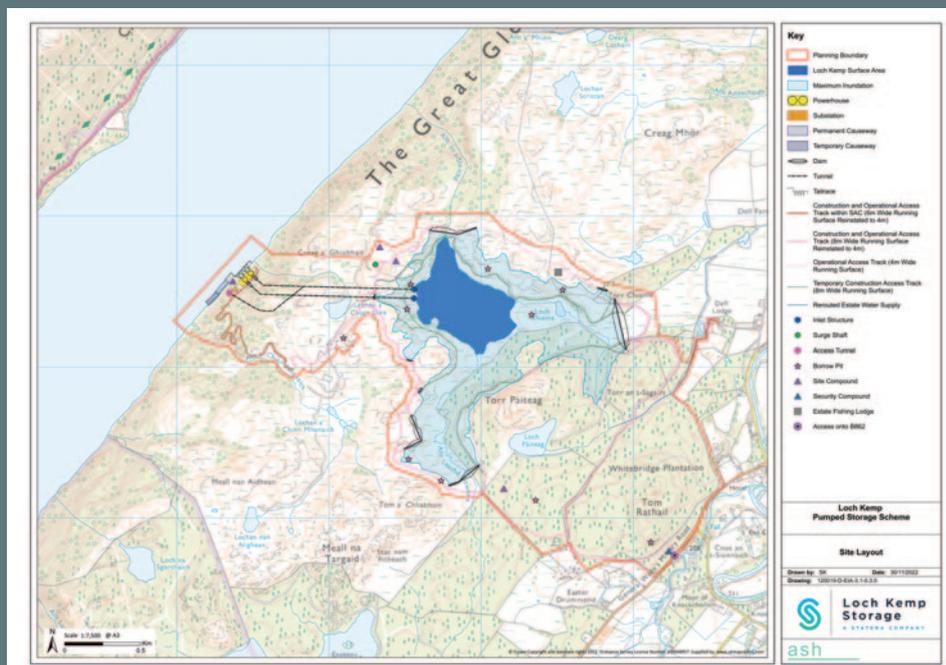
ENERGY SCHEMES IN THE AREA

There are already many energy schemes in the area that are up and running, from windfarms to hydroelectric schemes. We are working on a map to show everyone where they are and what they are producing but for this article, we wanted to highlight a new pump storage scheme that is going to be applying for full planning in April this year. The scheme is called 'Loch Kemp Storage' and is a hydro pump storage scheme planned for Loch Kemp on Dell estate in Whitebridge by Statera Energy. They are proposing to build and operate a new 600 MW Pumped Storage Hydro scheme using the existing Loch Kemp as the upper storage reservoir and Loch Ness as the lower reservoir. To achieve this, the plans are to make eight dams on Loch Kemp and raise the capacity of the water levels there by 28 meters. This will of course involve flooding a lot of land that is not currently underwater and in turn, creating a loss of a natural habitat for many species. The scheme itself will involve a new access road going through the Whitebridge plantation woods a few hundred yards west of the Killen turnoff - see the small purple circle on the map below. There is also a proposal for a camp in the woods

for construction staff. The powerhouse on the shores of Loch Ness is planned to be above ground and to give some idea of the scale, we have been told it will be similar in size to the one at Foyers. There would also be the requirement for cabling to run from this proposed powerhouse to the substation in Foyers. We are awaiting confirmation, and this will be a separate planning application but may be a mixture of above ground and underground cabling.

The Community Council will share the planning application when it goes live and would encourage anyone with any questions or concerns to please get in touch with the Community Council and/or make your own representation to the planning department.

Sharon Ferguson,
Admin, SFCC



READER'S LETTERS

Thank you to Mark and Julie for a very interesting personal insight into the hydro scheme. We would be delighted to hear the views of all our readers on topics that are important to the community.

WHEN 'GREEN' MIGHT NOT BE QUITE SO GREEN

In November 2021, Statera Energy proposed¹ a 300MW/30 hour Pumped Storage Hydro-electricity Scheme at Loch Kemp, southeast of Loch Ness. The scoping report stage concluded in March 2022 with full planning application expected soon.

The scheme would utilise Loch Kemp as the upper reservoir with Loch Ness being the lower. 8 dams up to 30m high would encircle Loch Kemp, allowing its level to be raised by 28m. An underground tunnel with surface surge shaft would descend 1km to a powerhouse on the shore of Loch Ness. New access tunnels, permanent access roads, borrow pits and a temporary accommodation block would also be required.

This location is rich in nationally and internationally rare flora and fauna as evidenced by several statutory designations; Ness Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated for its woodlands and common otter, also

contains the Easter Ness Forest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The proposed powerhouse site lies within the Ness Woods SAC. These woodlands are also listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) as Ancient Woodland of semi-natural origin. Whitebridge Plantation is also listed in the AWI as Long-Established Woodland of Plantation Origin. The development would inundate at least 5ha of these ancient woodlands. Additional felling would be required for the accommodation block and access. In total, over 30ha of woodland would be lost.

Knockie Lochs SSSI, which is about 1km from the site boundary, is designated for breeding Slavonian grebe, used by red and black throated divers and also has an established and successful white-tailed eagle nest.

The site is rich in insects, reptiles, amphibians and bryophytes and also includes significant areas of blanket bog with its important carbon sequestering peat. Golden eagle, osprey and red kite also breed within the site or nearby. Other protected or Schedule 1 species that have been observed include crossbill sp., hen harrier, pine marten, red squirrel, Scottish wildcat and bats.

Statera Energy's publicity and consultation documentation focuses heavily on the environmental benefit of the scheme and its 'Green' credentials. The Scottish Government's National Planning Framework endorses pumped hydro as part of achieving energy security. However, the overall environmental benefit of this particular scheme in this specific location is questionable.

Pumped hydro doesn't generate any new low-carbon energy of itself, being a net consumer of energy with a cycle efficiency of around 80%. Any carbon emissions saved are only indirect, consequent on the source of the electricity used when operating in pumping mode. Commercial imperatives governing operation would not enforce solely consuming clean energy. Full consideration of all environmental impacts of the scheme before approval is essential. In this case, the damage and disruption caused to important, fragile and biodiverse habitats makes the 'Green' label of this development on this site unjustified.

This is a letter to the editor from two local residents.

Mark Hindley and Julie Harvey



FREE HOME FIRE SAFETY VISITS

We investigate every fire that we attend, to understand how the fire started and developed, how could it have been avoided and could it have been prevented entirely.

The answer is all too often yes, that fire could have been prevented, and that person would have avoided injury or sadly, death.

But the greatest challenge for us has always been reaching the most vulnerable people in our communities to make sure they have the life-saving advice and support that they need.

That is why we are issuing a nationwide call to action – if you know someone who is over 50 and smokes and lives alone, has mobility issues or uses medical oxygen – we need you to help us reach them.

Make the call to us on **0800 0731 999** and we can ensure that the people who may be at risk get the fire safety advice and support that they need to help them stay safe in the home.



WILDFIRES

Wildfires are very dangerous, spreading fast, changing direction, jumping to and from other areas potentially threatening life. If you see a fire, however small, call 999 immediately.

Be prepared for wildfires that can threaten your home

Create a safety zone

The best protection against loss, damage or injury due to wildfire is prevention. One of the most important things you can do to protect your home is to create a safety zone around it, extending out for at least 10 metres in all directions. A safety zone is a well-planned, well-maintained area that is as free as possible of combustible materials that could support the spread of a wildfire. It does not mean you need to strip the land of any vegetation and cover it in concrete.

Properly preparing your home and community does not guarantee that you will not incur fire damage, but it does reduce the risks.

Any kind of vegetation will burn. Mature trees, shrubs, grass, even your woodpile are all potential fuels and can easily ignite (increasing the chance of building ignition and loss). Managing the space around your house and buildings is of prime importance.



Fire and other hazards

- If you burn leaves and debris, consider alternatives like composting.
- Before lighting any outdoor fire, check for any restrictions or if any permits are required.
- Avoid lighting fires when high winds, high temperatures and low humidity are present or predicted.
- Always have a shovel available and connect your garden hose before you start the fire.
- Make sure recreational fires are made in a fire-safe pit or container and completely extinguished before leaving.
- Never burn if the smoke and flames are blowing towards your home (or your neighbour's home).
- Do not dispose of ashes until they are cold to the touch.
- Store flammable materials in approved safety cans. Keep those safety cans in a fire-resistant metal or brick building or your garage.

Access for our fire crews

- Give our fire control room staff as much detail as possible. If you know the best access point, please let them know. If it is safe to do so, stand by the access point and speak to fire crews when they arrive.
- Access to your home starts with signage. It affects how easily emergency services can reach and protect your home.
- Emergency vehicles will not easily find your home if your number or name is not visible from the road.
- In mid-summer, when the vegetation is fully leaved, go to the road and see if you can read your number. If you cannot you may need to move the sign or make it bigger. Remember that at times smoke or darkness may make it harder to see your details.

SFCT BOARD REPORT

Here are some of the highlights and projects discussed at the SFCT Board meetings over the last few months

STRONELAIRG PANEL

As previously reported the Stronelairg Panel will cease after the final round of grants which must be submitted by 6th March.

HIGHLAND GATHERING

Highland Gathering planning is making progress but again replies and responses from contractors are slow so we need to firm up.

INVERFARIGAIG PROJECT

The Inverfarigaig Fields purchase is nearly complete and funds have been transferred to our solicitors for completion. In light of the budgetary revision, the remaining expenditure in this financial year can be pared back to:

The Inverfarigaig Residents' Group are looking to restore the garages and workshops; fell an overgrown hedge and self-sown trees; fence the site; have electricity connected to the site for electric vehicle recharging and in 2024 to create a 'Men's Shed' and community firewood processing facility.

THE WILDSIDE CENTRE

The Wildside Steering group met on 16th February. The group discussed budget, lighting issues, storage, play area and Polycrub.

Obtain quotes for lighting

Explore and cost storage solutions internally

Buy a storage container for outside and concrete base to site it on

Contractor to prepare ground for proposed park area.

Identify suitable area for Polycrub

Identify projects and costings for next year.

FIREWOOD

Over 100 people signed up for the one off Free Firewood Offer. The firewood was donated by Alex and Janet Sutherland.

HIGHLAND DANCING

Following a request after the Highland Gathering last year Highland Dancing classes for children begin in April at the Wildside Centre.

PRE AND AFTER SCHOOL CLUB ACTION GROUP

Parents/Carers got together following the CAP and this Action Group is progressing this project and we will update once we know more.

Tony Foster
Trust Manager, SFCT

Photography by Hugh Elgar-Bond

COMMUNITY GROWING PROGRAMME

This Spring we aim to kick start the Community Green Project which has started already with the Open Boot day - held on the First Wednesday of the month from 11- 12.30 at The Wildside Centre. Our local crofters and producers can come along and bring their produce to a central collection point so that we can save on those expensive fuel costs into town. Nothing quite like buying local and supporting our local suppliers. Yes we are starting small, Jane from Lyne Mhor Croft has been coming along as well as Beth from Birchwood Croft and the ever popular Jinty's Jams, but we do anticipate that this will grow as we go.

This has coincided with our Warm Wednesdays and the start of the community pantry, plus Kirsty's great scheme where you can take a warm coat from the rail and donate one if you have one spare. These are all things we aim to build on with a greener ethos at the core across all the work we do. We will keep you abreast with social media communications so you know when to come along.

Polycrubs - The Community Growing Programme

As you may know we have received Highland Council Funding for the siting of 2 polycrubs. These are storm strength growing spaces from a community company in the Shetlands and provide really solid indoor growing space to get growing our own. The site at the Wildside Centre, Whitebridge has been agreed on and will be situated by the river. Not only will we be starting a more resilient food production programme this will be a lovely, calm place where we can get the seeds in the

ground, for all year round produce. We are going to create some wildflower areas and bug friendly hotels just outside the crubs too which the children will be getting involved in. The aim is to have this up together by the end of March, with an additional site at Inverfarigaig.

If you are interested in being involved then do please get in touch, and thank you to those that already have. Contact Sarah at sarah@sfctrust.org.uk and we will get a band of keen green fingers together.

Second hand Saturday?

Another plan is to hold a Second Hand Saturday if there was sufficient interest. At the Wildside Centre again as a table top sale. A great chance to pop along, grab a bargain and keep stuff out of landfill. £5 per table with tea and coffee available. The proceeds from this will go towards purchasing seeds for the growing programme.

Free Firewood

Elsewhere you will have read about a to supply free (unseasoned) firewood from March 2023.

All of these projects are at the heart of a greener vision in that we are better off if we don't have to travel more than 20 minutes to access basic essential items. We all have to try to do our bit to limit any environmental impact and it's good to save money at the same time. The aim is to start this in May so once again get in touch with Sarah or Sharon at sarah@sfctrust.org.uk or Sharon Ferguson sharon@sfctrust.org.uk

Sarah Byrne,
Fundraiser, SFCT



ERROGIE CHURCH PROJECT – FEBRUARY 2023

Project Vision

Errogie Church was purchased by Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust in 2019 to create a multi-purpose community space at the north end of Stratherrick and Foyers.

The vision for this building is:

The Errogie Church will be a uniquely designed, supportive and inspirational multimedia venue for crafts, music, heritage and biodiversity and a meeting space in Stratherrick and Foyers that promotes learning and creative confidence.

Objectives –

1. Restore a building to its original role as the meeting place for people who live in the north end of Stratherrick.
2. Preserve an historic building for future generations
3. Develop a place that becomes a social focal point for the people who live on the doorstep, providing facilities for family events
4. Provide a facility that will support a range of specific activities externally that meet the requirements of the local community and regional community.

The building will complete a network of community hubs, ensuring that in areas where there is a concentration of households there is a meeting place on the doorstep. The other hubs are Stratherrick Public Hall, Wildside, BCC Hub, the Forest School and a meeting hut in Inferarigaig. The local community would like to use Errogie for Heritage, Music, Biodiversity and Arts provision, alongside a social space for the whole community.

Proposed Community Benefits

In 2021 the Community Action Plan was published. This document outlined the wants and needs of the community. The re-development of Errogie Church fits into the recommendations laid out in 'Community Life'.

Proposed Economic Benefits

This building will bring an economic benefits by welcoming tourists and visitors and providing a market place for locally produced drink and food. Proposed activities that will help us to do this include:

- Café space
- Heritage and biodiversity exhibitions
- Promotion of works by local artists, photographers and professional crafters
- Venue hire

Current position

Phase 1:

Work on phase 1 has now begun. This phase is focusing on basic repairs to the building, including guttering, roof strengthening and re-pointing to make it wind and watertight, and fit for basic use. Without this work, or a private sale, it is very probable that the building would have deteriorated to the point where it was beyond repair. Also within this phase, provision is being made for the bats resident in the roof-space – this work is almost complete. The builders are installing a second internal ceiling creating a safe space high in the apex of the roof where the bats will live alongside the human occupants on the floors below.

The work being carried out in this phase will strengthen the building and make it ready for conversion works once planning permission has been granted. The works in this phase have been allocated so as not to be un-done in the next phase. Photographs of the work can be seen on the next page

Please be aware of increased traffic around the site, and do get in touch with Caroline by emailing pc@sfctrust.org.uk if you have any concerns or questions regarding current activities. Works are due to be completed on this phase by June 2023.

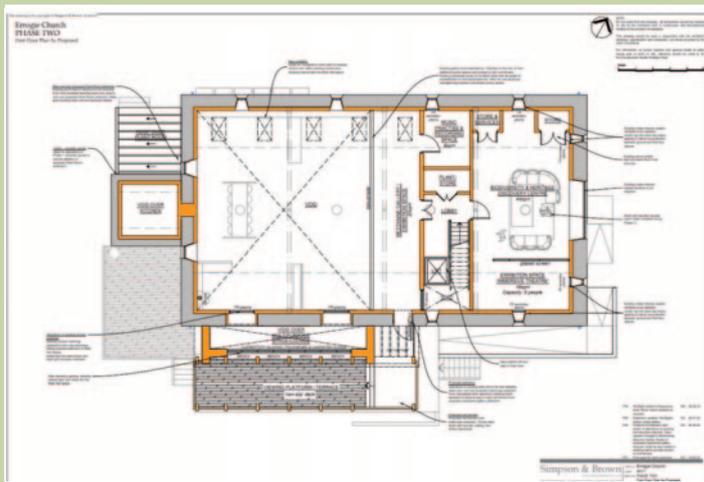
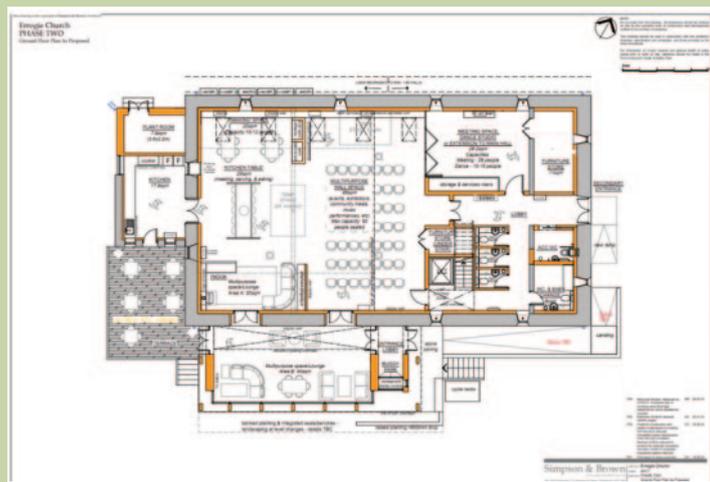
Phase 2:

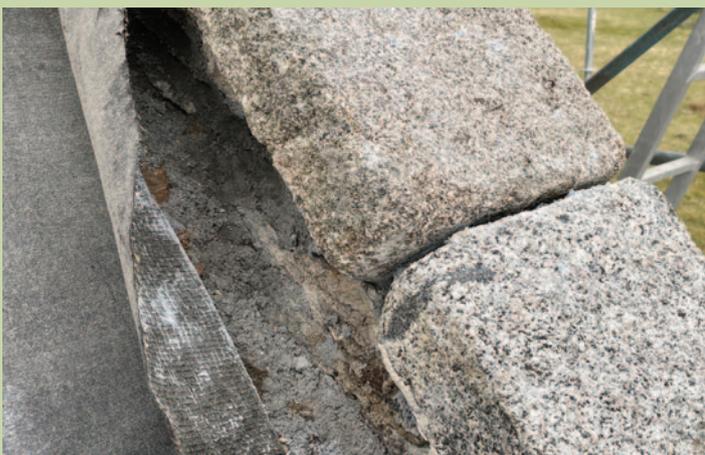
The conversion of the building into a community space. Throughout the last 18 months we have been working with the Steering group, architects and wider design team to create a building that we hope will fit the needs of the community.

We are almost at a stage to submit our designs to planning. We still require further information on drainage and positioning of the septic tank. Below you can see the latest version of the architects plans. These will be on display in Wildside for community members to view, and available on our website.

Our fundraisers have identified a number of available funds that we can apply for to assist with the costs of this project, and match the funds provided by Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust.

Gareth Jones
Chair, SFCT





COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION AWARD FOR JOHN DUNCAN

In November 2022, John Duncan, from Errogie, was announced as winner of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation (IHBC) Marsh Charitable Trust Awards for Community Contributions by a Retired Member of the IHBC Award. The judges were impressed with John's exemplary work while in retirement, representing a wide variety of contributions, at different levels, and all with great effort. Some of his contributions included as Director/Trustee and currently Chair at the Highland Historic Buildings Trust (HHBT), as Director/Trustee at the Inverness City Heritage Trust (ICHT), as member and at one time President of the Inverness Architectural Association (IAA), and by way of his membership of the Highlands and Islands Traditional Building Forum, helping to deliver conservation masterclasses at Inverness College (UHI).

John has said, "I am very honoured to have been recognised by IHBC and the Marsh Charitable Trust. I graduated in architecture, urban design and town planning respectively, but my interest and passion in the conservation of the built heritage has grown in the last forty or so years, firstly when I was appointed in 1981 as conservation architect for the then Highland Regional Council (now the Highland Council). Although I formally retired just over fourteen years ago, I have maintained my interest in the built heritage, admittedly finding it somewhat more challenging than full time employment as the Highland Council's conservation architect, particularly in sourcing funding. I was a founding Director/Trustee in 1985 and latterly current Chair of the Highland Historic Buildings Trust (see www.highlandhbt.org.uk), which operates as a 'restorer of last resort', tackling historic buildings that are at risk, dependent on public funding, usually from a number of sources.

On a personal front, I own a listed bothy which I am in the process of restoring and converting into a holiday let. Due to its limited scale, a separate service building comprising a shower, toilet and store is required and is currently under construction. I could say I am now practising what I 'preached' during my twenty-seven years with the Highland Council!"

Well done John!

Caroline Tucker,
Project Co-ordinator, SFCT

RIVERSIDE FIELD

The Riverside Liaison Group met on 22nd February and the next phases were presented to the group. Nearby residents will input into landscaping and the architect will draw up a list of the specialists required for the planning conditions.

Tony Foster
Trust Manager, SFCT

FOYERS BAY

We had a very positive Foyers Bay meeting albeit only 5 in attendance. While we wait for planning, we have a clear vision of what tasks we need to complete first and have opened other discussions for futures steps.

Tony Foster
Trust Manager, SFCT

HOUSING

The Housing Group are looking at options to buy properties for rent or build new for rent. We are looking at how the allocation of houses will be managed once built.

Tony Foster
Trust Manager, SFCT

PLAYPARKS

The Play Park Action group are progressing with their plan to install a play area at the Wildside Centre. The group recently met, to get an update on ground works, design and quotes from installers, and are ready to submit their first funding application. Once funding is secure, a preferred installer will be chosen to build the play area.

The group also agreed that their next step would be to explore options for a play park in Gorthleck; while pinning down their long-term ambitions for the area. If you would like to be involved with any of these discussions, please get in touch.

Kirsty Balfour
Director, SFCT

BROADBAND

Cromarty Firth Wireless Networks Ltd is one of the few Wireless ISPs in the Highlands. Our extensive network covers from Tain down to Stratherrick, with over 1,500 subscribers. Our wireless technology allows us to replace the old slower dial up connections which were once the only option with a Superfast Internet connection.

We are currently utilizing Scottish Government's voucher scheme to bring connections across the Highlands, and Stratherrick already has the advantage of our existing base station infrastructure.

The voucher scheme can allow us to install a Superfast connection that may otherwise be to cost prohibitive. The basic install itself (antenna and router) is fully paid for by the voucher, you only have the ongoing monthly costs. This enables you to take advantage of streaming services like Netflix & Amazon that would not be possible over a dial up connection.

Our existing infrastructure in Stratherrick is capable of supporting Superfast connections with download speeds of up to 50mbps. The connection is made through a small dish (similar to a sky dish but smaller), and the install has minimal impact on your property.

If you'd like to know more, and think you're eligible for a voucher, please call us for a chat.

Jenny Gillwald,
Cromarty Firth Wireless

CROMARTY FIRTH WIRELESS NETWORKS LTD

SUPERFAST BROADBAND

CURRENTLY INSTALLING IN STRATHERRICK AREA

The Scottish Government currently offers a voucher for a **FREE** superfast broadband install to eligible properties

Check your eligibility at

[TINYURL.COM/CFWNVOUCHER](https://tinyurl.com/cfwnvoucher)

If you're eligible for a voucher, call **01349 80 50 40** or email enquiries@cfwn.co.uk

Current broadband speed of 50Mbps download, 20Mbps upload. Monthly connections from £36.60. Ultrafast connections available soon

CHILDCARE

One of the many aspirations that came from the Community Action Plan was to address the lack of any childcare options in the area and in turn, attract young families to the area and boost school rolls. The lack of childcare is a factor in why some families choose primary schools in Inverness as they offer wraparound childcare (breakfast club and after school club). This gives parents flexibility to work. A small school roll can also be off putting to families when considering which school they would like their child to attend.

An action group came together last year to start looking into the problems and find workable solutions. The 1st thing that happened was a short survey to discover the extent of the issue. The survey revealed that apart from some family members, there is no childcare options in the area and just over 78% of respondents to the survey reported that lack of childcare had affected their employment from a little to a great deal. The two most popular childcare options from the survey were an after school club and to have a registered childminder/s in the area. Work has been ongoing with the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) on a feasibility study looking at after school care. There has also been progression with the Scottish childminding association (SCMA); discussions have been taking place to look at supporting someone locally to become a childminder and delighted to say that Stratherrick and Foyers area has been included in SCMA's recruitment campaign with a fantastic package of fully funded support and training available to one successful applicant, providing everything needed to establish a new childminding business from home. This is a great opportunity for someone. If interested, please go to - <https://www.childminding.org/childminder-recruitment> for more information on the scheme and to register your interest.

Sharon Ferguson,
Fundraiser, SFCT

PATHS AND ACCESS

The Paths Group have been looking at signage, path maintenance and are considering a community maintenance day on items at the Falls of Foyers.

Grid references have been added to the audit at a base level which will help towards any app development. Help with this would be greatly appreciated.

We are looking and have made an application for funds for some quick wins in Whitebridge / Foyers / Inverfarigaig and meeting with stakeholders to discuss the wider maintenance of the South Loch Ness Trail in late March.

Tony Foster,
Trust Manager, SFCT



CRM SYSTEM

Mailchimp has allowed the Trust to begin communicating more effectively with a wide range of groups within the community. Mailchimp was designed as an email and marketing tool and therefore it can be tailored to connect with specific groups within the Trust community and their interests and needs can be targeted with specific information.

Responses to Trust emails can be analysed using various tools and where for example, there is little interaction, it will prompt reviews and actions to enhance content and reach. The platform can also be used outside the Trust area to communicate with funders and other important stakeholders, so look out for the updated communications arriving to your email soon!

Laura Walker-Knowles
Administrator, SFCT

OUR COMMUNITY FUNDRAISERS

From playparks to childcare, paths to cost of living help, housing to slipways, community facilities to community growing; since we started with the Community Trust last year, we have been busy working on all these activities and more! The focus is to help drive some of the aspirations from the Community Action Plan that was undertaken in 2021. We have been successful in obtaining a good amount of funding so far but a lot of our work has been getting projects to the point of funding. Feasibility studies are required alongside costings, evidence of need and a host of information to make a successful funding application and in turn, a successful project. There are many of the Communities plans coming together and we look forward to being part of making them happen.

We are also on hand to help any of the local Community groups should they need help applying for funds and taking ideas forward. Please get in touch if you want to discuss any projects and/or funding requirements that we might be able to help with.

Finally, a huge thank you to all the volunteers that we have been working alongside in all there varying capacity working on Community projects, you are all amazing! It's not money that makes the magic happen, its people!

Sharon and Sarah
Fundraisers, SFCT

STRATHERRICK HALL - A HISTORY

Ah well I'm sure any newcomers to the district in the last three years will be wondering what this (abandoned) wooden building within the confines of the village of Gorthleck is? Ah pray let me enlighten you.

I'm the Stratherrick Hall, sometimes referred to as Gorthleck Hall, the main meeting place for the district for almost ninety years. So well before my time, where were the local social events such as weddings, wakes etc held?. A local barn would have been cleared and decorated suitably as the occasion merited. From the eighteen seventies onwards, with the local public schools having now being built, events were held in those premises. This would include public meetings of local societies along with their associate lectures and concerts. The first dedicated local hall in the district was the workman's social amenities building (Reservoir Club) at the Glebe. The building was erected around 1896 in connection with the construction of the Dam for the British Aluminium company's factory at Foyers. In early 1988 the building had been given to the community for a public hall, with local intentions to move it to a more central sheltered position in the district. However, this intention was not fulfilled and in its exposed position it soon deteriorated, with letters appearing in local papers condemning lack of action by hall trustees. By 1912 collectors were appointed to approach the public for subscriptions to defray the expenses of repairing the hall. However, this did not avert the ravages of time and weather and by the end of WW1, suggestions were to the fore about a providing a new hall as the local war memorial. Well, as we know this idea was not taken up, resulting in my predecessor going into terminal decline and abandonment. The district then reverted back to former arrangements for social events. However, fate took a hand and after much grumbling by the populous of the district about the need for a Public hall in Stratherrick to match facilities in Foyers, action needed to be taken.

So local County Councillor Col Frank (Barney) Sopper, in mid-December 1931, called a public meeting in Errogie School to gauge interest and to debate at length the merits of proceeding to provide a hall. This included, was the hall needed? Was the community prepared to sacrifice money and leisure time to get a hall and finally the location of the hall?.

Ah, you will have to remember at this time was the great depression, following the Wall Street Crash resulting in the hungry thirties.

Such was the support for a hall within the district that on a winters evening, nearly one hundred people attended the meeting. A hall building committee was elected under the chairmanship of Col Sopper. I can only imagine how the funds were raised to build the hall, no windfarm money in those days. Just honest community spirit, subscription books going round the district to raise funds. Events such as Gift Schemes (Raffles), Sales of Work, concert & dances, bringing the community together in a common goal.

One of the events to raise funds for the hall in early Jan 1933 was a Grand Dance at Leadclune Farm, the admission prices being, Ladies 2/-, Gents 2/6. There was also a bus leaving

Macrae & Dicks garage Inverness at 8.15pm going via Dore. The site where I stand, part of Gorthleck estate, was gifted by the British Aluminium Company to the community for a hall.

The labour to clear the site, install services, build foundations and provide septic tank etc was given free of charge by local tradesmen. If I recall correctly the site clearing was done by the Shaw brothers Croftdu, along with Tommy Mactavish, the Cape.

Of course at this time there was no such thing as electricity, so I was illuminated with paraffin lamps and later on gas, till the electric made its appearance in the Strath in the late fifties. Then the great day arrived on the afternoon of Friday 24th August 1934 I was officially declared opened in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd as Lady Lovat unlocked my front door with a golden key. Inside I consisted of a large hall to seat about two hundred with a raised platform at one end, ante-rooms, a kitchen and cloakroom accommodation were also provided. Later on that evening a dance was held with music supplied by Mr Ken Sim's orchestra from Inverness.

So that's how I came into existence, a Hall built by the community and owned by the community and looked after for the community by a board of trustees, including Regional and District councillors, the parish Minister and a local Schoolteacher.

So it was I served the community faithfully for the next eighty nine years, what were the functions and events held within these wall and surrounding grounds.

Various sales over the years to fund other events or causes, Red Cross sales, Shinty Sales, Young Farmers Seed and Root show sale by auction was always the talk of the Strath (how much someone had paid for a cake as a bidding war ensued).

Public meeting and talks held by Public Bodies, various local associations and clubs were also well to the fore, along with voting station for Local and National elections. Prior to the election, the political party's Parliamentary candidates electioneering meetings always led to grand going debates. Ah that was well before TV came to the fore and they could hide behind a camera for electioneering. Surgeries for local councillors, and a Chiroprapist were held here also and on at least one occasion a land court about disputed croft boundaries too.

Now sport featured here too, the floor was marked out for Badminton and the local team led by Father Thain were highly successful. Winning the County Cup in 1939 and possibly the Jack Hall Cup the same year. This sport continued well into this century in Stratherrick.

Shinty was another sport that used my facilities, that grand team Straths Athletic, twice Scottish Junior Cup runners up just after WW2, changed here and played their matches at Murnich. Boleskine also trained here and juvenile shinty was played inside here during winter months. Boleskine youth club in the nineties met here and also featured various indoor sports later on, there was ladies keep fit classes, Yoga, Karate and Scottish Country dancing too. Carpet bowls was popular here in the new century. Ah the children or bairns dependent on what decade they were mentioned in, enjoyed coming here for their entertainment and wellbeing. From mother and

toddler groups, kindergartens, Brownies/ Guides, and the annual Christmas party. I would be festooned with decorations along with a tree for the festive period, to welcome my young guests to their annual treat. How their eyes lit up as if it was magical. Party games ensued followed by a veritable feast of food that differed from the normal fare and then the big question came "would Santa make an appearance, if so could there be presents also?". One of the main ploys then of the older bairns, was to try and figure out which adult was Santa. All this provided for by a subscription book going round the parents and the district to get funds organised by the local bus driver, Tom Davis and helpers. The Stratherrick WRI met monthly here from the fifties through till they disbanded in the eighties. Organisations or local clubs raised funds by many means, both Whist drives and Beetle drives were popular during the sixties and seventies, as were concerts followed by a dance. If funds were required they had to be raised locally, fostering great community spirit and entertainment, as a large event would be preceded by a few smaller fundraising ones. I was well used for family events and many happy memories to the people of the district were created here, Wedding receptions, wedding dances and birthday parties for notable age milestones. Other events of a similar vein, were when the district came together as one to acknowledge a person's great public service, generally on their retirement, or a presentation as they were leaving the district for pastures new. Sadly too we cannot escape it, funeral teas were also held here over the years.

Over the years I have hosted a variety of events including Carol concerts, Harvest Praise, Plays by the Loch Ness Luvvies and other non-local dramas groups. In 2018 I hosted a pop up Museum for a couple of days, when things of yesteryear were collected locally and displayed. The following year in the same vein an exhibition on Trees and Forests of Loch Ness.

During WW2 the local Stratherrick Home Guard Company used me as a drill hall and training facility. One night they were having a demonstration in the stripping and assembling of a Bren gun unknowingly using live ammunition, someone fired it by mistake and the bullets went straight into the hall roof! (The holes are probably still there under the cladding, put up in my later refurbishments).

I even hosted Royal events associated with the late Queen, for her Coronation in 1953. Due to the inclement weather if I recall, the local schools sports were cancelled and games held here instead, in the evening I hosted a dance for the adults. For her Majesty's Golden Jubilee in 2002 an afternoon tea was held here. Her Diamond Jubilee in 2012, I provided facilities to mark the occasion over two days. The first event was an evening party and dance, whilst the second three days later was an afternoon tea dance. Unfortunately, for the Platinum Jubilee last year, I was unable to offer my facilities due to building problems, but the less said about that the better.

Perhaps I better be politically correct and say Senior Citizens rather than OAP lunches etc were held here over the years, latterly the monthly Lunch club and the weekly Broth and Blether were well attended. But the main event was the annual Christmas dinner held in the hall, the meals were prepared and served by the local women. One group that raised funds for the children's and senior citizens Xmas treat around 1977 was the Braxie Ball Committee. The Braxie Ball was an eagerly anticipated annual ticketed dance held in

October with one of the top Scottish dance bands of that time the Wallochmor Ceilidh Band. The tickets were highly sought after locally, and old locals now domiciled in other areas would make their way back home for the Ball to renew old friendships.

As you may have gathered dances were very popular throughout the years here at Stratherrick Hall. In the old days during a dance, tea and cakes would be served during a break in the evening. From the old days till about thirty years ago, my trustees insisted that no alcohol was allowed in the hall. This resulted in people going outside for a drink to the car park, half bottles and cans were consumed and shared around within the cars. The Stratherrick dances of that time were immortalised by local Foyers bard Jock Mackay in his epic poem 'Stratherrick Bound', which I sure many of that age group will affiliate with. As I recall one New Year Day dance in the mid-seventies one reveller climbed up and started dancing in the rafters, and almost brought my house down. But thankfully most people are slightly better behaved these days. Aye I've have had a few refurbishments over the years. In the mid-sixties an extension was put on in my front and along the east side of the building, topped off with a large mural depicting a view of the district from across Loch Mhor at the back of the stage. For my opening night, two episodes of the popular radio programme Down My Way were recorded.

In 1987 I had a major refurbishment with extensions to the rear of the building and the interior redesigned to what you see today. To raise funds for the work the community once again came together and ran at least two Stratherrick Highland Games at Croftmore near the Chapel Bridge. On the evening there were Barn dances in the big Sheep Shed at Compass. I was opened by Alister Chisholm unveiling a plaque, with a concert and dance to follow.

In 2000 I had a major refurbishment to comply primarily with public entertainment licences for halls, though I'm sure my patrons enjoyed themselves adequately without one. The hall was totally reclad internally, with new hall furniture, lighting, portable stage and new kitchen equipment among the items purchased. I was reopened by a former resident Grace Macgillivray and a social evening then ensued.

I have been used continuously since opening, albeit with short breaks for refurbishments. Then the Covid outbreak in March 2020 and building problems has seen me closed till now. But I am back, in rude health ready and willing to serve the community again, for the next ninety years.

Forgive me if by some perchance I have overlooked some event that has occurred here over the last eighty nine years, but age is a definitely a duller of memory, as the older residents and even some of the younger ones will verify.

Mussady

THE TRAVELLING PULPIT

AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE STRATH'S HISTORY

Like many people, the Christmas and New Year break is the time that family visits. As a fundraiser, Sharon Ferguson and I have been involved with the Heritage Group and the work they plan to do at Errogie Church. My niece Jessica Morgan was visiting over the break and is currently studying for a Masters in Object Curation at the School of History Archaeology and Religion. At the same time, I heard that the South Loch Ness Heritage Group were dismantling and removing the travelling pulpit from Errogie Church for safe storage, plus Jessica needed to submit a "Condition Report" for an object of interest!

Putting two and two together I thought it a great idea (sorry Heritage Group)... to head down to Errogie Church and capture the moment for Jessie's university work, which we could then use as fundraisers to pitch for funding, and more importantly to catalogue this unique object.

You can read excerpts of the report below:

'The pulpit is believed to have been built and used from around 1870 onwards... There are very few known examples, and there is very little research, or records about the specifics of when, who, where, and how, these pulpits were used. As many of the communities in the Highlands are very rural, and much of their time would be spent working on crofts, it is generally believed that church leaders would have to take sermons to these rural communities, rather than large groups of people having to travel weekly, whilst enduring the expenses incurred to make the journey, and families would often walk up to 16 miles each way for special services, such as communion. The travelling pulpits also led to open-air sermons, which would allow for much larger crowds of parishioners, who may not fit into purpose-built churches.

Many of the examples of open-air churches or travelling pulpits are linked to the Free Church. Formed in 1843 during the 'Disruption of the Church of Scotland'. The result was evangelical ministers seceding from the church, who had felt there had been increasing influence and pressures from the British state. The forming of the Free Church could be seen as an anti-English and patriotic movement (Mallon, 2020). There have been



examples of landowners of the time refusing to allow the Free Church to build new places of worship, which could have led directly to the use of travelling pulpits as the locations of the Free churches moved to more rural or remote areas of the highlands. This separation of the church came towards the end of the period of highland clearances, which predominantly took place between 1750 – 1860.

Currently the overall structure of the pulpit is good. There are only a few sites where the wood has been affected by woodworm, and these parts could be replaced if needed... If the pulpit is to be displayed inside the church in the future, there will need to be an ongoing pest prevention plan to prevent reinfestation and further degradation of the wood present.

If the pulpit is going to be stored outside, especially for long periods of time there will need to be multiple treatments undertaken to preserve the wood. The wood will be vulnerable to the damp moisture of the local area, which could quickly affect woodworm damaged areas, as well as the legs and roof.

There are very few examples of this kind of travelling pulpit that can be found within

the UK, as well as very little information about their use. The Disruption and separation of the church is a key part of Scottish history, and can still be seen today, reflected in the Free Churches that stand around Scotland. The importance of this piece is linked to its uniqueness, as well as its close link to religious change within Scotland.'

As you can see, this really is quite special (there are only a couple on display across Scotland) and it was really interesting to see the careful dismantling and to pick the brains of Heritage group's knowledge. Thank you Alister for your time.

It turns out, amongst other things, that in its day the Travelling Pulpit was very busy, allowing the Minister to address the congregation in sites across our area. The report pertains to the condition and history of the pulpit and it seems that it is quite tricky to get much information. Alister, in his bank of knowledge was able to add to the research on this object, which will feed in to what is planned in terms of heritage provision at Errogie Church, where we hope to have a number of pretty interesting interactions – watch this space!

Sarah Byrne and Caroline Tucker

ALEX SUTHERLAND SPORTING GRANT

I would like to report upon my Community Trust sponsored trip to the Masters Athletics Home Countries International Cross country race in Dublin on the weekend of the 13th of November 2022. I was part of the Scottish team of 70 - 74 year olds competing against other teams from England, Ireland, Wales, and Northern Ireland over a 6-kilometre race in a Dublin park.

Our team of runners had a great success, securing the first four places ahead of all the other countries to win a gold team medal with an individual bronze for my third finish overall for Scotland and of course for Stratherrick and Foyers!

The running was fast over grass with some hills and suitable for cross country spiked shoes with no ditches, tree roots, bogs or other hazards to negotiate (conditions sometimes met on our North Highland cross country race circuit). A dinner and the medal ceremony followed in the event hotel before flying home to Glasgow on the following day.

I think being able to train regularly on the hills and trails of our home area stood me in good stead and on the 5th of February having moved up an age category I returned to Glasgow for the Scottish Masters Athletics National Cross-Country Championship and won the over 75 race.

I just entered the equivalent British event with a long journey to Wallsend near Newcastle for the British Master Cross Country Championship where I was very pleased to win the gold medal for being first in the 75-plus age group. I have been able to remain injury free with support from the regular Pilates sessions at the Wildside Centre. "You don't stop running because you grow old, you grow old because you stop running!"

Alex Sutherland



GRANT AWARDS NOTICE OCTOBER 2022 - JANUARY 2023

The following grants were awarded at the Board meetings held on 5 October, *2 November, 7 December 2022 and 1 February 2023
(*not a scheduled grant meeting)

STUDENT/EDUCATIONAL GRANTS

£500 awarded to:

Jessica Main, Courtney Monaghan, Rowan Main, Anna Yeats, Sarah Flanagan, Olivia Grant, Raine MacGruer, Keely Alexander, Alex Brown, Chantelle Lewis, Abigail Kirkland, Graham Bain, Maureen McGuire, Grant MacGruer, Isabel Slater, Michelle Rhodes, Robbie Stewart, Verity Cameron.

The following awards were made to:

Jennie Devlin, £100, Meg Somerville, £250, Alannah Graydon, £250, Helen Sinclair, £100, Karen Ayland, £500

Sporting

Olivia Grant - £250
Alex Sutherland - £250

Non-Constituted Grants

Children's Christmas Party - £350
Highland Dancing, £1,000
Baby and Toddler Group, £700

Constituted Grants

Farr Primary School - £1,800
Stratherrick Primary and Nursery Parent Council - £9,230

Cost of Living to Local Business Grants

Isabella Kilgannon - £1,00

Further details of the grants awarded are recorded in the minutes of the meetings available on the Trust website
www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk

SCOTSHAVEN COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Scotshaven Complementary Therapies and Yoga is situated in a peaceful spot between Gorthleck and Foyers and is run by Gill and Alannah. They offer weekly yoga classes in their purpose-built yoga studio along with a range of massage therapies, reflexology, reiki, and facial treatments.

In a world where so many people are too busy to think about their own wellbeing and are suffering from stress, anxiety and depression, Alannah and Gill's passion lies in helping people relax, take care of their tired bodies and minds, and reconnect with what is important in life.

Gill first went to a yoga class when her hips started to give her discomfort and she felt the need to improve her flexibility, like many people she had no knowledge of the psychological benefits of yoga and was shocked at the realisation of how stressed and anxious she was and how fantastic it felt to relax and let go, albeit for a short time. She had forgotten what it felt like to just be and to feel relaxed, until this time if anyone had told her she was stressed and anxious she would have disagreed with them. This is the danger with anything affecting our mental health, we always think we are ok! Until either our bodies stop us, or our minds break down, we just keep battling on.

Unfortunately, people have a modern-day impression that to do yoga you have to be flexible and get into weird poses, this could not be farther from the truth. People regularly say 'I couldn't do yoga, I'm not flexible enough' well that's exactly why you need to do it. Yes, yoga can make you strong and flexible, but it is not just an exercise class. Yoga is about your relationship with you! We do poses which are important to the health of your body, but yoga is not a competition with anyone else, the only competition is between you and your body. You just do what your body allows you to do and challenge yourself to go a little further. Keeping your body healthy, stilling the mind, and focusing on yourself is the aim.

Their classes are inclusive to everyone; all ages, fitness abilities, male or female. Originally yoga was invented and only practiced by men, so it is not just for women! It is also very beneficial for

runners, hikers and cyclists who become very tight in specific muscle groups which can then lead to long term problems if not stretched out regularly.

Gill and Alannah are trained in Hatha yoga and Gill, who has a deep interest in mental health, has recently qualified in yoga for mental health and restorative yoga for chronic pain along with Yin yoga. Yin yoga is a branch of yoga that stretches deep into the ligaments, tendons, and fascia of the joints by holding the poses for longer than in hatha yoga. Conditions such as fibromyalgia, MS, chronic pain syndrome and depression can all benefit from restorative yoga. Pain in our bodies very often reflects the state of our minds and by coming into gentle supported poses that relax the sympathetic nervous system and calm the mind, pain relief can occur. Alannah is planning to specialise in children's yoga soon, so for all those young people out there 'watch this space'. Hopefully by educating young people to have a better understanding of their bodies and emotions and to be true to themselves at a young age, it can help them avoid the mental health issues that many people are now finding themselves dealing with in midlife. Alannah also brings the energy and vibrancy of a younger person to Scotshaven helping us cover the requirements of all age groups.

Alongside the yoga classes we offer a range of complementary therapies that are aimed at relaxation and encouraging the body to heal itself. We believe that while conventional medicine certainly has its place, complementary treatments take a more realistic approach to healing, going back to the root of the ailment and including a person's whole being in the treatment.

With conventional medicine, a disease is seen as an entirely separate thing from the person who has it, which differs from

most complementary therapies, as these put the emphasis on whole body care. Complementary therapies involve treating the condition in the physical body, as well as the person's spiritual and emotional health and is one of the main reasons that holistic healthcare is increasing in popularity. Another major benefit of holistic care is its emphasis on prevention, while traditional medicine aims to intervene after the disease appears, most types of holistic practitioners promote 'well visits.' These treatments focus on preventing diseases before they show their symptoms along with caring for those who are already ill.

Gill and Alannah strongly believe in a mind-body link and that stress, and our emotional makeup play a part in many common diseases. With stress and poor mental health being one of the biggest problems of modern life, their therapies have an emphasis on relaxation and calming the mind; the key to a more purposeful, peaceful, and harmonious life.

For more details of Scotshaven's complementary therapies please visit their website - scotshavenwellbeing.com or give them a call on 07808 803445 or 07415 763836 if you would like to book a treatment.

If you would like to try yoga, their classes are on Monday and Friday mornings at 10am and Tuesday and Thursday evenings at 7pm. The cost is £24 for a four-week block, or you can pay as you go for the price of £7.50 per class. Booking is essential.

On the last Sunday of each month, they offer a full day Yoga Retreat running from 10am to 4pm at the cost of £30. Please follow their Facebook page Scotshaven Holistic Therapies and Yoga for the latest updates and news.

Gill Gray





LONG COVID SUPPORT SCOTLAND

LIVING WITH LONG COVID – NEW SUPPORT WEBSITE LAUNCHED

A new website which will offer support and helpful free resources to people who suffer from Long Covid has been launched in Scotland - www.longcovidsupportscotland.com

Long Covid Support Scotland is the brainchild of the team behind The Cheyne Gang©, a small Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) that uses singing to support breathing control in people living with long-term respiratory conditions such as Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Asthma, Bronchiectasis, as well as other conditions that cause breathlessness.

The new website offers practical advice and includes a range of professionals presenting bite-sized videos about respiratory physio, exercise (Yoga and Pilates), relaxation, nutrition and sleep, voice and swallowing, singing and returning to work. It also offers resources and advice that will benefit long covid sufferers and their families.

Julie Harvey, a freelance musician living in Stratherrick, works as a singing group leader for The Cheyne Gang. Attached is an image of the group performing at Holyrood (Scottish Parliament buildings) to raise awareness of Singing for Lung Health. All the singers have respiratory conditions. For more information on The Cheyne Gang, please visit their website – www.thecheynegang.com

Julie has contributed to the Long Covid support project demonstrating singing as an enjoyable and valuable way to help with breathlessness, fatigue, brain fog, anxiety and low mood. Many of these symptoms of Long Covid are also associated with other long-term health conditions, so the website may be of benefit to many people experiencing these symptoms.

Julie also runs 'Singing for Health & Wellbeing' at the Hub in Lower Foyers on 1st and 3rd Thursdays of every month, 2-4pm. All are welcome to attend.

Julie Harvey



LIBRA HOLISTICS

I am now into my 8th year since I set up Libra Holistic in Lower Foyers. I have continued to learn so much about how

holistic therapies and modern medicine complement each other.

I recently completed my training in Indian Head Massage, which is a therapy I have wanted to train in for many years. From enjoying many Indian head massages myself over the years from various therapists in various parts of the world and feeling the benefits long after receiving the massage, I really wanted to add this lovely relaxing, stress busting treatment to the services I already offer.

Indian head massage has been around since 1800 BC and was developed by the Rishis from the Himalayan region of India who practiced an ancient system of holistic medicine known as Ayurveda. In Ayurveda massage is an acknowledged method of cleansing and maintaining the health of the body, mind and spirit.

Indian head massage is a lovely relaxing treatment that helps reduce stress and anxiety, alleviate headaches, sinusitis,

removes stress and tension in the shoulders, neck, head and face. During the treatment a range of relaxing and stimulating massage techniques are used that help to detoxify the body by improving blood circulation and the lymphatic system.

An Indian head massage takes around 40 minutes and costs £30.

We live in such a busy fast-paced world with many stress triggers. When we don't manage our stress, it can cause a whole host of illnesses. Which is why it's so important that we regularly take time to slow down, relax and reconnect to ourselves.

In the future I look forward to doing further training and bringing more holistic therapy options to the area.

Lindsey McNaughton
Libra Holistics



NEWS FROM THE WHITEBRIDGE HOTEL

As we wave goodbye to a fun festive season that leaves behind fond memories and well wishes for 2023, we focus our energies on the season ahead and our promise to deliver authentic highland hospitality in the beautiful south Loch Ness.

Our events programme has proven to be a big success with locals and visitors, allowing us to plan ahead and bring new events to the Whitebridge Hotel. Our live music nights have been popular; we are working hard in the background to make connections with bands and solo artists to have regular live music nights that work in our small space. We are very interested in working with local musicians; our cosy wee bar is the perfect ambiance for some live music so please get in touch if you are interested.

Our joint working with Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust to deliver a subsidised afternoon fish tea for the community has proven to be a success, the offering brought many members of our community- young and old together over the winter months, giving people the opportunity to socialise in a warm welcoming space where fun activities have been enjoyed by many. Our Fish

Friday- fish tea continues to be well attended, it is always nice to see new faces, so why not book in for our Fish Friday tea and enjoy some new company on a Friday afternoon in the comfort of our old dining room?

We have been working on some small upgrades in the hotel to improve the customer experience. So far the response has been encouraging, people continue to congratulate us on our creative/ quirky interiors alongside our love for music and good food. Our discounted rooms brought many of our local customers to the Whitebridge for an overnight stay, where they could simply kick back and relax with a wee dram or take the opportunity to enjoy long winter walks with their four-legged friends.

The support from the local community and beyond continues to grow, we are very lucky to have so many locals who continue to support us. We would like to say a special thanks to Jan Stephen for planning and implementing our plants and flowers around the hotel each year. Your talents are appreciated and needed! Jan also supplies our wonderful jams and marmalades – which our customers love!

A massive thank you to Helen Wallace for her upcycling skills, Helen has done a fantastic job of painting and upholstering chairs throughout the hotel, the set of six in the coffee bar are greatly admired by many not to mention the unique one-off pieces in our hotel rooms. She is an incredibly talented lady with a creative eye for detail.

Thanks to Sue Erlam for support with our social media- you make it look easy! Your wealth of experience in online communications has been instrumental in supporting us to make effective changes in how we share information and communicate through online forums... thanks for inspiring us. We continue to work with local tradespeople to maintain the old girl and will always look to support local businesses through our building

maintenance program. We often recommend our tradespeople and can do this with confidence.

A reasonably busy winter has enabled us to hold our staffing levels into the season – this has been a massive challenge that we have proudly conquered! Holding on to our much-loved local staff has been a priority for the Whitebridge – these guys make Highland hospitality look easy and for that we truly can't thank them enough. They are a fantastic bunch of people who work hard and take much pride in their work.

We also have vacancies for the summer season 2023, these roles include – waiting / housekeeping/ kitchen porter/ cook or chef. Experience is not always necessary, the right attitude and an eagerness to get the job done is more desirable as training can be offered. We are flexible employers who do our best to meet the needs of our employees while meeting the needs of the business. Maybe you're a retired person looking for a few hours work a week to get out the house and meet people or a parent looking for school hours – whatever your personal situation is, we are keen to hear from you!

We do look forward to hosting our community and visitors over the spring/summer months and hope we can entice you to attend some of our events- you can follow us on Facebook for up-to date information on our events. If you don't use Facebook, you can sign-up to our mailing list where you will be kept up-to date with our programming. Our up and coming spring events include – a Murder Mystery night, Mothering Sunday and Easter.

If you haven't already taken advantage of your local's discount at the Whitebridge Hotel- why not treat yourself? Let our skilled kitchen team prepare you a lovely meal while you enjoy the benefits of the 10% discount (excluding events and special offers).

As we move into the summer season, we are feeling proud of our achievements and the positive impact we have on Scottish tourism. Our customer reviews have been outstanding and continue to grow – The Whitebridge Hotel has become a popular destination in the Scottish Highlands, where we welcome holiday makers from all over the world and continue to expand on our UK return tourism... the old girl is doing us proud!

Bookings – 01456 486226
Web: www.whitebridgehotel.co.uk

Bella & Lesley

FOYERS LODGE

Following a successful trial period, we're pleased to announce that we'll be continuing to offer our Friday night takeaway Fish n' Chips throughout the year. As our car park will be full with resident guest vehicles when the hotel is open, locals will be able to park in the lay-by opposite the Coach House and collect their takeaways between 4.30pm and 6pm from the kitchen door at the rear of the property. We'll post details on the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Facebook page or you can follow us on Facebook and Instagram - @foyerslodge - for regular updates. Occasionally we can offer tables for dinner to non-residents if we have space. We post these opportunities on our Facebook and Instagram 'stories' section either on the day or a few days before. Tables are usually for two although sometimes we can offer a table for four, further information and a sample menu can be found in the 'Food and Drink' section at www.foyerslodge.co.uk

We'd like to thank all those who have supported us in the past and look forward to feeding you again soon!

Anna & Phil, Foyers Lodge, Foyers IV2 6XT



COMMUNITY BUSINESS DIRECTORY ARE YOU LISTED?

If you run a business in the Stratherrick and Foyers area, and you would like a listing, please contact Steven on do@sfctrust.org.uk for more information. And please visit the Directory and support our local businesses!

<https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/directory/>

DIRECTORY FOR MAGAZINE- WEBSITE ENTRIES 2023

CAMERONS TEA ROOM AND FARM SHOP
Tel: 01456 486572

Calum Martin Production Services
Email: info@cmpsonline.net
Website: cmpsonline.net/

FOYERS HOUSE AND THE WEE DRAM
Website: foyershouse-lochness.com/mobile/

FOYERS STORES AND POST OFFICE
Tel: 01456 486233
Website: foyersstoresandwaterfallcafe.co.uk/

GILCHRIST BOILER SERVICES
Tel: 01463 242441
Mob: 07753 600399
Email: gilchristboilerservices@gmail.com

JOHANNA SCHUSTER – HIGHLAND ACUPUNCTURE
Tel: 07795 204 351
Mob: 07795 204 351
Email: highlandacupuncture@yahoo.com
Website: highlandacupuncture.co.uk

INSPIRATION-SCOTLAND
Tel: 01456 486649
Email: info@inspiration-scotland.com
Website: inspiration-scotland.com/en/

JULIE HARVEY MUSIC TUITION
Tel: 01456 289035
Email: mail@julienessmusic.co.uk
Website: julienessmusic.co.uk/

LIBRA HOLISTICS
Tel: 01456 486562
Website: libraholistics.com/

MEG'S MINDFUL MOVEMENT
Mob: 07712 579599
Email: meg.somerville@gmail.com
Website: megsmindfulmovement.co.uk/

SCOTSHAVEN COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES
Mob: 07808803445
Email: scotshaven.therapies@btinternet.com

THE WEE HAVEN AT SCOTSHAVEN
Mob: 07808 803445
Website: airbnb.co.uk/rooms/33110398?_set_bev_on_...

TIM LUCAS FOREST MANAGEMENT
Tel: 01456 486729
Mob: 07781341894
Email: tim@timlucasforestmanagement.co.uk

WILDSIDE HIGHLAND LODGES
Tel: 01456 486373
Email: info@wildsidehighlandlodges.com
Website: wildsidelodges.com/

WILLIAM FRASER HAULAGE
Mob: 07778 927591
Email: williegorthleck@tiscali.co.uk

JOIN THE TRUST

All residents of Stratherrick and Foyers are welcome to join the Trust. It is free, you get regular email updates and can vote at AGMs, or even become one of our volunteer directors. To join, complete the short form on line or call 07525 120966 and we will post one out to you.

Go on... we really want you to join!

www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/join-the-trust/

RETURN OF THE MOBILE LIBRARY

As many of you will be aware, the Mobile Library Van has been out of action for some time. Although the full service has not yet returned, a new service has been running in its place, where you can reserve books online via the Highlife Highland app, or by visiting www.highlifehighland.com/libraries/ and select 'Dingwall and Moray Firth Mobile Library' as your pick up point. We are pleased to let you know that we have now secured the Wildside Centre as a drop-off point, and the next visit will be on Wednesday 5th April at 11.15am, and every 4 weeks thereafter. This coincides with Wildside Wednesdays, so please pop in and have a cuppa while you're here!

Caroline Tucker
Project Co-Ordinator, SFCT

SATURDAY
22nd
JULY

SAVE THE DATE!

HIGHLAND GATHERING

12-4PM

CORRIEGARTH ESTATE

PIPE BAND / FALCONRY DISPLAY /
VINTAGE VEHICLES / HIGHLAND DANCING /
FOOD, DRINK & CRAFTS /
ACTIVITIES FOR ALL THE FAMILY



FANCY VOLUNTEERING? FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE EMAIL PC@SFCTRUST.ORG.UK



HAVE YOU AN IDEA FOR A MAGAZINE ARTICLE? OR A GREAT PHOTO YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

Give us a call on 07525 120966! We can type up what you say, then make sure you are happy with it and include it in the next issue!

MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS... AND PHOTOGRAPHER

This newsletter is made possible by community benefit funding from SSE Renewables, Greencoat and Green Highland Allt Luaidhe (228) Limited.

Thanks also to Russell for his fab photos.

