

Connect
monthly

**July
2016**



the **moray** council

My thoughts in this edition of **Connect** concern the council's Employee Survey, which is run every two years. 2016 is the mid-point between surveys and so I feel it's a good time to take stock to see whether things have improved since June 2015.

Some areas consistently scored highly in the survey, like enjoying the work we do and knowing what our duties and responsibilities are, and 2015 saw an overall improvement across the majority of areas surveyed. However a few areas were showing little or no improvement since 2013. These include reports of strained relationships at work, bullying, unacceptable behaviour and unrealistic time pressures. These first surfaced in the 2013 Employee Survey, were the subject of a further survey in 2014 and featured again in 2015 when 19% of those who responded said they had been subjected to this sort of behaviour.

The council listened to what was said and committed to improve and to provide a positive working environment for all. The Culture Working Group was set up in 2014, and includes the Council Leader, the Chief Executive, Trade Union representatives and officers from HR. The group agreed a detailed plan to address the issues in a co-ordinated way across the council, which focusses on improvements in areas such as realistic expectations on workload, mutual respect at all levels of the organisation, good two-way communication and positive behaviour. Progress is ongoing with many actions already completed including guidance issued clarifying what we mean by bullying and unacceptable behaviour, a review of the Employee Charter and resilience training given to key groups across the council.

The level of concern expressed in the survey varied across services, so it was agreed that some targeted work be done in services with the poorest survey results. This ensures employees who had recorded the greatest concerns in the survey also had an opportunity to help to resolve them. As many of the poorest results were in Environmental Services, this is where most of this work has been

targeted to date and I will continue to monitor progress carefully. I am also pleased to see a commitment in the Direct Services Service Plan for 2016-2019 to improvements in this area.

One of the problems described to me at these Service Learning Visits was the fact that our annual appraisal – the Employee Review and Development Plan (ERDP) – is not always being completed. This issue isn't confined to Environmental Services as 43% of those surveyed across the council in 2015 had not had an appraisal in the past 12 months, but within my department the figure was 63%, so clearly something has to change. The council now has a target for ERDPs completed of 100% by March 2017. Managers of some front-line services said it was difficult to free employees up for a lengthy 1:1 appraisal within normal working hours without this affecting service delivery. To address this, within Environmental Services we are reviewing how we use ERDPs to provide more opportunities for focussed 1:1 meetings and we'll be introducing these later this year.

These are just a few examples of the work ongoing to make the council a place we can all work together in a climate of respect and fairness. These are not just lofty aspirations but ideals we must put into practice on a daily basis. A fundamental part of that is speaking out when you are faced with behaviour which doesn't match these values. There are numerous ways to do this, including calling the Employee Assistance Line (0800 970 3980), speaking to your manager, Trade Union representative or calling HR advice line (01343 563261).

Rhona Gunn
Corporate Director
(Economic Development, Property & Infrastructure)



Inside story

Editorial

School's out for the summer! Wishing all of our colleagues in education a relaxing summer holiday – and you too if you're taking a break. Where are you heading off to? Let us know at connectnews@moray.gov.uk. Give a wave to our colleagues in the road crews if you pass them on your travels – they're surface dressing the roads to make your holiday travel smoother. See what they're up to on [page 3](#).

Our theme this month is health & safety so take a look at the Moray Management Methods on the [back page](#) to find out more. If you were proud in purple on Dementia Awareness Day, look out for your pics on [page 8](#), and we've got a special photo this month of all of our valued members of staff that received their long service presentations on [page 6](#). Thank you to everyone for your many years of service!



Tacky tar and spitting chips: it's a dirty job, but somebody's got to do it! Meet our colleagues on the roads team who keep you on the move across Moray. The annual surface dressing programme for the council's roads has begun and *Connect* caught up with the crew as they repaired two miles of rural road near Keith.

The condition of roads in Moray are in the top five percent in Scotland and the annual surface dressing programme – which takes place over eight weeks every summer – helps keep them in condition. The roads team is busy spreading 762,650 litres of tar and 5,087 tonnes of chippings over 50 miles of roads to ensure smooth travels for motorists on Moray's roads.

"The process is mobile and they are constantly on the move," says Ian Cameron, Acting Area Engineer (East). "The squads on the ground are pulled in from Keith, Dufftown, Tomintoul and Elgin depots, making it a big team effort."

Surface dressing is a roads maintenance operation which seals the surface and can restore skid resistance and texture to the road which is required due to general wear and tear, and is based on usage: rural roads with low use can go up to 10 to 20 years before needing it, while main roads with heavy usage will need to be treated sooner. Tommy Ogg, a road worker based at the Keith depot, has 31 years of experience

with us. *"The Roadworker job involves everything – driving, kerbing, tarring," he says. "Surface dressing takes seven to eight weeks, depending on the weather, as it can only be done in dry conditions. It'll hold the roads together for quite a few years."*

The programme is determined by a combination of the Roads Maintenance Technicians monitoring the road surfaces and deciding which require 'dressing' and in addition an annual survey is carried out by external contractors with specialist equipment to check skid resistance and surface texture. Using all this information, and working within the available budget, the programme for the year is decided.

Ahead of treatment, a tractor and mechanical sweeper verge-plough all sites and crews patch road surfaces where necessary to bring them to a condition that can be treated. Moray squads remove junction markings ahead of dressing and an external contractor removes the centre lines.



"I've always been on the roads. Driving is the best part"

Colin Duncan
Road Worker



When the surface dressing crew arrives on site, traffic is halted and the road surface is sprayed with bitumen emulsion – the two tankers at each site hold a total 17,000 litres! A second machine spreads chippings and a roller is driven over to settle the chips into the bitumen, with any bare spots filled in by hand. After a few minutes the road is ready for traffic. It gets a mechanical sweep to remove surplus chippings after the surface has 'settled,' then teams re-mark the lines and replace any cat's eyes.

"The process is mobile and they are constantly on the move"

Ian Cameron,
Acting Area Engineer (East)

Several sites have work ongoing at any time with sweeping ahead and behind, placing and collecting signs, verge-ploughing and patching

ahead, then re-lining behind in addition to surface dressing itself. Mike O'Brien, Roads Maintenance Technician (East Area) who manages the operation, explains: *"We liaise with all the public utilities to try and avoid any work conflicts and notify many householders if they are likely to be directly affected. We always try to accommodate or avoid any pre-arranged functions."*

John Jackson, the surface dressing team supervisor, has 34 years' experience with the council, 25 of



The road surface is sprayed with bitumen emulsion



Loading the hopper, while the spreader is still moving forward



The spreader width is constantly adjusted to fit the road width precisely

those in surface dressing. *"New tar roads get surfaced after four or five years to seal them, recycled roads get surface dressed one year after to seal. A recycled road is one where the surface is too poor to be patched: a machine drives over it and churns up the remaining surface, mixes it with stones and bitumen (similar to what goes into tar) and re-lays it. The recycling programme is going on right now, taking two to three weeks. This is done by a contractor, and council employees surface dress the site a year or two after. Recycling the roads is a new thing we've done over the past few years, and it has been very successful."*

The site team consists of around 25 people – a supervisor, general foreman, chipper operator, roller operator, sign

"Recycling the roads is a new thing we've done over the past few years"

John Jackson,
Team Supervisor

operators, five lorry/tanker drivers, three sweeper operators, up to six lorry drivers depending on the size and type of site, five men 'on the ground' handling traffic control, training and masking ironwork, and a record-keeper. Colin Duncan, a driver/roadman, has been with the council road crews for 38 years. *"We work with the same crew for surface dressing, but there are different squads for different jobs. I've always been on the roads. Driving is the best part,"* he says, admiring the view of the hills around Sillyearn in the Grange from his cab.

When lunchtime comes, the crew takes a hard-earned break, enjoying their sandwiches in the sunshine. While surface dressing is a seasonal programme, the road crews don't take it easy the rest of the year – in winter they're handling snow clearance, and in the spring they sometimes have to plough blown sand away!

The road crews are constantly involved in patching, drainage, and general maintenance – whatever it takes to keep Moray moving.



For the Roads Crew, it's chips with everything!



The roller helps to bed the chippings into the emulsion



Inspecting and patching any parts that are missed is done by hand

Long Service Awards



Dedication and loyalty were rewarded at a ceremony in Elgin Town Hall at which almost 40 members of staff were presented with long-service awards. Convener Councillor Allan Wright performed the honours as he presented framed certificates for 40, 30 and 20 years' service. He calculated that the recipients' total years of service amounted to more than 900.

As part of the ceremony, short films were shown featuring two of the long servers – training supervisor Donald MacKenzie and cook supervisor Aileen McDonald – talking about their jobs and their time with the council.

Recipients were:

40 years: Marshall Halliday, George Mitchell.

30 years: Dianne Collie, Ann Garner, Graeme Shanks, Donald MacKenzie, Catherine McDonald, Anne Reid, Malcolm Thomson, Fiona Miller, Stewart Pirie.

20 years: Andrew Kelly, Linda Walls, Lorraine Clayton, George Gregor, Kay Turner, Iain Macdonald, Gillian Ewen, Tracey Sutherland, Allison Broadley, Fiona Innes, Alison Murdoch, Aileen McDonald, Marjory Nicoll, Barbara Smith, Deborah Maclean, Karen Ferguson, Gillian Logan, Heather Scott, Norman Christie, Brian Davidson, Graham Findlay, Lily Mulholland, Rosanne Clark, Colette O'Neill, Carolyn Mowat, Iain Valentine, Robert Hair.





Dementia aware

Colleagues from the council's Health & Social Care service were involved in public awareness sessions during Alzheimer Scotland's Dementia Awareness Week.

Sessions were held at the Tesco stores in Elgin, Buckie and Forres where they took the opportunity to promote the local 'dementia friendly' community project as well as the range of groups and activities available for older people in Moray.

Visitors to the mobile information bus also had the chance to meet NHS Grampian staff and get health and wellbeing advice in addition to information on what people can do to reduce the risk of developing dementia.

The **wear-it-purple** day on Friday 03, June, raised £720 for Alzheimer Scotland. Thank you to everyone who donated and took part!



<< Cllr Lorna Creswell
with her collecting tin



Carbon Connect



MRC Super Savers

Moray Resource Centre (MRC) has saved a massive £1,000 off of their energy bill in the past year, thanks to the efforts of Energy Champions Eleanor Devenney and Terry-Jo Bell. Eleanor and Terry-Jo, pictured here with some of MRC's team of super savers and clients, attribute the savings as a result of raising awareness. *"We've always been good about things like switching photocopiers off at night, but we have become more aware," Eleanor says. "It's good housekeeping. Nothing huge has changed; lots of small changes have helped us achieve this."*

The MRC team took turns using an energy monitor in each office as well as the kitchen to see how much their electricity is costing in real time. An energy awareness session was the focus of a team meeting, followed by daily energy 'facts of the day' and participation in worldwide Earth Hour. The team has shared their energy awareness with their clients too, who are now unplugging battery-powered wheelchairs when they are finished charging. Switching off computer monitors when away from desks, and reminding colleagues to do the same, has also made a difference.

Eleanor says: *"We actually have more staff working out of the offices here than we did at the start, and more staff equals more computers and more power, but we have still managed to make this savings!"*

Could you make a difference too? Be an energy champion in your workplace! Contact the Energy Office at energy@moray.gov.uk.

Welcome Aboard!

If you're off on your holidays in July, have a wonderful time! But before you go, stop and say 'welcome aboard' to the seven colleagues that we welcomed through their corporate induction at the end of June.

Tara Gaughan has been with us for a year; her temporary role in Accountancy has become permanent.



Derek Reid has been with us since February, in consultancy as a bridge and water course inspector.



Yasmin Humphries has been our colleague for five years, but has a new role as a Project Assistant in the self-directed support team.



Jo Foggo has been with us for five months as a Clerical Assistant in Housing and Property.



Emma Wagstaff joined us in May as a Clerical Assistant in Housing and Property.



Gareth Williams joined us in June as a Performance Officer for the Moray Health and Social Care Partnership (MHSCP).



Shannen Leil joins the team as a Technical Assistant in Housing and Property.



If you're new to the crew, sign up now for your induction to get an overview of the council and its operations. It's a great chance to meet other new employees as well! Just log into **CLIVE**, search for 'Corporate Induction'.

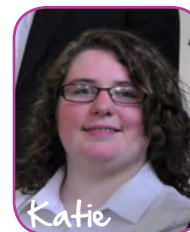
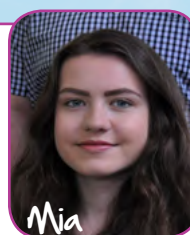
Six teenagers are getting their first taste of work experience after joining the council as part of the Moray schools Career Ready programme.

They are spending four weeks sampling various aspects of work within the council and developing skills that will stand them in good stead once their school days are over.

Career Ready is designed to help young people bridge the gap between education and work by giving them access to a wide range of workplace experiences.

Mia Ingram, 16, from Speyside High School, is working with the council's sports development section while Nathan Mather, also 16, from Buckie High, is learning the ropes with HR.

The Career Ready youngsters include four from Lossiemouth High – Katie O'Neill, 17, and 16-year-old Latoyha Stewart-McLeod, who are with education and social care, and Ross McCulloch and Callum Hawkins, both 16, who are with transportation and IT respectively.



Bumper Big Birthdays

There has been a bumper crop of big birthdays lately! Anne-Marie Ballantyne celebrated 'the new 30' with the help of her colleagues in Education. Colin Sowden in Estates, Peter Jones in PR and Andy Simpson, head teacher of Elgin High School, have all recently celebrated the big 6-0, while Alex Burrell and Stuart Beveridge in Estates have both marked their half-century. Many happy returns to all!



Andy Simpson celebrating 60!



Anne-Marie Ballantyne hits '30'

New head at the High!

It has also been announced that Hugh McCulloch will be joining us as Head Teacher of Elgin High School in October. Welcome Hugh!



Hugh McCulloch celebrating new post



Margaret Purdie leaving us after 24 years

Bon Voyage!

Diane Vivian started at Dyke Primary 29 years ago, working just six hours a week and getting paid at the end of term! She was a great support to generations of families and begins her retirement with two months of travelling France with her husband.

Helen Mutch is also leaving us, retiring from her role as Clerical Assistant WPO in Environmental Services after a career of long and varied service in different departments.

We also say farewell to Margaret Purdie, who completes 24 years with us in education business support.

To all of our valued colleagues who move on this month, thank you for your hard work and dedication. We wish you all the best!

Each month we aim to feature various coming and goings from the council family; send your news and photos to: connectnews@moray.gov.uk.



Diane Vivian leaving us after 29 years



Hot Topic 6 Health & Safety

This is the sixth in the series of articles highlighting the Moray Management Methods which were developed to help provide a brief, clear and consistent statement of expectations and responsibilities of council managers. This month the spotlight falls on health and safety.

As a large organisation with a diverse and complex range of services, the council has a devolved safety management system in place that seeks to ensure that risk assessment & risk control are undertaken at a departmental level. Central support comprising of advice, assistance, investigation and monitoring is provided to enable the system to function.

This also involves developing the health and safety policies and practices for use within services to ensure the continued health, safety and welfare of all employees.

The main responsibilities for managers are to:

- ✓ ensure current risk assessments are complete and the risk control measures are communicated to both employees and if necessary, service users, and
- ✓ monitor the operational implementation of safe working methods and review practice.

More specifically, this means managers must:

- ✓ co-ordinate health and safety issues in their section to ensure that necessary risk assessments, safety checks, tests, inspections and examinations are carried out on time
- ✓ investigate any failures to get to the root causes and take effective corrective actions so that improvements are made
- ✓ ensure results are communicated to all employees and service users as required
- ✓ monitor current practice of safe working methods to ensure all employees comply with relevant standards, and
- ✓ ensure regular review of the operational implementation of health and safety policies and procedures within teams.

To give us some level of assurance that the above activity will improve things as regards stopping accidents, ensuring no ill effects on health and reducing damage to equipment and buildings, there are a few fundamental things which must be built in to the way you do things here at the Moray Council.

- ✓ Your leadership is vital to securing good standards in health and safety. You must make a clear commitment to stopping accidents and back up your words with actions.
- ✓ You must have a clear focus on controlling the most serious risks first and with better assurance of success.
- ✓ Active involvement of the people who face the risks in any assessment or improvement exercise is vital.
- ✓ In a fair and honest way, holding people to account when things go wrong is critical to system success.