

# Connect

monthly

November  
2016

A graphic of a yellow and black striped sign with a blue clip at the top. The sign contains the text 'Access ALL AREAS' in white on a black background, a geometric pattern of triangles below it, and two barcodes at the bottom.

**Access**  
ALL AREAS





Dear Colleagues,

**I'm sure many of you, like me, will have been following the Trump/Clinton debate in America with a mixture of shock, horror and embarrassment. Politics is a broad church and good debate is a prerequisite to developing strong policies. But should political debate ever descend to this level of personal rather than principled attack? Whatever happened to professional respect? And if presidential candidates can't even demonstrate that basic level of inter-personal skill, should they really be trusted to run a superpower?**

This might sound like a pointless rant from me, but respect is a big issue for Moray Council too. We know from our last staff survey in 2015 that too many of us felt our workplace culture was poor, with issues around feeling valued and being treated badly. Being respected in our daily working lives is something most of us feel should be a given, but it's not always easy to achieve. It's not just about what we say, but also about whether we listen and value one another's opinions, and whether our body language backs that up.

So what can we do about that? Well, in general terms, we need to give ourselves a bit of time to think, listen to and empathise with our colleagues. Sometimes people don't realise the way their behaviour is affecting others. They have no insight. The only way to improve things is to get the issues out in the open, and discuss them. That's what the Employee Survey did for us, and since then there are signs that things are getting better. Work has been ongoing both corporately and in a number of services to encourage open discussion about workforce culture. In Housing and Property Services work is ongoing to promote positive behaviours and the six corporate values.

Although we are still some way from a complete fix, when myself and my colleagues in CMT go out to visit services, we are hearing fewer complaints about this issue and also some encouraging stories of better interaction within teams. If you feel differently, please let us know.

To close, it's always worth emphasising the importance of humour in strong working relationships, so here's a new take from Bill Murray about many of our troubles:

*"A few decades ago we had Johnny Cash, Bob Hope and Steve Jobs. Now we have no Cash, no Hope and no Jobs. Please don't let Kevin Bacon die."*

Rhona Gunn  
CORPORATE DIRECTOR

Welcome to November's *Connect*!

We're delighted to feature our cheerful friends in the Access Point teams this month. They do a sterling job at the front line, where people skills and a deep knowledge of the services we deliver is essential.

Something that emerged from our interviews with them, and that many of us don't consider as we go about our various jobs, is the cause and effect of what we do. If we've done something or behaved in a way that's less than perfect, it's these good people that often bear the brunt of complaints. A tough gig when the cause of the problem is not even their fault! Something to think about as we all interact with our customers.

Next month we have a special 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary edition, marking the time Moray Council has been in existence. Were you here then? What was it like? Smoke-filled rooms? We've got some old pictures but would love to have more, so if you've got anecdotes or anything we can scan for December's *Connect* we'd love to hear from you. Call or email us: [connectnews@moray.gov.uk](mailto:connectnews@moray.gov.uk)

Enjoy the read  
**The Ed**

## TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Raymond Shewan  
PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Jess Barbier-Marsden  
PROJECT OFFICER

Angus McNicholl  
DESIGNER

### CONTRIBUTORS THIS MONTH

Lindsey Jackson, Brenda Harvey and Jane Fordyce



For many people, the public face of the council is represented by the Access Point teams. Our 21 colleagues in the Access Points – located in Buckie, Elgin, Forres, and Keith – meet and assist members of the public on a daily basis, providing information and answering queries on a wide range of topics. This month, **Connect** visited the teams for an access all areas look at life on the frontline.

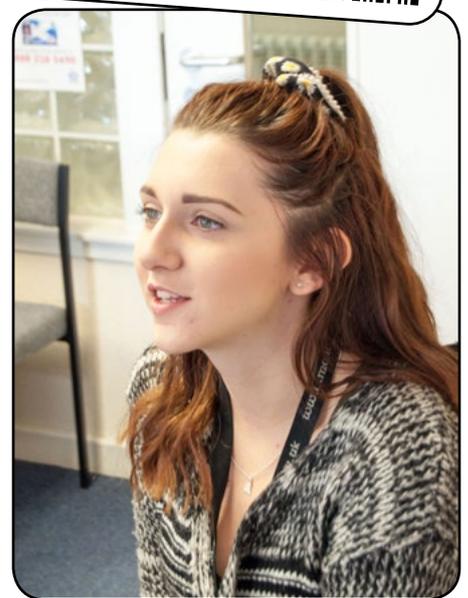
The teams deal with all queries related to the council, and there is no such thing as a typical day when you're dealing with this much variety.

Forres-based Eden Naylor said "it changes every day, but generally there's a lot of housing repairs and revenues."

Iain Grieve, who has worked at the Buckie point for a year, agrees: "You get asked questions from left field all the time – people come in and ask about something you've never heard of! It really can be that varied; no two days are the same. There's always a highlight of the day – a moment where you either say 'that's why I do this every day!' or 'why do I do this every day?!'"

The teams help between 20 to 100 people in a day at each point with everything from form-filling to finding a bed for the night. In addition they coordinate pool cars and meeting room bookings, record service requests (street lighting, roads or housing repairs) and complaints, handle applications for bus passes, lunch grants, clothing grants, termination of tenancies, and the Scottish Welfare Fund. The Forres team handles bookings for the town hall too.

The teams are also the first point of contact with regard to homelessness, providing help to people who are or about to become homeless. Crucially, they are also receiving training to



"It changes every day, but generally there's a lot of housing repairs and revenues."

Eden Naylor



Some of the team at the Elgin Access Point: Bryan Easson, Caroline Sibbald, Tricia Hellyer, Christine Cunningham & John Ogilvie

*“Routine repairs are one of the things that people get most angry about.”*

Mark Walton

provide advice on benefits and council tax – which came under their remit about 18 months ago and forms a large part of the queries that they answer on a daily basis.

lain said that 50% of their workload is revenues.

Mark Walton started out in revenues 10 years ago and finds his background extremely useful. *“Revenues is fairly complicated,”* he says. *“It can be difficult without background knowledge.”*

If all this wasn't enough, they often have to explain that the council is not responsible for everything.

*“Sometimes customers get frustrated that we're not the DVLA, Jobcentre, etc.,”* says Eden. *“We can only deal with council services but some customers expect us to be able to do everything.”*



*The advent of being able to do things online has helped, but staff have noticed that the older generation still prefers to come in and speak to people in person. But some come in just to have a chat!”*

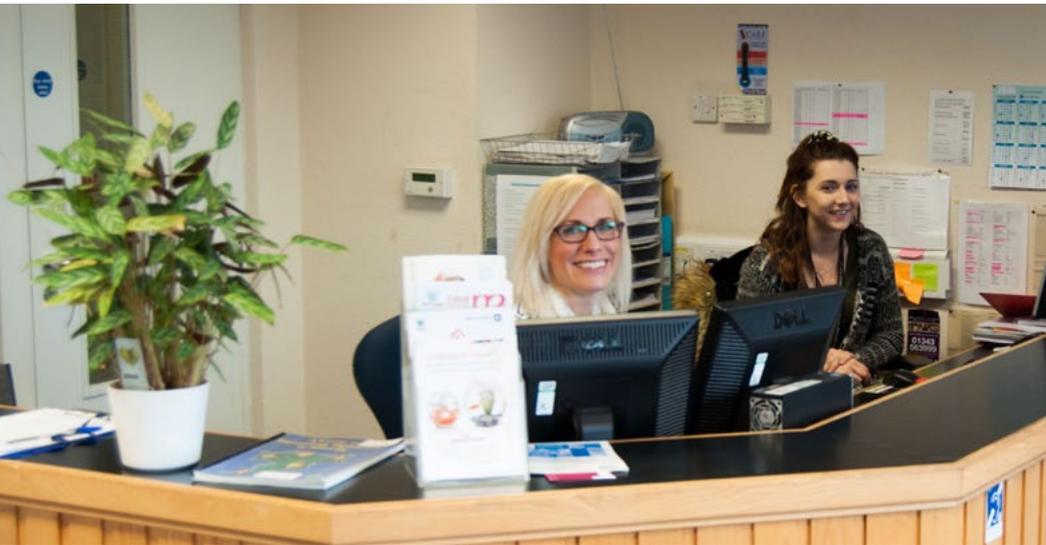
What *Connect* noticed from all of the Access Point team members is their passion for the job and for helping people.

lain says: *“It gives you a sense of satisfaction knowing that you've done something useful for someone else. Most people don't want or need to understand the inner workings of tax, but they do want to know how much they need to pay and when it's due. If you can help them so they go away easy in their mind, especially elderly folk, you feel quite satisfied.”*

Kathryn Adam, who works at the Forres point, says: *“You've just got to be patient and have a professional manner. I do enjoy it, you've got to have different hats on all the time; you have to know about everything. And if not, there is always someone on the end of the phone if you're stumped so we don't feel alone.”*

Eden agrees: *“I like the fact that it is different every day. I love the people I work with, it's a great team. And the knowledge that you've helped somebody is great as well.”*

Responsibility for all four Access Points lies with Sandy Livingstone, Customer Services Team Leader. He tells *Connect* he's proud of his staff:



Some of the team at the Forres Access Point: Kathryn Adam & Eden Naylor



*"You've got to have different hats on all the time; you have to know about everything"*

Kathryn Adam

Eden agrees: *"The majority of people are fine. If they come in and they're having a hard time, you know they're going through a lot; if they're upset you don't take it personally."*

Many of us may not realise it, but our actions can have a direct impact on the Access Point teams. People will often come in to the Access Points to make a complaint about a service or staff member in other departments, venting their frustration at the Access Point team members, not at you!

*"It's frustrating when we hear that no one has called the customer back or lets them know what's going on,"* says Mark. *"Emergencies are dealt with very well, but routine repairs are one of the things that people get most angry about."*

Understanding how all our roles fit together is the first step to providing a seamless service – at the Access Point and beyond.



*"It gives you a sense of satisfaction knowing that you've done something useful for someone else."*

Iain Grieve

*"Everyone seems to enjoy the variety of the work and the customer interaction. Some have been with us for quite a long time – in Elgin, Caroline Sibbald and Jacqueline Reid have been with us for about 20 years! The ability to listen and empathise with people is key, and a desire to help people."*

The teams find that local knowledge is invaluable. *"It helps to know the town, especially for repair complaints like street lighting,"* Iain says. Mark agrees, adding: *"it's not so great to live locally when people stop you on a Saturday in the supermarket to ask about things! I enjoy the face-to-face contact though. The advantage of local offices is the camaraderie, all working together."*

But what about customers in distress? Mark says, *"People come in upset, stressed, once even suicidal – we've seen it all. You learn how to deal with people: not to antagonise, but not to give in."*

# HR Noticeboard

## EMPLOYEE CONFERENCE 2016 ROUND-UP

Given the £200 million size of the council's budget the figures can sometimes seem like Monopoly money, and that's a theme that was picked up at this year's three employee conferences in Forres, Buckie and Elgin. A specially designed 'Monopoly' board took centre stage as around 80 employees from across services were asked to debate the real and serious issue of how to achieve savings of £12m alongside the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service.

We're all familiar with this year's theme of 'Shaping the Future', which has formed the Team Talk dialogue over the last few months. It's fair to say that although reducing our spending is not a new challenge, the scope and scale was really brought into focus by the Moray-opoly discussions at the conference. Not many of our groups managed to find the £12m target but along the way they were able to find out more about each of the 60+ service areas and consider where they might make reductions and where investment should be prioritised. Of course, as in the game and indeed in the life of the council, there were some unexpected events that groups had to make budget provision for during the course of the game.

The discussions were thought-provoking and challenging and exposed the very difficult choices that will have to be made around the future of our services.

After all the deliberations of the Moray-opoly games attendees enjoyed viewing some digital stories from colleagues – Pam Gowans, Chief Officer (Health and Social Care) shared her experience of Shaping the Future of two large organisations, Darren Wells (Apprentice Mechanic) talked about his experience as a Mechanic within Fleet Service and last year's STAR Awards Winners (Rhona Wood and Kirsty Dunlop, Home School Link Workers) told of the work they do which resulted in the Award.

Not all news was bad and Roddy Burns, Chief Executive, highlighted how a positive approach can really generate success – Forres winning a category from the Britain in Bloom competition entirely community-led, and Moray Dial-a-Bus winning a national award with some innovative thinking and determination from the officers involved.

Council convener, Allan Wright, and leader, Stewart Cree, opened and closed the conferences between them, commenting again how useful and interesting it is to meet and speak with front-line staff and about the challenges both within their services and that the council faces and hearing their thoughts and ideas about changes that might help.

Thanks to all those who attended and took part in the event. Feedback from the conferences will be included as part of the wider engagement programme.



## TEAM TALK

### Budget Round-up

We've been busy recently discussing community planning and budget gaps, and receiving suggestions from everyone.

The first of the council's two major community engagement exercises related to the Community Planning Partnership's ten year plan, 'Moray 2026: A plan for the future.'

Recently updated, this long-term plan is prepared by Moray's Community Planning Partnership (CPP) working together and is aimed at improving people's lives. To help development of the plan, the CPP undertook some public engagement activity to help the local community influence it.

To find out what was on the Moray public's mind, a ten-week series of live question-and-answer sessions was hosted on the CPP's Facebook page from May to July. Topics including housing, early years' development, and community safety were covered, with experts answering the public's concerns in real time. In addition a six question survey – a key part of the CPP's six-point action plan – was carried out in both online and hard-copy versions: 143 responses were received, representing a respectable 5% response rate. The number one priority identified by respondents was health, followed by education, services, and employment. 37% of those that replied were from Keith and Buckie, 29% of respondents were from Elgin and 14% hailed from Forres. The information gathered from these activities will help develop the CPP's 'Moray 2026' plan, the council's overarching corporate plan which also includes the financial plan.



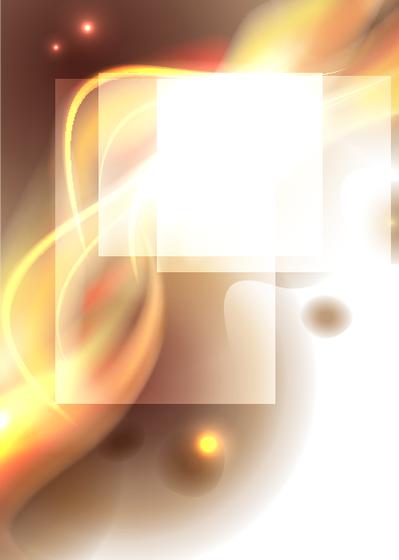
Over the last seven weeks – from August to mid-October – our council budget conversation took place on social media, via email, a focus group, Citizens' Panel and surveys. Among this plethora of platforms we had some very considered suggestions from you and your teams, clearly informed by your knowledge of how the council works.

In all we've had 60 emails, 145 completed surveys, 450 people engaging with us on Facebook, nearly 70 people attending the focus group, and results from the Citizens' Panel members. This is in addition to the surveys, 'Bright Ideas' and emails from you. It's been by far the most comprehensive consultation we've ever done.

All these responses are being collated and analysed this month by our colleagues in the research and information team, and will be presented to councillors in the administration's Service Development Group in November to assist them with their budget deliberations. A detailed report on budget options will be presented to the Full Council at a special meeting on December 14.

What has emerged from the feedback is a clear indication of people's priorities, and what they consider the council's should be. Clear priorities that emerged for many were education and health and social care, but in delivering these vital services some economies were suggested.

Details of these and others will be in the December report to council, and we'll carry a review in our January *Connect*.



# Hot Topic 10 Procurement

In order to provide services effectively to the local community the council has to buy a wide range of goods, services, works and construction. While not everyone will be involved in this in their day-to-day job, the Public Procurement Reform Programme puts it at the centre of Scotland's economic recovery. Procurement is part of policy development and service delivery and should be both business-friendly and socially responsible. As a council we must be able to show that a consistent and equitable approach is taken when dealing with suppliers.

Following council procurement procedures ensures we deliver value for money and quality based on the principles of openness and fairness as well as effective contract management for the duration of contracts. It also ensures compliance with all legal requirements associated with procurement including tendering arrangements, health and safety arrangements and other relevant legislation such as equalities and the environment.

All services produce, by referral to all managers involved in procurement or commissioning, an annual procurement action plan that commits the resources to the required planned procurement activities from tendering through to contract management.

Each plan is reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure that the council requirements are being delivered.

Managers should do this by:

- ✓ Ensuring all procurement action within their services is contained within the service/departmental procurement action plan
  - ✓ Ensuring all staff involved in procurement undertake procurement training and regular refreshers
  - ✓ Scrutinising contract monitoring information at least quarterly if not more frequently against key performance indicators or supply levels
  - ✓ Working closely with the supplier to ensure service delivery is at acceptable levels, and any required improvements are actively managed to redress the situation.
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HARNESSING  
THE POWER OF  
THE SUN

# Carbon Connect



**Swimming pools are intensive energy consumers and the recent refurbishment of Forres Pool has provided an opportunity to incorporate a number of efficiency improvements which will realise lower energy costs and improved conditions for years to come.**

A key energy-consuming component of a swimming pool is the heating of water and thus a roof-mounted solar thermal array was perfectly suited to the needs of the building. The solar installation comprises 18 solar collector panels located on the roof of the pool, covering an area of 79 m<sup>2</sup>.

Sun-heated water is used to heat the pool water and water for the showers. When required, gas boilers automatically provide additional heat to meet the needs of the facility. It is predicted that the solar thermal array will generate nearly 25,000 kWh of heat energy every year, which equates to an annual saving of over £3,600.

But that was not all:

## **New ventilation equipment with heat recovery**

For a comfortable environment within a pool hall, both the water and air needs to be heated to approximately 30°C. This means that the air becomes laden with moisture which needs to be exhausted outside. With the old system, replacement air was taken from outside and had to be heated up, which consumed a lot of energy. The new system now extracts as much heat as possible from the exhaust air to pre-heat the incoming replacement air, which is predicted to save £15,000 every year.

## **Building insulation**

Both from a need to improve the current condition of the building and also to improve energy efficiency, insulation standards were significantly improved throughout the facility, including walls, roofs, windows and equipment. Combined, the increased insulation standard is expected to save over £30,000 every year.

## **Other measures**

In addition, the opportunity was also taken to replace:

- ✓ the lighting system with a long-life modern equivalent
- ✓ the boilers which serve both Forres Academy and the Pool
- ✓ pool filtration equipment and associated pumps.



14th - 27th November

# TO RUSSIA WITH LOVE



In last month's *Connect* you read about how Ishbel Ewen, our Design Coordinator, and her husband Mark are raising money to fund treatment for Mark's Secondary Progressive Multiple Sclerosis (SPMS). Diagnosed this time last year, Mark's condition – for which there is no known cure – has grown progressively worse and he has had to give up his work, a frustrating experience for someone previously so active. Treatment is available, but it isn't covered by the NHS so Mark must travel to Moscow, Russia for the one-month course... which costs a whopping £41,000.

To help raise awareness and money for the life-changing stem cell treatment, which should arrest Mark's symptoms so that they don't get any worse, 25 of our colleagues – primarily from the Corporate Policy and Community Support Units – chose to walk, jog, run, swim and cycle the distance from Moray to Moscow in just two weeks – all 2,347 miles of it!

Averaging a distance of 6.3 miles per person per day for all 15 days, the team travelled 2,850 miles in total, clocking up their miles both on their own as they walked or cycled into work, together at lunchtime taking walks and going for group cycles on the new pool bikes, and during activities in their free time. Best of all, £889 has been donated by colleagues across the council towards the target!

At the time of going to print, Ishbel and Mark have raised almost £28,000 from donations, their social media page and events, which is 68% of their target. *"A massive thank you to everyone who took part and donated,"* says Ishbel. *"We are both quite overwhelmed. Mark starts his treatment in Moscow on 22 November."*

If you are able to help Ishbel and Mark on the rest of their journey, please donate the price of a cup of *chai* (Russian for 'tea') – or more if you can! – by feeding the piggy bank in HQ room 207 or by visiting the online donation site at:

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/mark-ewen-3](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/mark-ewen-3).

WISHING THEM BOTH THE BEST  
AS THEY PREPARE TO HEAD OFF  
TO MOSCOW.

# NORTH COAST 500

Walking Challenge



You've probably heard that we should all aim to walk at least 10,000 steps per day to be considered 'active' and not 'sedentary', but do you?

The Healthy Working Lives (HWL) Group challenge you to walk 10,000 steps per day during November whether it be by doing exercise, housework, etc. – it all adds up.

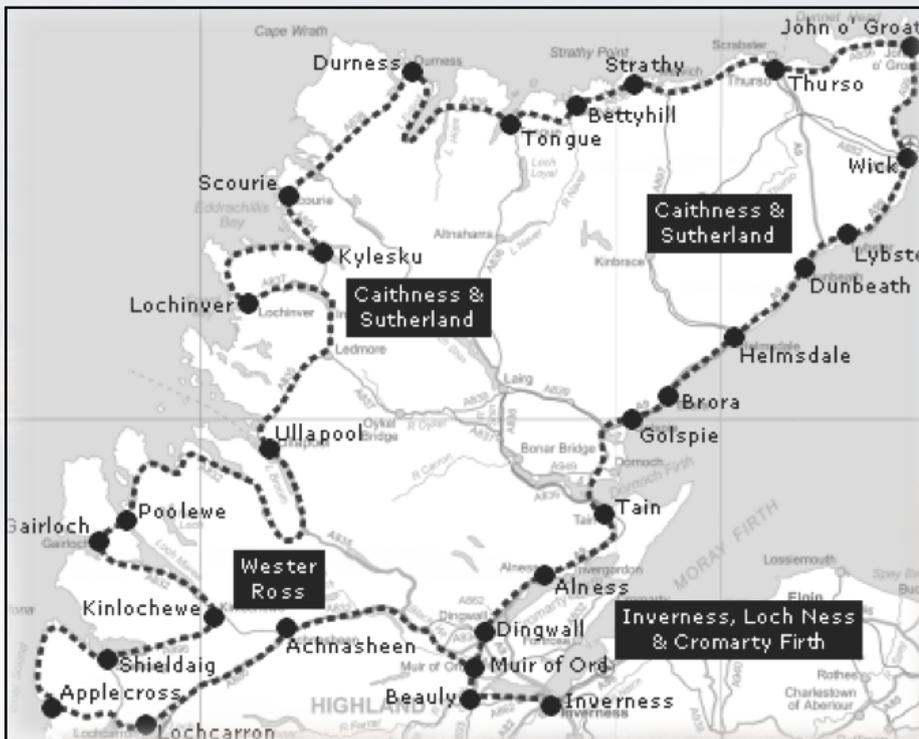
This year you will be walking the North Coast 500 where for these purposes every mile = 2,000 steps. See how far you can get in four weeks. Maybe you will even start again and make it back to your favourite place along the route! Register a team and encourage and support each other to keep going and cover as many miles as you can.

You will need:

- ✓ A team of four
- ✓ Four pedometers (not supplied)
- ✓ Walk as many steps as possible between 14 November and 11 December
- ✓ All teams that register will compete to finish the scenic route first – so try and aim for a bit more!!

For a registration form and information sheet please contact [kirsti.souter@moray.gov.uk](mailto:kirsti.souter@moray.gov.uk)

Please have registration forms back by 11 November 2016.



# Dink-me-up



The annual coffee morning in aid of breast cancer research was very well supported once again, with lots of tasty cakes and raffle prizes.

The 'Wear it Pink' event, held in the breakout area in the HQ building on Friday 28 October, raised an amazing **£1,255**.

Many thanks to all those who helped make it such a great success!



# interchange

It's been almost a week since your brand new intranet, the interchange, launched and since going live we've had an incredible 16,495 views on the homepage alone.

Hopefully you've had some time to explore the new site, and are finding the content on there more user-friendly and easy to navigate. You'll notice, of course, that not everything on the previous intranet has been transferred. You won't lose information on the previous site that hasn't been moved across yet. In fact, you can access our former intranet from any page on the interchange by selecting the 'Old Intranet' button at the top right hand corner of every page.

We're working with services across the organisation to update and refresh information, so that everything you read on the interchange is accurate and relevant. This will take time, and as soon as content has been signed off, we'll make it available on the new site.

The next phase of work concentrates on making more of the interchange available 24/7 to all of you, whether you're accessing it from work, home or on-the-move. We'll also be adding more service-related information, so keep checking the interchange for updates.

Please let us know what you think about the site so far, you can 'Rate a Page' on the interchange, or send your feedback to [webmaster@moray.gov.uk](mailto:webmaster@moray.gov.uk).



# ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Spelling it out: Moray's armed forces spell out the covenant acronym

## Our Commitment to the Armed Forces

A new Armed Forces Covenant has been signed between Moray's community leaders and the military. This reflects the big changes to the community that have taken place since the original Armed Forces Community Covenant was signed in 2012, particularly the arrival of the Army to Kinloss Barracks.

The Covenant enshrines fair access to health, education, employment and housing to current service personnel, veterans and their families.

The recent changes, coupled with the announcement of RAF Lossiemouth's development as a base for the new P8 Poseidon aircraft, make the reinforcing of Moray's commitment to service personnel, veterans and their families particularly relevant. A recent success for the Armed Forces Covenant in the area is the council's introduction of a pilot scheme, in partnership with the General Teaching Council of Scotland, to enable conditional registration for teachers who qualified outside of Scotland.

Signing the Covenant are (L to R) Capt Chris Smith MA FCIPD, Royal Navy, Naval Regional Command Scotland and Northern Ireland; Councillor Allan Wright, Chairman of the Moray Community Planning Board and Convener of the Moray Council; Group Captain Paul Godfrey, Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth; and Lt Col Jim Webster, CO 39 Engr Regt and Base Commander Kinloss Barracks.





## ERS Silver Award

On 10 November Councillor Chris Tuke, our Armed Forces Champion, is attending a ceremony at Edinburgh Castle to receive the Ministry of Defence's Employers Recognition Scheme (ERS) on behalf of the council. The ERS Silver Award has been awarded to reflect our positive stance towards employees who are members of the armed forces community – whether veterans, currently serving, or family members – and our commitment to supporting military personnel and their families. Moray joins 12 other councils in Scotland at silver level.

The council has a record of backing the armed forces, having been registered as a supportive employer in relation to reservists carrying out duties with the Army Reserve

– formerly known as the Territorial Army – since 2003. Our current colleagues include veterans of the regular and reserve forces, as well as spouses of currently serving military personnel. Cllr Tuke says: *"I hope that the principles of the Covenant can continue long into the future and my gratitude goes to all involved in making Moray a great place for our serving Armed Forces personnel and their families to be based and, often, to settle on retirement."*

# BOOK YER BIKE

A system is now in operation for booking pool bikes from the annexe car park at council HQ.

The bikes – there are 10 in total – are located in the cycle shelter and information on how to book them has been posted on the intranet.

The bikes are an alternative to taking a pool car for a short journey and will help to free up the pool cars for longer journeys.

Staff booking out a bike will be supplied with a key to the cycle shelter and each of the bikes is numbered and has waterproof panniers, a combination lock and an Allen key for adjusting the seat height.

The bikes come in different frame sizes and there are two ladies' bikes; the others are unisex.

Near the cycle shelter is a work stand with tools for adjusting the seat and a pump, although the tyres are checked regularly and should not need any attention.

The bikes will undergo a programme of regular maintenance but if any problems are found they should be reported on returning the keys or via the online fault form.

Helmets are also available (although at this stage it is up to individual users whether to use them).

Pool bikes can be taken home overnight or for a weekend to encourage staff to cycle to and from work.

There may also be the opportunity for staff to take part in guided trips at lunchtime to familiarise them with local cycle routes around Elgin.

Finally, as an added incentive, the first 20 people to book a bike can claim an Urban Freedom buff which can be collected from the traffic team in Room 228 at HQ.

