



**March
2017**



COUNCIL
MAY THE FOURTH
BE WITH YOU
ELECTIONS

moray
council

HeadsUp



Alasdair McEachan, Head of Legal & Democratic Services

Dear Colleagues

I've been in the Head of Legal and Democratic Services post for just over a year now, having previously been a legal service manager with the Council.

Our section deals with all the council's legal matters, licensing, property sales and acquisitions, planning hearings and appeals, child protection legislation, revenues and benefits and customer care. It's a busy section!

I am also the council's monitoring officer. It's one of four posts which every council must have by law, (inc. chief executive, chief finance officer and chief social work officer).

As monitoring officer my job is to make sure that council decisions are lawful and fair, and that officers and councillors maintain high standards of conduct.

To help with good decision-making I need to ensure that the council stays within its statutory powers, that our constitutional documents are up to date, that committees run smoothly and that officers have got the necessary powers to get on with their jobs.

With the help of a great legal team all reports which go to a committee are checked to make sure there's no problem with what's being said. Even then, situations occur where the way forward isn't clear.

This often happens in heated debates. Councillors will interpret the rules (called Standing Orders) to favour their point, and if they are not happy with the way the Chair is going they ask for a 'ruling' from the Monitoring Officer. It's at this point that you are on the spot, your heart rate doubles and you hope that:

1. you've been paying attention to the debate
2. you've been taking notes and know which rules are relevant
3. there's a clear answer

Although councillors will look for a yes or no, it's often not that clear. Maybe the scenario is not covered by the rules. Maybe more background information is needed. Or there is a real danger of being seen to favour one side or the other in a political battle.

Unfortunately there's no 'phone a friend' or 'ask the audience' options. I try to stay calm, objective and to focus on what is best for the council, and help the Chair run the meeting. Sometimes it's best to suggest a short recess to the meeting.

Sometimes I'll be lucky enough to have a few days before these situations to mull over a tricky issue. I'll ask colleagues for their views before forming an opinion, and find that time outside of the office helps. A lunchtime swim or an evening run are great opportunities to work things through and come up with solutions. Having quality leisure time where you completely forget about what's going on in the office is good, doing activities with the kids or something active in the outdoors. It's amazing how it can give you a fresh perspective and focus to tackle those tricky issues, and never fails reminds me of how lucky we are to live in such a great part of the country.

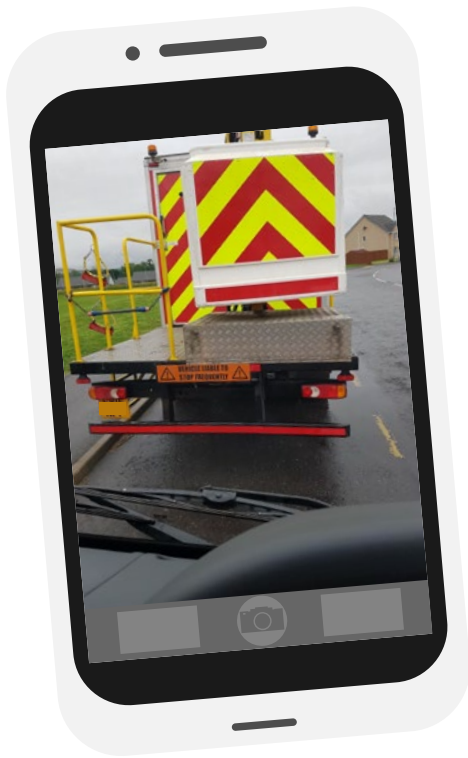
Alasdair

EDITORIAL

Welcome to your March edition of *Connect*!

We're featuring the elections team this month in advance of May's council elections, and I'm sure you're as surprised as us at the size of the operation. You can imagine the pressure felt on the day and at the count by Mark and his team – it's a huge responsibility to convert the democratic wishes of the people into properly elected representatives. May the Force be with you and everyone involved in the process.

Meeting and talking with colleagues to report on the wide range of services Moray Council delivers is a very uplifting experience for the *Connect* team – you're all doing a great job! But I think we've only scratched the surface and would like to blow our council trumpet a bit louder, so we'd like to hear from your services about what you get up to. In *Connect* this month you'll see a call-out for stories; these can be about a project you're involved with, or something quirky you've done or seen – anything you think might be interesting to your colleagues or the public.



SNAPPED!

Smartphones. They're everywhere. Moray has a very high smartphone ownership per head, and they're being used more frequently to contact the council, or access its website and social media.

This is good, as it provides a platform upon which we can communicate with our communities. They use their smartphones to tell us if a bin hasn't been collected, or that something has happened that needs our prompt attention, even just to ask us a question about a service. Much of this interaction happens in full public glare on our Facebook page, so when we respond promptly our people know we are listening and acting. Over time, people see this and our reputation is enhanced.

Of course it's great to see pictures of our services in action doing what we do best, but we should all be aware that, while it's not quite Big Brother who is watching, everyone else is and they're filming it. So we all need to be conscious of how we look to others so we don't have pictures sent in from smartphone cameras that present a less than positive image. Unfortunately we have had to address issues in the past as a result of some pictures being posted, including some of poor driving, inconsiderate parking and other actions that appear bad to the casual onlooker. Across the council people do a great job and really go the extra mile to deliver services and support our community. Let's make sure that's what the public see too. We can all help to improve our reputation as a professional, listening organisation.

Lots of cyclists use 'GoPro' cameras attached to their helmets, both to record their journey and to provide evidence of poor driving that endangers them. Particularly prevalent in cities, and it's all over YouTube.

A recent court case featuring Radio2 presenter and keen cyclist Jeremy Vine saw a driver prosecuted after she had threatened him. All caught on camera.



Dashcams are on the increase too. They're very cheap to buy and some insurance companies offer a discount on your annual premium if one is fitted to your vehicle.

TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Raymond Shewan
PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Jess Barbier-Marsden
PROJECT OFFICER

Angus McNicholl
DESIGNER



COUNCIL

MAY THE FOURTH BE WITH YOU

ELECTIONS

If you've ever passed a post box and slipped your vote inside, or made time to visit the polling station on Election Day, you have been part of the great Moray electoral machine. It may seem simple enough to tick the box for your chosen candidate, but who made sure you got the ballot paper? It takes a small army to make sure that elections happen, and *Connect* has visited the team behind the scenes.

The person in charge of elections in Moray is the Returning Officer: Mark Palmer, our Corporate Director (Corporate Services). Mark is responsible for ensuring that elections

go ahead on the day they are scheduled and Moira Patrick, Democratic Services Manager, and Alison Davidson, Elections Officer, work behind the scenes to facilitate this. *"There's a lot involved months before anyone can cast a vote,"* says Moira. *"Not much is known of what goes on behind the scenes."*

But this trio are the tip of the iceberg. An army of dedicated helpers, many of whom are current or former colleagues, step up to man polling stations on the election day.

But it is 18 months before the big day that work for the election begins. Among a host of

activities the team get busy with are venues that need to be booked for polling stations, contracts are commissioned for printing ballot papers and supplying the electronic voting machines, and planning started for candidate registration and info packs.

"There are five core areas to what we do," explains Alison. *"Communications and awareness, candidates and nominations, print and postal votes, the polling stations on the day, and of course the count itself."*

Communications begins with the official publication of the notice of election to the public,

and the team hold information sessions so that anyone interested in running can find out more about being a councillor. Polling cards will go out on 14 March to notify people of the election, and prospective candidates have from then until 29 March to throw their hat into the ring.

The first set of postal votes is issued on 13 April and the first of these will begin to come in four days later. With 9,500 postal votes to be opened by hand, this is a huge undertaking. It takes a week of eight-hour days for a whole team to process them and – importantly – compare the signatures electronically. The process is incredibly

time-consuming. Moira said it also comes with pitfalls.

"We can sometimes see that it's husband and wife that have signed each other's statement and they've invalidated each other's vote, but there's nothing we can do!" she said.

"We are not allowed to contact them. Sometimes we can reissue postal votes – we've had people call to say they've just spilled coffee all over theirs, or the dog ate it – but only if there's enough time".

A total of 238 staff will be working across postal vote verification, which starts two weeks before the election, polling and the count itself. *"It's traditional to use current and former council staff as we know them and there's a certainty around integrity,"* explains Moira. *"We have to have polling stations manned. We always have reserves, but local authority staff could be commandeered to do the election if there were*

ever a flu epidemic or something like that."

This year, while everyone else is enjoying the May Bank Holiday, elections staff are busy packing 72 identical kits of election material, one for each of the polling stations located at 58 polling venues across Moray.

"It is interesting and once you've started in it you just carry on; it's a nice job."

Tania Porter, Elections Volunteer



Alison Davidson, Elections Officer coordinating from the Elections Hub Office



Each kit – containing statutory paperwork, signage, ballot papers, the ballot box, the electoral register containing the details of who is allowed

to vote at that station, and even pens to complete the ballots – must be ready for collection by the station's presiding officer the night before the election. The Lands and Parks team delivers the polling booths to each polling venue and with the arrival of the polling station staff at 6:30 am on Election Day, voting can begin.

Polling clerk Tania Porter – who was with the council for 23 years and held a variety of jobs from library assistant to mailroom

driver – started election work in 1993. Now a polling clerk, she said: *"It is interesting and once you've started in it you just carry on; it's a nice job."*

"As polling clerk, working with the public is the best part – people stop to chat with other people that have come in, you sometimes see people you haven't seen for years and those that you won't have known lived in your area. It's quite social, especially for older people."

"Some of it can be quite exciting, the Parliamentary ones and the Referendum, there can be quite a buzz in the hall."

John Anderson, Elections Volunteer





"We had to issue the first ballot from the boot of the presiding officer's car! If they're on the register you've just got to get on with it."

Moira Patrick, Democratic Services Manager

"I think the public appreciates the time we spend – the whole 15 and a half hours! It's a challenge though; you wouldn't want to do it every day."

Anyone interested in helping out not only has to be available on the day but also for training ahead of time. Every member of staff is trained ahead of every election, and training is provided right down to what colour clothing you can wear – neutral colours only please! Polling station staff have a long day ahead of them, spending fifteen hours at the venue: from the time they arrive at 6:30 am, they are not allowed to leave the venue until the polls close at 10 pm – even then there is tidying up to do before they can say goodbye to the count and head on home.

John Anderson worked for the council for 42 years. Formerly in charge of improvement grants in Housing, he's been involved with elections

since 1974. *"I've been doing it on and off ever since then,"* he said.

"Some of it can be quite exciting – the Parliamentary ones and the Referendum, there can be quite a buzz in the hall – though some of it is quite mundane."

John worked on his own at the council for many years, but when he and a colleague both wanted to participate in the election process, John was happy to let his co-worker take the daytime shift at the polling station while he moved to the evening shift at the count.

"If everything is right it should be okay when counting manually. Most times we'd hit it on the head but I've been in the situation where we've counted three or four times and still been out – though it's rare. This year I'm a Ballot Paper Tray Runner at the count in the Town Hall."

With so much experience, the team have seen some

memorable elections. *"I remember hearing about one situation many years ago at a polling station where the presiding officer and his deputy turned up to find the door locked,"* says John. *"They phoned for advice and were told to kick the door in and worry about it later."*

"They're very strict on that; an election's got to happen."

While Moira agrees that 'the show must go on', times have changed on the door front: *"These days we wouldn't want to see any doors kicked down, but we have had to take special measures before. On one occasion*

the building was shut and we couldn't get it open. By 7:00 am the first voter was already waiting outside, so we had to issue the first ballot from the boot of the presiding officer's car! If they're on the register you've just got to get on with it."

When the voting boxes come into the Town Hall, they get stacked at the back until verification – that the number of ballot papers matches the account – has been completed. The first box in is usually from Elgin: there's always a race between Elgin's West End and Bishopmill to see who can get the first box in!



The Town Hall ready for voting

"I enjoy my work and I do like the elections; I like the statistics and look forward to seeing the results."

Elizabeth Ogilvie, Elections Volunteer



The first count is purely to check the number of ballots per box. For electronic counting the boxes are opened, each ballot is unfolded and orientated in the tray to be scanned, and the trays are numbered according to ballot box number. The trays are stacked ready for scanning. The presiding officer gives the number that should be in each box, reconciled with number of ballots issued (minus those unused or spoilt.)

"I love the count," says Moira. "That's the best bit; I love the atmosphere. The electronic counts don't have as much drama as you can't see the stacks of ballots growing next to each candidate's name."

Alison, on the other hand, is not so keen on the count. *"I hate it! You've got that far but there's still so much to do. It can be very stressful. But we're not interested in how one person votes; it's the outcome that's important."*

Once the results have been finalised, Mark gets

the candidates together and delivers the good – or bad – news and gives them a moment to compose themselves before making the announcement. The candidates then sign to accept their new post, then address their supporters and the press.

Among all the fanfare and excitement of the occasion, Moira says it's also a big responsibility and many volunteer because they see it as their civic duty.

One of these is Elizabeth Ogilvie, who was a registrar with the council for almost 25 years. In the 1980s, as part of her role she and her colleagues visited every household in Moray over the month of September to check the information held on the electoral roll. *"I think I'm the only person pleased to hear about elections!"* she says.

"A lot of folk don't like doing the polling stations because you're out from 6:00 AM 'til after 10 PM but I've never found it a long day."

"The elections process brings together a great team, and for me it is hugely satisfying to work with such committed colleagues."

Mark Palmer, Returning Officer



"You try to make it as happy an experience to the voter as possible. I enjoy my work and I do like the elections; I like the statistics and look forward to seeing the results."

Elizabeth shares her memories of the Scottish independence referendum: *"We thought we'd be done at 3am but it was 9am before I got home! That count helped to introduce 16-year-olds to elections, it was special for them. I saw quite a few of those who cast their first vote at 16 at the Referendum kept their polling card as a souvenir."*

The trio of helpers Connect spoke to agree that helping out at the elections is rewarding, and that although they do get paid for their time, it isn't about the money. *"There's always a wee bit of a buzz about it,"* says John. *"You do get a fee but that's never been my agenda. I've enjoyed it over the years. Until such time as I get the elbow I'll keep putting my name forward!"*

Tania agrees, saying:

"I've always worked with people I know and there's always a really good atmosphere. It's why I'm still be doing it 20 years later!"

Elizabeth says: *"It's good to meet folk and see colleagues of old. I would encourage anyone who's interested; it's an interesting experience."*

Mark says: *"The elections process brings together a great team, and for me it is hugely satisfying to work with such committed colleagues. Whether out at a polling station or doing the count, we all pull together to produce an accurate result in good time. It can be quite stressful at times so having the best support team is vital and that is just what I get from everyone involved – and I am hugely appreciative of everyone's efforts."*

"We're not interested in how one person votes; it's the outcome that's important."

Alison Davidson, Elections Officer



MAKE YOUR EARTH HOUR MATTER 2017

Earth Hour is a global movement, which brings millions together across the world to call for greater action. Over 7,000 cities and towns worldwide participate by turning off the lights of homes, businesses and landmarks for one hour. From changing individual behaviour, to legislation, Earth Hour has achieved massive environmental awareness.

Last year a record 178 countries took part – a number that rises every year. From the Sydney Opera House and the Eiffel Tower to Buckingham Palace and Edinburgh Castle, cities, towns and communities like ours across the world switch out their lights and come together for an hour, to join a global show of support for action on climate.

Every year in Moray we make our commitment to Earth Hour by switching off lights on a local landmark. This year we will be switching off the lights on the Landshut Bridge in Elgin.

Earth Hour belongs to you. Celebrate your commitment to the planet with your friends, family, community or at work - in your own way. A simple event can be just turning off all non-essential lights from 8.30pm-9:30 pm. To celebrate, you can have a candle lit dinner, talk to your neighbours, stargaze, play board games, have a concert, create or join a community event – the possibilities are endless.



EARTH HOUR 2017

Turn out the lights, take some time and make Earth Hour matter for you, your friends, your family and your planet.

At 8.30pm on Saturday 25 March 2017, hundreds of millions of people across the world will turn off their lights for one hour in a spectacular demonstration of support for action on climate change.

The time for action is now and it's never been more important to show world leaders you care about action on climate change. So turn out the lights and make your Earth Hour count.

Find out how to make your Earth Hour matter and download your ideas pack now at www.org.uk/earthhour



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For some years now Moray has been able to boast one of the highest recycling rates among Scottish local authority areas.

But now our waste management section has exceeded even its own high standards.

In the third quarter of the last calendar year – July to September – Moray’s recycling rate was a record 63%. The previous quarter’s figure wasn’t half bad either, at 60.2%. These figures are as yet unaudited by SEPA but are encouraging nonetheless.

The figure for 2016 as a whole was 58.7% compared with 57.5% the

previous year. That may not sound much, but the 1.2% increase equated to nearly 1300 tonnes – and that’s a lot of plastic bottles, cans, paper, and grass cuttings.

With recycling targets becoming ever more challenging, these latest returns are testament to the hard work and dedication of colleagues in the waste and recycling teams who have been beating the drum, long and hard, on recycling.

It is hard to believe that, only 14 short years ago when figures were first recorded, Moray sent just 18% of its household waste for recycling!

Colin Bell, Moray’s environmental protection manager, congratulated the team.

“It’s a team effort,” he said.

“The council’s improving recycling achievement has been possible due to the commitment and strategic approach of all staff within the waste section, from the refuse collection crews and disposal teams working in all weather conditions, administration staff providing essential back office support to our recycling assistants’ skill and persistence in educating and persuading the public to do as much as they can for recycling.”

RECORD RECYCLING RATE!

HR Noticeboard



REMINDERS!

Mothering Sunday on the 26 March also clocks go forwards at 2am



INDUCTION CHECKLIST

The first day at a new job may be amongst the most memorable with a mix of nerves and excitement. We all want to settle quickly and become familiar with the surroundings and the ways of working. To support new employees, a standardised induction checklist was implemented across the council in August 2016. The checklist includes the mandatory processes as well as the softer cultural elements, all of which are important factors in enabling new employees to feel settled.

If you have line management responsibility, remember to refer to the 'Induction Checklist' the next time you have a new employee to support them in becoming settled and productive in their role. It can be located under the 'Corporate Induction' section within Interchange.



SURPRISE!



We're celebrating Moray Council's 21st birthday next month, and we want your memories and pictures.

Yes, hard to believe it was 21 years ago in April that this council officially came into being – it seems much longer. We'll be looking at how the organisation has changed in those two decades, and how some of the staff have changed with it. Or not, as the case may be. We have pictures of current staff from that first year when they had hair, while others are still wearing the same style clothes. We know, quality never dates, but...

But we surely can't have all the pictures there are in existence. We're on the hunt for some you might have from those early days, particularly any which shows how we did our jobs then. What vehicles and machinery were you using back then? How did you get to work? How did we all stay in communication with our colleagues, depots and team managers? Don't forget, these are pre-email and digital days, so it was all forms and hard copy everything. Knowing where the nearest payphone was really mattered.

If you've got anything that fits the bill, or an anecdote that simply must be shared on *Connect*, get in touch. We're on (phones) or email!



RED NOSE DAY

Last month we asked you to get your thinking caps on and identify which social events you would like to run within your service. To help you get on your way, we have identified an upcoming event that you might want to consider participating in – Red Nose Day on Friday 24th March.

Red Nose Day is a popular event with a number of workplaces up and down the country already signed up to participate - you too can arrange to join in the fun. Various materials, including a fundraising kit are available from the Red Nose Day website. Start by asking your manager for support, and then gather a few of your colleagues together to start planning.

Fundraising is a great way to bring people from all parts of the Council together, a break from the norm, it's fun and helps other people, and that always feels good. If you decide to join in with the celebrations, please remember to take lots of photos and share them with us by sending them through to connectnews@moray.gov.uk

The team behind your monthly offering of *Connect* are always on the lookout for stories and snippets that might interest you – our readers.

And while we always have our eyes and ears open for anything that we think might fit the bill, we don't have a monopoly on ideas for inclusion.

That is why we would like to hear from colleagues, right across the council, with suggestions for items that they would like to see featured.

Although much of the content of *Connect* is work-related, we are always keen to know what our staff get up to in their own time. For example, many of you are involved in charity work and voluntary organisations, or take part in sporting activities or other leisure pursuits, which others would like to know about.

So, if there is something going on within your team, or in your office, section or department, that you think is worth sharing, please let us know. Similarly, we would love to hear of anything newsworthy that you are involved with away from work.

Just drop us a line at connectnews@moray.gov.uk and we will take it from there...

OOOPS! SORRY!

Finally, apologies to those of you who couldn't access their copy of *Connect* online when it dropped into their email. It seems you all can't wait to read it, so the massive collective click on the link 'broke' the internet connection (or something far more technical like that). We'll be sending it out at a later time to avoid that happening again!

WORKING TOGETHER

How we provide Care at Home has changed hugely over the past 10 years.

Where once a care worker would have been mainly helping with domestic chores, collecting shopping and perhaps making a cup of tea for the people they cared for, today, Social Care Assistants are much more likely to be managing medication, assisting with personal and intimate care, or helping someone to rehabilitate after a stay in hospital.

Our aim is to enable people to live within their own homes for as long as it is safe for them to do so. As well as being what many people want, we know that health and wellbeing is improved when people can stay in their own homes rather than residential care. So, our social care assistants are trained in a variety of skills and knowledge to give them the expertise to help promote independence and aid people to achieve their full potential.

Within the next 20 years we will see the number of people living over the age of 75 rise by over 90%. However, as we age not everyone remains fit and healthy. Nearly two-thirds of these people will have one or more long term condition, such as cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, to name but a few.

In addition to physical lifestyle, there is a growing recognition that the social world we live, work and socialise in greatly impacts on our health and wellbeing. Where social connections are lacking, people can become lonely and feel isolated.

We face ongoing difficulties in recruiting and retaining a workforce to meet the demands of our service users. Yet for those with the capacity to care, a caring career is rewarding, life affirming and many carers describe it as adding value and meaning to their lives.

To try to manage this increasing demand, the Scottish Government has made the biggest change to health and social care since the foundation of the NHS in 1948. In April 2016 the Integrated Joint Board (IJB) for Health and Social Care was established, forming a legal partnership

between Moray Council and NHS Grampian. The aim is to help people sustain and improve their health, by ensuring better local, seamless access to health and social care.

As the partnership approaches its first full year in operation, we are already beginning to benefit in real terms from closer working relationships. For example, social care assistants now have improved development opportunities through working with NHS colleagues. We are involved with Public Health staff, assisting in the delivery of various programmes designed to increase social inclusion, such as Vintage Tea Parties held at various locations across Moray.

We will shortly be involved in the rolling out of Public Health's, 'Make every opportunity count' campaign, which will enable staff to recognise possible risks to people's health, and how these can be reduced.

There are challenges facing health and social care today. The changes we are making in Moray should meet some of them. What is clear is that they can only be met and overcome by working together with all our partners, sharing knowledge, expertise, access to resources and above all, a shared respect and determination to succeed.



the TAX MAN COMETH

A full list of the approved savings can be found on the council's website, direct link here:

www.moray.gov.uk/minutes/data/MC20170215/Item%207-Appendix%202-Budget%20Pressures.pdf

www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file111195.doc

Members of the council set the 2017/18 budget last month, and while it contained few surprises it's worth highlighting the main points.

Point one is that only a very small number of jobs are currently affected by the budget decisions. Savings of £3.249m have been agreed and the books have been balanced by drawing just over £7.6m from reserves. This maintains services at their current level for the coming year.

The budget included provision for a 1% pay award, although this is still being negotiated at national level. These negotiations are set against both the recent announcement that average weekly earnings rose by 2.8% across all sectors in the last 12 months and contrastingly, a shrinking public sector budget.

Council tax will rise by 3%, with those in properties Band E and above paying the new rate for their band set by the Scottish Government. Overall this will raise an additional £2.2m for Council Tax. A full table is below.

Charges for council services will increase by 5% across the board, with few exceptions. Maintenance programmes for some areas, such as car parks, the core path network, and winter maintenance will be reduced, subject to consultation. The same goes for levels of cleaning in HQ and Annexe buildings, again subject to consultation with staff unions.

In terms of impact that might be felt by staff this budget is minimal. However, at the council's current rate of spending to provide services, the ability of our reserves to prop up future budgets will run out in September 2018. This means when the incoming council take control following the May election, it will be facing some tough decisions as to what is funded and what isn't. How they tackle that will be guided by senior managers, directors, and the many suggestions received from you and the public. Nonetheless it's difficult to see how future budgets can be balanced without cuts to a number of council services.

	Current Council Tax 2016/17	Increase per Scot Govt	3% Increase per Moray Council	New Council Tax levels 2017/18
Band A	£756.67	-	£22.70	£779.37
Band B	£882.78	-	£26.48	£909.26
Band C	£1,008.89	-	£30.27	£1,039.16
Band D	£1,135.00	-	£34.05	£1,169.05
Band E	£1,387.22	£104.04	£44.74	£1,536.00
Band F	£1,639.44	£204.94	£55.33	£1,899.71
Band G	£1,891.67	£331.04	£66.68	£2,289.39
Band H	£2,270.00	£510.75	£83.42	£2,864.17

^{financial} New Year



~~New You~~ look payslip



The start of a new (financial) year is nigh, and with this comes a new HR and payroll system for everyone within the council. We've been working away behind the scenes to make sure there's a smooth transition between processing your pay on the old system and the new. The new system – iTrent – goes live next month, so we're taking this opportunity to give you the heads up.

If you receive your payslips by post to your home address, this won't change although it will not arrive in a tear and open envelope, instead via a letter envelope headed Strictly Private and Confidential.

Those of you who access your payslips online can still do so through the interchange (look for the 'View my payslip' link in the Most Popular box), or type in interchange.moray.gov.uk/payslips into your browser (we recommend using Internet Explorer) and select the 'Launch iTrent' button.

You'll notice some obvious differences with the new system:

- 💬 You'll use a different login and password. We'll send you an email or letter reminder before the end of March, and we'll tell you how to login.
- 💬 Your payslip will look different – see mock up. —————
- 💬 You won't receive email notifications that your payslip is ready for viewing.
- 💬 You can do more online! iTrent has an Employee Self Service (ESS) portal which lets you:
 - view, download and print current and historical payslips (from April 2017 onwards)
 - view and change personal details, such as address, bank details and emergency contacts
 - view job details, hours and reporting manager
 - view absence history.

Although you don't need an email address to login or view your payslip(s), if you want to change any personal details, you'll need to register an email address. This means that if you receive paper payslips, you'll have read-only access to iTrent until you register an email address.



Pay Group Local Government	Employee Name Joseph Bloggs	Emp Ref No. 0000000	Payment Date 23/02/2017
Tax Period 11	Period End Date 28/02/2017	Tax Code & Basis 1100L Cumulative	NI Number NP000000A
		NI Category	

Payments			
Description	Units	Rate	Amount
Project Officer			
Basic Salary			
Contractual Overtime @ 1.0	2.00	10.22	885.73
Residential Child Care Worker (Relief)			
Basic Relief Hours	5.00	11.48	57.41

Deductions		
Description	Amount	Balance
Tax		
Residential Child Care Worker (Relief): LGPS 2015	3.16	
Project Officer: LGPS 2015	49.84	

Taxable Pay YTD	910.58
Tax Paid YTD	0.00
Taxable Pay This Period	910.58
Tax Paid This Period	0.00
Net Pay	910.58
Method Of Payment	BACS

Total Payments	963.58
Total Deductions	53.00

Why are we changing the system?

There are a few reasons. The current system for processing pay and changes to employee details is outdated and difficult to use. Introducing iTrent should make it more user-friendly for all, as well as speeding up processing times, accuracy and efficiency. There's also the benefit of giving you 24/7 control of your personal details, and the ability to update these online. Important!

☞ Holiday pay entitlements for any overtime, additional hours and allowances will be paid during the same pay period in the new system, as opposed to the following month. In order to bring this holiday pay in line with the new system, February and March's holiday pay entitlement will be paid together in March's payslip. This is to help us start with a 'clean slate' on the new system, from 1 April.

☞ We recommend that you download your previous payslips and P60s (at least as far back as April 2016) from the current system as soon as possible, and save these to your personal devices. Remember that we charge you for backdated payslips and we can't guarantee how long the electronic versions will be available for once we begin using iTrent.

☞ We're changing the design of paper timesheets; if this affects you, your line manager will tell you.

WELCOME ABOARD

Spring is here and everything's coming up roses – a bumper crop of new colleagues took part in the most recent Corporate Induction, a few of whom are coming from farther afield. Don't be shy, say 'hi!' when you see them and help us welcome them to sunny Moray.

If you've recently joined us fresh or have come back after a break, don't forget to sign up for the next induction on 30 March. Just log into the the CLIVE LearnPro system to register for a place today.

Each month we feature our new starts, colleagues who are leaving us, birthdays and other special events, so keep your news and photos coming in to: connectnews@moray.gov.uk.

Ann-Maree Foley joins us as a Residential Childcare Worker at Cala. She has been with us on and off since 2001.



Angela Oxley has joined us in Housing. Formerly with the Glasgow School of Art, she has 15 years' experience in the private and public housing sector.

Lizzy Baker has joined us as a Children's Services Worker from being a relief worker at Cala.



Anna MacLeod is a Social Worker with the Community Learning and Disability Team, having previously been a Keyworker.

Joanne Addison has joined us in Keith as a Library and Information Assistant, from a previous role with Aberdeenshire Council.



Penny Curry joined us as work experience last May, and is now working in Library Services at the Elgin and Forres libraries.



Juliette Marley has taken on her first job with us as a Payroll Administrator.



Claire Smith joins us as a Youth Literacies Worker from a previous role with a charity.



Jenni Adam is returning to work as an Accountancy Assistant.



Christine Ross is rejoining us as a Library and Information Assistant.



Chris McLeod has joined us from NHS Highland as an OT Advanced Practitioner.



Dave Moreton has also crossed the county line, joining us as a Project Manager from a previous role at Highland Council.



Mary Dow joins us as a Clerical Assistant in the Shared Lives team from a previous role at Elgin High School.

Steven Robertson has joined us in the Transport sector as a Public Transport Officer.



Karina Fortuniak has joined the team in housing Housing Support.

Pam Napolitano has joined the admin team in Employment Support Services.



Ellen MacMillan joined us in December in a busy role as an HR Assistant.

Lisa Brennan has also joined us in HR as an HR Advisor from a previous role at the college.





SOCIAL MEDIA

SOCIAL MEDIA REMINDER

The council is about to embark on a period of social media activity to feedback from last year's budget consultation work.

This activity will take the form of conversations about suggestions received as part of the process last year, and will include what the council could potentially implement. It will endeavour to describe consequences of certain actions, and seek feedback on how services could be delivered should suggested cuts be actioned.

As you know any decision concerning cuts to services has to be decided by elected members. The purpose of this feedback period is to help people understand more how the council works, what it has to do and what it has discretion over. Staff should not be alarmed at what may appear as part of the conversations held on social media; the council – any council – attracts a lot of ill-informed criticism and part of this process is to show that for what it is. Staff are encouraged to join in conversations from their home accounts if they wish, bearing in mind the requirements of the Code of Conduct in respect of use of social media. To paraphrase, staff shouldn't criticise the council on a public forum as an identified council employee.

We received a lot of suggestions to cut staff, cut management, cut councillors, as you might expect. While acknowledging these suggestions, the reality and consequences of implementation will be our purpose in this feedback period. For example, there may be a suggestion that we either cut staff in a particular area or contract the service out. Our response would be that we can't cut staff unless we decide how to reduce or change what needs to be done, no matter what the service is so unless someone volunteers to do the considerable amount of work undertaken across the area by our qualified teams for nothing, there will continue to be a need to undertake it ourselves. Moreover, the council delivers services reliably at a very competitive cost, so the benefits of privatising would be scarce. So, what we need to continue to discuss is what can be done differently or perhaps not at all.



Addressing these factors takes a bold approach from employers at various levels. For example:

- ☞ Flexible working arrangements. This includes arrangements to work flexible hours to accommodate childcare needs, as well as the option to work part-time following pregnancy. The Moray Council has already put such measures in place.
- ☞ Promoting the work of inspiring women who have made a difference. Inspired by the film *Hidden Figures*, NASA has recently published the stories of women who have been instrumental in its space programme. Their stories can be found at www.nasa.gov/modernfigures. The BBC publishes its 100 women every year in November www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-38012048, a list of women from around the world who have been determined to make a difference. Here in Moray, at Clochan near Buckie, we commemorate the Women's Land Army and their contribution. In Kobane, Syria, a statue has been unveiled celebrating the contribution of Kurdish women in the fight against ISIS. Their contribution was particularly effective because of the misogynist views of the ISIS militants.

- ☞ Inspiring men. Flexible working is available to men as well as women. Too often, childcare is seen as a woman's job. Being bold for change can be as simple as a dad deciding to take a bigger part in the early years of a child's life.

As part of the Moray Council's approach we would like to hear more from women's and men's experience so that we can understand and tackle the pay gap.

Please contact the Equal Opportunities Officer, Don Toonen on **01343 563321**, or by email don.toonen@moray.gov.uk.

International Women's Day

This year's theme – Be Bold for Change – is a response to the slow progress that is being made in addressing the worldwide gender pay gap. The World Economic Forum predicts that, at the current rate, the gender pay gap will not be closed until 2186! You can see the full report: reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/

In Scotland, the gender pay gap is 14.9% when comparing the combined hourly earnings of women against those of men. Compared with men, women essentially work for free from 13 November until the end of the year.

Close the Gap Scotland, a government-backed group driving change in the gender pay gap, say factors that contribute to the situation include:

- ☞ Women are far more likely than men to work part-time
- ☞ The onus is still very much on women to take career breaks in order to raise children
- ☞ Occupational segregation, for example relatively fewer women in senior positions and under-representation of women in careers involving science, technology, engineering and mathematics