

May 2017

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DIGITAL REVIILLITI IIN

@moray libraries





HeadsUp

Lorraine Paisey, incumbent Head of Finance

Dear Colleagues

The council's year end is 31 March, and for most people throughout the council who contribute to the close down of the accounts, that date is now a distant memory.

However, for us in the accountancy section a lot of the real number-crunching is just about to begin as we prepare the annual accounts to put before councillors next month.

Preparation of the annual accounts is one of the key responsibilities of a Section 95 officer. That's the council's equivalent of the treasurer, named after section 95 of the **Local Government** (Scotland) Act 1973 which requires all Scottish local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and to appoint an officer to have responsibility for them. It's where the buck stops.

Margaret Wilson, as outgoing s95 officer for Moray Council will present the draft accounts to Full Council on 29 June, and shortly after that I will succeed Margaret in that role upon her retirement on the 30th.

Although responsible for "the administration of the council's financial affairs" the s95 officer is dependent on a team of people to ensure that the council's finances are properly looked after. Most obviously, these include the staff in Financial Services - just over 60 staff who deal with all the council's payments, including payroll, VAT, procurement, treasury management, banking and accountancy.

Expenditure is authorised and income generated in all sections of all departments across the council, and each budget manager has an important role to play in the council's finances. The Financial Services department is there to provide assistance — and that's probably the most interesting part of the job: the relationship with other departments

and being involved (although at a distance) with the many different services delivered by the council to the people of Moray.

The s95 officer is also responsible for providing elected members with good quality financial information on which to base their decisions, along with information from other officers.

I've worked for Moray
Council since February
1996. I qualified as a
Chartered Accountant with
a large firm of accountants
in Aberdeen and then
worked for the City of
Aberdeen District Council.
The s95 officer must be
a qualified accountant of
suitable experience.

At a time of budget cuts and uncertainty we will all have a part to play in ensuring the continued provision of quality services in Moray, and I look forward to playing my part in that process when on 03 July I will take the reins of the council's section 95 officer.

Lorraine

EDITORIAL

Welcome to May's Connect. Sorry we're a few days late, jobs are stacking up for our design team and the rest of the Connect team have been tied up with election work.

That's all over now (for a month, anyway) and we have a new council elected. Many of these councillors will be new at this, and some are old hands returning. They will be shaping the priorities of this authority for the next five-year term. Our election colleagues are girding their loins for the next one on June 8.

Hope you like our report on the library service – what a happy bunch they are, coping well with all the changes they've had over the last decade and still hungry for more!

Keep an eye and camera phone ready this summer for celeb-spotting in Moray or on your travels (see page 16). Prizes for any that are featured in *Connect*!

TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones
Communications Officer

Raymond Shewan
Public Relations Coordinator

Jess Barbier-Marsden Project Officer

Angus McNicholl Designer



A fond farewell from outgoing Council Leader Stewart Cree

As you will already know, having decided not to stand for a third term in the council elections, I had my "big redd oot" and sifted through the detritus of 10 years' correspondence, guidance and committee reports at the end of April.

However, it is at times like these that I cannot help but reflect upon the organisation which I leave. The past 10 years have seen some very difficult times for local government, however I have been most fortunate in that I have been a member of a council which, at every level, is staffed by men and women who care about what they do and who want to make a better future for those who live and work in Moray.

I hope that I have avoided the temptation to be a 'watchdog' and whilst I have always tried to support my constituents I have also tried to support those with whom I have the privilege to work. For this reason I have sought to avoid a 'them and us' attitude and tried instead to recognise that we are all working towards the same purpose and that, whilst councillors may have a duty to ensure proper governance, this should always be exercised in a supportive and positive manner.

There are some things I won't miss, particularly the financial battles, but what I will miss is the people. People who, on an everyday basis, empty our bins, care for our elderly, teach our children, maintain our roads and council houses, promote our economy and run the myriad of backroom services that ensure that this all happens every day of the year. So to all of you, as a councillor and a resident of Moray, I thank you most sincerely for the support and assistance you have given me over the past 10 years and for the daily efforts that you make on behalf of us all.

I'd also like to thank my fellow councillors for all their efforts and those of their spouses and partners, including my own wife Lorna, whose support and forbearance has often been overlooked.

So now with my papers sorted, sifted and shredded, and a date with a back surgeon booked, I will quietly ride off into the sunset, like my matinee heroes of yesteryear, confident that the Moray Coupel can meet the challenges it faces.

Connect Monthly - May 2017



@moray libraries

You may picture libraries as guiet places staffed by even quieter people - but think again. The library and information team across Moray has been leading the digital revolution for almost 30 years and has changed with the times, moving from the manual card issue system to an online one-stop shop covering everything from comic books online to family history research. Connect caught up with the crew at Elgin Library for a quick-fire update on what they and their colleagues across Moray to do to keep up-to-date.

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There are 11 libraries across Moray – serving Aberlour, Buckie, Burghead, Cullen, Dufftown, Elgin, Fochabers, Forres, Keith, Lossiemouth and Tomintoul – with 46 members of staff. All sites offer free internet access, with six of the libraries also housing accredited learning centres that provide a range of services - including Job Clubs supported by JobCentre staff run by library staff and volunteers, computer literacy training such as the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL), and adult literacy and numeracy courses. There is even a mobile library that tours communities across Moray on a sixweekly rota basis: its visits support the elderly and those with mobility difficulties, rural areas and even parts of towns where access to transport is a challenge. Each library has its own stock which is rotated on a regular basis to provide readers with greater choice, though popular DVDs are circulated around library locations more frequently to ensure that the widest range of users has a fair chance to borrow them.

"We enable people," says Sheila Campbell, Principal Librarian. "We provide literacy skills, help in supporting parents to read to children; we help people create a CV and apply for



"A library is not just a room full of books. It's all of the ancillary services we provide that make it a library."

> Sheila Campbell, Principal Librarian

a job, and provide social interaction for the elderly. Libraries are free, warm, local, and welcoming — anybody can come into a library and use it. Everyone knows they're welcome — we don't judge," Sheila says. "A library is not just a room full of books. It's all of the ancillary services we provide that make it a library."

Because of this welcoming attitude, the libraries are utilised by an increasing range of customers with support needs, including homelessness, mental health issues, and substance addiction: staff are provided with additional customer service training and work as a team if challenging situations arise. Elgin Library recently achieved 'Dementia-Friendly' status and all provide training on stroke, autism, and Alzheimer's awareness. "Because library services are changing so rapidly, it keeps the job interesting," says Sheila. "What we're trying to do in libraries now is break down barriers for users, especially in terms of children. There was a perception of 'formfilling' and strict rules to use libraries, but not anymore."

The libraries have embraced the digital age, where people can download over 1,200 free e-Books, over 16,000 free comics and graphic novels with its ComicsPlus service, and even free

audio books. You can borrow CDs, DVDs, even artwork, and there's even a <u>library app</u> for smartphones.

Sheila has been with the council since 1988 and spent five years with a neighbouring authority before that. "There have been massive changes," she says. "But the greatest change has been digital services. In my first year it was announced that we'd be getting a computer system – it was totally new! In addition to transferring all book stock to

the new system, we had to

learn
how
to use
it, train
the staff,
and then help
the customers to use it.
Now we have our own
social media sites, and
with the app you can scan
school p

Now we have our own social media sites, and with the app you can scan the barcode of a book in a bookshop with your phone to see if we have it in stock. We deliver accredited learning, and in the past year rolled out free Wi-Fi access in every library."

The libraries are busy places, hosting a range of events from story time to visits from popular authors, such

as Ian Rankin and Stuart MacBride. The Spirit of Moray Book Festival takes place every autumn, last year attracting nearly 3,000 people.

Elgin Library is even the official venue for remote passport interviews — and is the busiest one in Scotland! Last year there were over half a million trips to Moray libraries with over 400,000 items borrowed.

"We're moving with the times," says Lara Buckle, Senior Library and Information

Assistant
"When
it's
busy
it
can
be

hectic
s as
you'll
dealing with
lots of enquiries.

quite

Schools and nurseries are invited in. Kids want help with their homework and school projects, and we run summer and autumn reading programmes for the children. We have 15 book groups across Moray, all very popular – we can hardly keep the books in. We have to ask people to read fast and pass them

Younger readers are wellserved too with all of the libraries offering weekly story-time for under-fives.



"Schools and nurseries are invited in Kids want help with their homework and school projects, and we run summer and autumn reading programmes for the children."

Lara Buckle, Senior Library and Information Assistant

Since 2015, every baby born in Moray has been given automatic library membership under the GIRFEC 'Every Child a Library Member' scheme – providing a head start to a lifetime's reading.

Linda Geddes, Lending Services Co-ordinator, said everyone pulls together.

"We have got a service that relies on consistency: we try to give everyone who comes along the same level of customer service.

"Everyone who works in a library wants to help people, and give accurate information – whether for



"We have got a service that relies on consistency: we try to give everyone who comes along the same level of customer service."

Linda Geddes, Lending Services Co-ordinator

tourism, council info, even bus passes."

This positivity may explain the long-serving nature of the library's staff: Linda has been with the libraries since 1990, spending 21 of those years at Elgin Library, and her colleague Fiona Sturgeon has been with the libraries since 1983.

When asked what makes a good library staff member, Sheila doesn't hesitate: "Customer care is first and foremost. We can provide training in all of the systems, on the job training in the library management system, training to do story-time



Ooh-aar! Pirate Day fun at Elgin Library.

- but you've got to have someone with the right people skills to start."

Elgin also has dedicated space for tourist information and works with VisitScotland, though the organisation no longer has their own tourist information staff on-site. "Tourists want directions and accommodation, or

suggestions on the local area – we have been asked what time the dolphins will be out in the bay, and where people can see a Highland cow!" says Lara.

Use of local heritage services has also increased since it moved into the main Elgin Library building a year and a half ago. James Nock, Local
Heritage Officer, says:
"School classes regularly
come in. We've just had
one visit to look at the
town council minutes from
the Jacobite era, and we
were able to digitise the
pages for their teacher
to take away. We are a
thoroughly 21st century
learning centre. With our
digital microfilm reader we



"School classes regularly come in We've just had one visit to look at the town council minutes from the Jacobite era, and we were able to digitise the pages for their teacher to take away."

James Nock, Local Heritage Officer can automatically digitise microfilms of things like newspapers and parish records to 1609, and we can send them out to people across the world – it's great for heritage tourism. That's what libraries are all about – making things accessible."

James, who has been in the role for nearly two years but originally came to the library as a student placement from Robert Gordon University, also notes the library's links to council colleagues and across Moray's industries: "Planning and Estates often need building plans - we have plans for all buildings prior to 1975 – and we are the only place that has the Charles Doig archive, which holds all major distillery plans, so we often get requests coming in from the distilleries."

National funding also enabled the library and heritage centre to obtain a new EDS scanner, a high-tech digitising machine that can capture such detailed images that researchers would be able to detect subtle differences in ink type and paper. "You can't photocopy some fragile archive items but you can put them on the scanner," says James. "We have archive items dating back to 1234, and 300,000 people on index. You can search what's been scanned, and host it online. We can digitise archive items and newspapers on request, and get it to people very quickly, around the world."

With their dedication to customers of all ages, and their commitment to keeping on top of the latest technology to provide more services than ever before, the library and information staff are spreading the digital revolution across Moray – to the world.

DID YOU KNOW?

All council staff get 10% off in the Cobbs café at Elgin Library on production of their ID card.

Moray Libraries

Your local library, anywhere

Solus

Remote catalogue search

Now you can find a title, reserve, borrow or renew it, straight from your mobile.

Barcode scan

Why buy when you can borrow? The app allows you to scan the barcode on any title, anywhere, then search the catalogue to see if you can borrow it.

Journey planning

Live public transport info, allowing you to plan your journey to the library.

Library information

From events to opening hours to directions, regularly updated service information gives you all the knowledge you need.

and much more besides!

For support using the app, contact elgin.library@moray.gov.uk









Staff Survey 2017

"I am committed to making the council a great place to work"

Roddy Burns, Chief Executive

You can help us do this by completing the Employee Opinion Survey – this is your chance to really make a difference and have an impact by giving your views and letting us know how you feel about working for the council.

It was good to see that the response rate increased in 2015 when compared to 2013, however there is still much room for improvement and the more employees who respond result in a more accurate collation of views.

Looking at our previous survey and from feedback you have provided more recently you identified reasons why you didn't complete the last survey; some of you have said:

You say:

"You fear being identified from information provided."

We sav

- Returned surveys will only be viewed by HR during analysis opinions are not viewed as individual returns.
- We will be providing various methods for the easy return of your survey which will ensure that your manager does not have sight of it.
- No individual return will be shared with your manager.
- Survey questions are being reviewed to minimise those which give the feeling of being identified.

You say:

"The survey is too long / questions difficult to understand."

We say:

We are reviewing survey content with a view to reducing questions and simplifying the language used. Some questions may be deemed essential in order that we can compare results with previous surveys and enable us to identify and progress issues specific to a service area.

You say:

"You don't have the time."

We sav:

We are working with managers to ensure that you are given the opportunity to complete within your working day. Your voice does make a difference, and evidence of this has seen the implementation of many new initiatives. These included the annual employee conference, improved office facilities, ERDP has been adapted to make it more accessible and practical to all job types, Connect magazine and Connections noticeboards, recycling computers for wider installation, employee charter, team talks, service learning visits, listening meetings, supervisor listening meetings, roadshows, back to the floor and the STAR awards employee recognition scheme. These initiatives and actions have arisen as a result of what you have previously told us about working for the council and as means of improving your working environment.

Since the 2015 survey a lot of work has been carried out around Workforce Culture.

Changing any workforce culture takes time, but we have already seen some improvements. We need your help to assist in continuing to make this a great place to work – please complete the opinion survey to allow us to determine what progress we have made and where we need to focus our efforts in the future. This is your chance to make a difference.

BEFORE WE MOVE ON?

Almost 1 in 5 employees told us they were being bullied or harassed at work in 2015 and that had to stop. Meaning that someone sitting beside you or who you meet at lunchtime was being intimidated, insulted or humiliated at work; or maybe they were being harassed and facing unwanted conduct related to their sex, race or religion.

Has it stopped now?

The council have done a lot to try to make sure we provide a positive workplace for everyone. But this cannot happen unless you speak up if something is wrong.

Not all poor behaviour or management action we don't

like is bullying; it's important to know the difference. Having your performance or absence managed can be uncomfortable and make you feel under pressure; the council must manage its workforce.

If you are being bullied, you need to tell someone. Report it to your manager, your Trade Union or HR now.

Having issues raised with you or decisions made that you do not agree with are part of normal working life, this is not bullying. It is important that these situations are handled well and especially around sensitive, difficult conversations so we are committed to improving management skills and practices.

We also know that many employees feel burdened by heavy workloads and from time to time we all say we feel harassed. But that's not harassment in the sense of bullying and harassment – like sexual or racial harassment or stalking.

What have we done?

Having reviewed the number of formal complaints of bullying received since the last survey we are pleased to say that the number has been few. This is great news!

You may also have noticed the new Bullying and Harassment policy that sets out more clearly how to raise issues and the 'Working Together Guide' that gives less formal options to fix things before they become too difficult. These build on the new Employee Charter that sets out what's expected of us all in terms of values and how we behave.

Resilience training to help managers and staff cope with the everyday ups and downs and improved induction for mangers is now available. We have also worked with services to put in place a one-to-one discussion for every employee (ERDP or PR&D) with their manager each year and to improve workplace discussions by supporting team meetings.

There are now a lot of workforce engagement activities that you might have taken part in, from the employees conferences to service visits and listening meetings and we're in the process of starting some back to the floor experiences for managers – so watch out for the chance to show your boss how it's done.

So what next?

A lot has been done since the last survey, and the council takes these matters seriously. There has been a lot of work with Roads, Environmental Protection

and Homecare based on a foundation of policy and guidance to make our workforce culture more positive. There are very few cases of bullying or harassment being reported but we know that workplace relationships were actually at the core in many places where things just weren't quite right and that's a hard thing to report.

We will be developing our management training next to support changes and consistency in approach and will be working with managers to make sure that the council's employment policies and practices work for services in a practical way (e.g. adapting ERDP for particular work groups.) But we don't want to be complacent in our approach and think that a few new policies and a bit of training will solve all.

It is important that you speak up if something is wrong. We want to hear from you! We are running an Interchange poll to gather your views. Alternatively if you miss the poll or do not have access, speak to your trade union rep of send your feedback to Kara Morrison, HR Adviser by 26 May 2017. If you want something done, you will have to tell us who you are and how to contact you.



Noticeboard

halfords cycle2work&

Now is your chance to participate in the Cycle2Work Scheme and select a bicycle and safety accessories, taking advantage of the savings available from tax benefits, from Monday 08 May to Friday 23 June 2016.

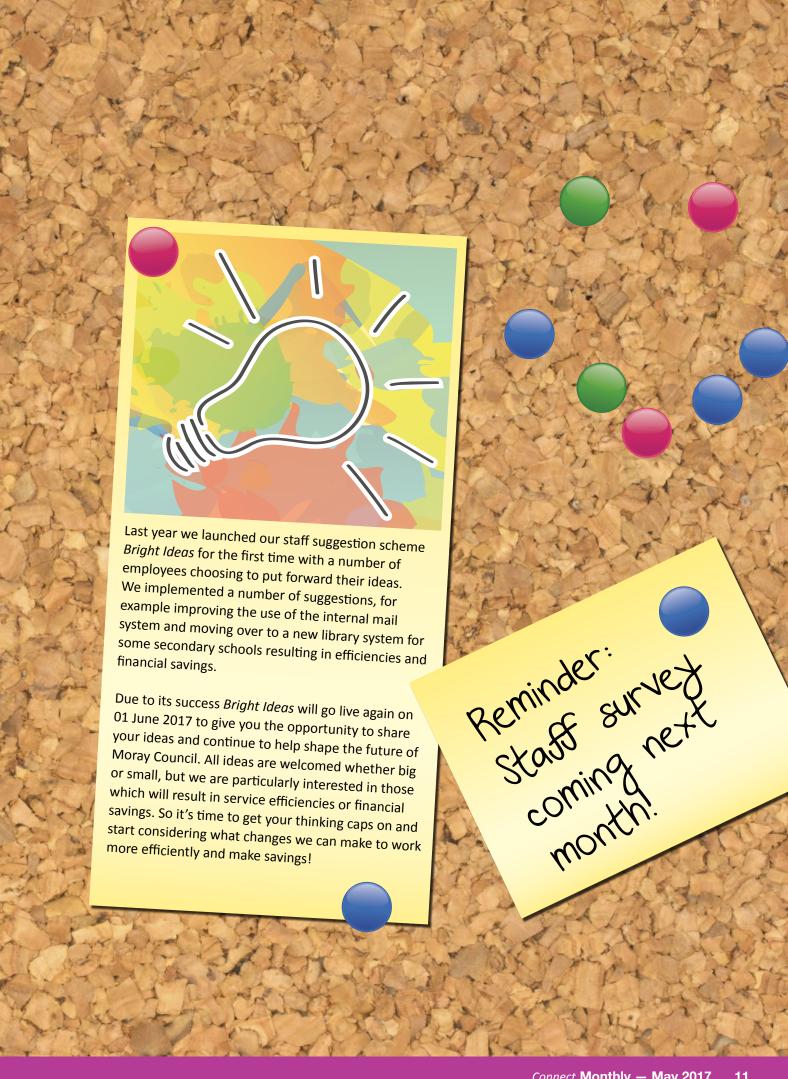
During this period, if an employee* wants to opt into the scheme they should either:

Log on to www.cycle2work.info – use the employer code: MORAYCOUNCILC2W Phone Halfords on 08450 778850

* conditions apply

- 1. have a look at the bicycles and safety accessories available at either the Halfords store, Elgin or online at What to do:
- 3. complete the Halfords Hire Agreement either by phoning Halfords on the above number or logging on to
- 4. print 2 copies of the Hire Agreement (this will be posted to you by Halfords if you apply on the telephone) and sign pages 2 and 6 on work premises (i.e. at your place of work) – this does not need to be co-signed by your line manager – this is done by Human Resources
- 5. return the whole Hire Agreement to Project Team, Personnel Services, Headquarters, Elgin, IV30 1BX
- 6. after processing the Hire Agreement it will be countersigned by Human Resources and a copy sent back to you and a copy filed
- 7. Halfords will issue a Letter of Collection to your home address
- 8. once you receive your Letter of Collection go to Halfords and place your order.





WELCOME ABOARD

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:

<u>connectnews@moray.gov.</u> <u>uk</u>.



Bride-to-be Ladren Smith, Clerical Assistant in Legal and Democratic Services, celebrated with her colleagues ahead of her wedding on Friday 14 April – and here she is on her big day with new husband Dean Walker. Congratulations and best wishes Lauren and Dean!



A new team began work at the start of March to support residents in Moray to maximise their household income. Headed up by Norma Matheson, Benefits Manager, the team members are Rosemary Pannell, Joanne Napier, Keri Hanton and Siobhan Ross.

Jointly funded by us the European Social Fund, the new income maximisation team will help a range of people in Moray aged 16 to 64, including:

- ☐ low income households
- → workless households
- □ lone parents
- residents facing money and debt problems.

The service will specifically target those of a working age, with the team providing basic financial and debt advice to help increase customer financial resilience and the ability to manage personal finances. The team can arrange to meet customers, assess their circumstances and:

- provide assistance with money management, such as help to access bank accounts and online banking; appropriate use of credit and low cost borrowing; making savings; planning for life events (pensions or insurances) and contingency for unexpected bills.
- provide advice on any benefits entitlement and the application process, including help with completing forms
- assist customers with household budgeting
- assist customers with the debt repayment options
- refer to other agencies/services that may be helpful.

Customers can refer themselves by calling 0300 123 4563. Or, if a customer is being referred from a service within the council, a referral form (interchange.moray. gov.uk/downloads/file111354.doc) must be fully completed for each participant and emailed to the team for assessment. All enquiries should be sent to benefitadvice@moray.gov.uk

(please don't contact individual officers.)



EUROPE & SCOTLAND



Something you'll be hearing a lot of over the next year or so is the Growth Fund Bid. This has the potential to trigger significant investment in the area to develop business, housing and infrastructure for Moray, with the inevitable impact on jobs and local prosperity.

The bid is being led by our director of Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure, Rhona Gunn. Both Inverness and Aberdeen have been successful in their City Bids to support development, and being located between the two, Moray is well placed to exploit the Growth Fund for the same purpose.

Work to develop a Moray bid began in late 2016 and an agreement in principle could be possible by late 2017/ early 2018. Much will depend on the extent to which the funding objectives of the UK and Scottish Governments are seen to have been met by the initial bid proposals. If we get an agreement, it will take a further period before the deal is signed off.

The potential prize for Moray is huge. Government funding for the Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire City Deal is worth £250 million over 10 years, with a further £254 million pledged from the Scottish Government for four capital infrastructure projects. The Highland Deal has drawn in £135 million from the Scottish Government and £53 million from the UK Government.

Worth going for!

A full brief on our Growth Fund bid is at this link: interchange.moray.gov.uk/strategytalk

A Real Whodunnit!



Members of the team at Ashgrove Depot decided to do a little something different to fundraise for Macmillan Cancer Research. Organiser Sharon Mair spotted a post about hosting the 'Whodunnit? – A Murder Mystery' evening on the charity's social media site and plans quickly came together for the 1920s-themed big night in, which raised a terrific £126.

"I can't spoil who the murderer was just in case people still have packs to play, but rest assured we got to the bottom of it! Not a bad haul and a great laugh was had by all who attended, as well as raising money for charity," says co-host Anne Taylor.

The festive fundraisers shown here in their fancy dress are: Sharon Mair, Anne Taylor, Jackie Greig, Alannah Jarockyj, Amanda Young, Susanne Greer, Gayle Beck and Stephen Beck.



ARTIQUINS

A meeting of minds has happened between two busy organisations committed to helping adults with learning difficulties.

'Harlequins' and 'Artisans' have merged to form a new organisation 'Artiquins', based at Victoria Crescent, Elgin. The name was suggested by one of the service users, Abigail, who also designed the new logo.

Harlequins was formed back in 1999 to support adults with learning disabilities to experience and take part in performing arts. Artisans was formed in the late '90s with council and European funding also to assist adults with learning disabilities but to work towards SVQs in Arts and Crafts.

With all the changes that have been taking place recently at Victoria Crescent following the merger, this year's Learning Disability week theme – 'Thinking Back-Looking Forward' is spot on. To mark the LD week a series of events are on at Victoria Crescent.

Artiquins will focus on the main aims of the project, but are now able to offer a different type of service to meet individual situations, taking into account people's changing needs and abilities. People attending Artiquins now have the choice of arts, craft, music, drama and dance and enjoy the provision of a more flexible service.

A priority objective for Artiquins is to improve social inclusion. With links to East End School and Andersons Care home, Abbeyvale Care Home and the Moray Resource Centre, this is going to be a major strength of the new organisation.





8 VICTORIA CRESCENT, ELGIN

LEARNING DISABILITY W

DAY?	- SOKING BACK, THINKING FORWARD'	_
TUESDAY	WHATSON	
· OLSDAY	SUMMER SUN - Join Harlequins as they sing and sign some classic summer songs! BROOCH MAKING - Join Artisans to a	TIME?
WEDNESS	to create a simple flower brooch	1.45PM
WEDNESDAY	STAKS IN THEIR EYES - Join Harlequins as they adom	2.15PM
THURSDAY	STARS IN THEIR EYES - Join Harlequins as they adopt a star of their choice and perform their chosen song. CARD CRAFT - Join Artisans to design and create a handmade card.	1.30PM
	The TO MOVE IT! - Join Harlequins 'dance crowd	2.15PM
		1.45PM
11107()	PAPER FOLDING & FACE PAINTING - Join Artists	2.15PM
	Troise. Soin Harlequins and grab an instrument as we 'jam' and make the	1.30PM
Harlequin:	s and Artisans came with the some funky songs!	2.45 DA4

Harlequins and Artisans came under joint registration at the beginning of January - which links perfectly into this years theme! Join us to take part in some activities, find out what we offer here and enjoy a cuppa whilst meeting the service users and staff!

Tuesday 16th - Friday 19th May 2017

FOR ANY QUERIES PLEASE CALL: 01343 559531

Celebrity Snapper





Snapped a celeb? Send in your pics!