

Connect
monthly

**June
2017**

On yer
bike!

moray
council

HeadsUp



Peter Adams, Trading Standards Manager

Dear Colleagues

Picture yourself on a garage forecourt. You've just filled your tank and handed over your hard-earned cash. Have you ever wondered if you've received a full measure of petrol or diesel? Most people don't give it a second thought, and they're right not to worry. You can be confident you will get a fair deal because trading standards laws ensure petrol pumps deliver the correct measure.

This everyday example pinpoints what trading standards all is about – ensuring fair trading so consumers and businesses can trade with confidence.

Most businesses are keen to provide great customer service and we help them with advice on how to comply with the law. We cover a wide range of issues including fair trading, weights and measures, product safety, pricing, tobacco and e-cigarette controls, animal feed and even the safe storage of explosives and petrol. Quite a mixed bag (which reminds me, we also cover regulations on plastic bag charges – please don't hold it against us!)

Unfortunately, there are a minority of businesses who cut corners or deliberately set out to defraud consumers and legitimate businesses. Some of the worst examples are fraudsters who take money from older and vulnerable people in their homes using misleading and aggressive trading practices to sell home or garden maintenance services, and telephone, online and mail scams.

We give high priority to these problems which cause the most harm. Our officers proactively inspect doorstep traders and will attend immediately when possible if problems arise at someone's home.

Our team helps protect individuals who are at risk from fraudsters, including providing 'call-blockers' to filter out scam phone calls. By the way, if you have friends or relatives who may be vulnerable, they can get this service too. You can even become a 'friend against scams' – visit www.friendsagainstsams.org.uk

It's a fast-changing world and our team of seven are busy keeping up with dodgy trading practices. The biggest recent change is the explosion in online and social trade, which now makes up around 30% of sales. Officers have had to develop the skills to find and investigate the online dodgy dealers, including internet surveillance and web site take-downs.

Our team is trained to capture evidence that will stand up in court and to 'follow the money' to find out who is behind that anonymous web-site or social media account. There have been notable successes over the last two years with counterfeit sellers receiving substantial fines, community service orders and their assets seized.

Trading standards have officers with specialist intelligence skills to contribute to the national picture and to analyse local intelligence. We disrupt and prosecute the worst offenders to protect potential victims.

Peter

EDITORIAL

It was Norman Tebbit MP who famously said to the ranks of the unemployed 'get on yer bike' to find work. We're saying it again, but more by way of invitation than instruction. Having said that, some of our colleagues in this month's edition seem to have taken Mr Tebbit at his word, using their wheels to get to work, and then some.

There never has been a better time to cycle; everywhere you go there are dedicated routes, tracks and trails where you can enjoy the freedom of two wheel transport powered only by your legs. Add to that the discount you get as part of the cycle to work scheme, your improved fitness and it's a winner.

I'm sure we'll be elected-out, with the general on the 8th and a local by-election shortly afterwards. Spare a thought for our elections staff who no doubt feel as if they've been doing nothing else for months, and virtually taken up residence in the Elgin Town Hall.

In next month's *Connect*: Tomintoul – gateway to the south



On yer bike!

"I've lost weight - gone down a trouser size - and am much healthier".

Carl Bennet
Cycling Nut!



TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Raymond Shewan
PUBLIC RELATIONS COORDINATOR

Jess Barbier-Marsden
PROJECT OFFICER

Angus McNicholl
DESIGNER

If you're looking for a way to get out and enjoy the summer sun, look no further than fun of the two-wheeled variety. Moray is a fantastic area for cycling, with forest trails and newly-opened cycle paths, plus this year's Cycle2Work (C2W scheme) is now open for entries! You have until 23 June to buy a new bicycle and safety accessories through the salary-sacrifice scheme, and with Bike Week (10-18 June) here now really is the time to pick up some pedal power. A few of our colleagues who have already picked up their wheels with the C2W scheme and love taking their bikes out for a spin have shared their stories with *Connect*.

"It'd be great if it weren't for the cars!"



Bob Ramsay
The biker fae Buckie!

One section of the council's HQ staff have really gone for it. Bob Ramsay, a Research Information Officer (RIO) in HQ, took a chance on the Cycle2Work scheme last year and now has the cycling bug. He said: *"I was interested in getting more active, and the scheme came at the right time."*

Bob now cycles from his home in Buckie to Elgin and back for work around three times a week, and enjoys his new commute. *"It'd be great if it weren't for the cars!"* he jokes. Bob enjoys the cycling so much that he's considering getting another bike through the scheme.

His colleague, Carl Bennett, is also a keen cyclist as a result of the Cycle2Work scheme. In 2015, he got his first bike through a previous employer and entered 'Ride the North', a two-day team cycling event covering 180 miles. *"I've got the bug – now I'm a geek!"* he says. Now cycling to work and back every day, and averaging 100-150 miles per week (*"less if the weather's not nice"*) for fun, Carl is part of two local cycle clubs and finds that cycling is having a positive impact on his life. *"I've lost weight – gone down a trouser size – and am much healthier,"* he says. Even a tumble on an icy patch in December, resulting in a fractured elbow, hasn't kept him away – Carl was back in the saddle eight weeks later and completed the Loch Ness Étape race in Inverness last month.

If you'd like to 'try before you buy', there are a range of cycles that you can borrow from Pat Douglass, Sustainable Transport Officer – including some fun, non-standard bikes. There are two adult scooters, two half-bikes that you steer by leaning, two Elliptigoes (like step machines on wheels), a couple of tandems, child trailers, and recumbent bikes, all available to borrow for free. The bikes were fully funded by Scottish Government's behaviour change programme 'Smarter Choices, Smarter Places'.

Pat says: *"It's to pull people in and capture their interest. It gets them talking to us about facilities that have been put in."*

"The biggest one was the River Lossie cycle path that opened last year – it's seven kilometres of traffic-free cycling and has been very popular so far."

If you fancy testing out what your commute would be like if you decided to cycle in, you can even take a bike home to see how it goes. Pat adds: *"I've been commuting in on one of the Elliptigoes and it's been great! Sometimes it's about showing adults that they can have fun, too."*

If you'd like to book out one of the nifty new bikes or trailers, it's as simple as sending Pat an [email](#).

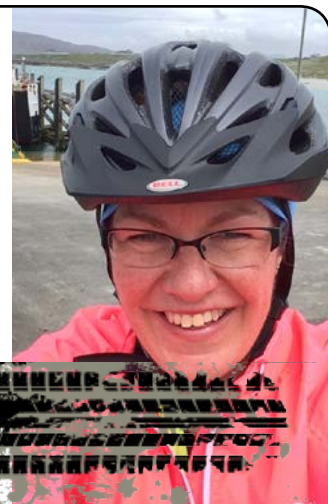
Don Toonen, our Equal Opportunities Officer, is Dutch and continues his country's traditional transport method in Moray: *"I grew up cycling; in Holland everyone cycles,"* he said.

Pat Douglas with one of the 'weird' Elliptigoes you can borrow to have a go yourself.





"I got a road bike through the C2W scheme now I'm 'hooked!'"



Louise Marshall

All the gear, no idea cyclist!

from anyone with suggestions for new routes or who is experiencing issues with existing ones: email your thoughts [here](#), and mark your diaries now for national [Cycle to Work Day](#), coming up on Wednesday 13 September.

If your cycling colleagues have inspired you to 'get on yer bike,' check out the details of the [Cycle2Work](#) scheme.

Louise Marshall, Performance Management & Quality Assurance Officer, has also taken up cycling since the Cycle2Work scheme came about. "I'm a regular 'spinner,' an indoor cyclist, so that's how it all started. I bought a town bike with a basket in first round of the C2W scheme about six years ago and used it for coming to work now and again, and the odd weekend cycles with friends. Last year I got a road bike through the C2W scheme – and things changed to 'hooked!' I'm buying little tool kits and Lycra!" Since getting her road bike, Louise took part in a week-long charity cycling tour of the Outer Hebrides with Elgin Cycling Club covering 391 miles over seven days, taking in six island hops and the Cairngorms National Park. Now that's getting on yer bike!

"We do our shopping on a bike. My parents are keen cyclists – my dad is 86 and my mother 83, and they still cycle every day, at least 100 km a week! They still do their shopping on a bike – it keeps them fit, and mentally fit as well."

"It was a bit of a culture shock to me when I came here 20 years ago; it wasn't that common for people to cycle."

"I've noticed a big difference in the last few years: when car drivers overtake you now, they seem to be more aware about having to leave space. The cycle network here has really made a difference as well."

If you're based in Elgin there is also the option to borrow one of 12 pool bikes (10 at the Annexe, two at Ashgrove) and helmets. They can be taken home overnight or for a weekend to encourage staff to cycle to and from work. For more info on how to book the pool bikes, [click here](#).

Several events are planned for this month's Bike Week, including lunchtime group cycle rides and maintenance classes – including one for women only – provided by Outfit Moray. Keep an eye on the [interchange](#) for more information. To find out more about Active Travel in Moray, visit the [Urban Freedom](#) website for maps and information. The council's Active Travel Strategy was recently approved, and the team is keen to hear

"The cycle network here has really made a difference as well."



Don Toonen

Master chief bikalist



24Hr Challenge

Cycling the entire breadth of the Scottish mainland would be a daunting enough prospect for most of us.

Doing it inside the space of 24 hours – and across some pretty rugged terrain – stretches the imagination even further.

But that is what two council colleagues are planning later this month in support of a fund-raising drive to equip police vehicles with life-saving heart defibrillators.

Ian Walker and Shaun Kerr will saddle up and ride the 240 miles from Ardnamurchan on the west coast to Boddam, near Peterhead, on the east coast..

Bike Ranger

Countryside ranger Ged Connell is bolstering Moray Council's green credentials by opting for pedal power as he does his rounds of the area's designated trails.

He has swapped the ranger service's 4x4 truck for a bike on which he carries out inspection work on the Speyside Way long-distance path and the Moray Coast Trail.

The bike is ideal for accessing the more remote stretches of footpaths across the area.

Ged, who has been with the council for 17 years, is a team of one and is responsible for all aspects of maintenance of the routes which are used by thousands of cyclists and walkers every year.

Lone ranger Ged saddles up on his robust mountain bike which is now part of the council's transport fleet and expects to cover around 800 miles a year on two wheels rather than four.

Although he will still require the truck for much of his day-to-day duties, the bike will help cut down on the council's fuel bill and reduce its carbon footprint even further.

"Having the bike is not only more environmentally friendly, it also allows me to interact more closely with the people who use all of our trails," said Ged. "I will be able to meet more people as I do my rounds and let them know about underfoot conditions, where to see local wildlife and tell them about the local heritage."

As if the distance alone was not a big enough challenge, the route will involve ascents of more than 13,000ft – the equivalent of climbing Ben Nevis three times.

Ian and Shaun will cycle coast-to-coast via Fort William, Aviemore, Tomintoul, Huntly and Turriff.

The pair, who work in Housing and Property, will have full back-up support during their trip from another colleague, Stewart Taylor, who is something of an expert in bike maintenance.

Ian is a regular cyclist and bikes to work every day and has also undertaken a couple of long-distance 24-hour rides for charity in the past.

Hillwalking is Shaun's main passion but he took up cycling to help him maintain his fitness and it was on a leisurely outing with a group of cycling workmates that he and Ian got talking about endurance routes.

"Ian mentioned the coast-to-coast route and I was very keen to try it myself," said Shaun. "I would say I am both excited and a bit terrified."

Although endurance cycling is nothing new to Ian, he knows it will be tough.

"It is as much a mental challenge as a physical effort, having to sit and pedal all day, sometimes feeling ecstatic, other times being down in the dumps."

The money they raise will go to Kieran's Legacy, set up by the parents of Milntonduff teenager Kieran McKandie who was tragically killed in an accident while mountain biking last year.

The first responder vehicle on the scene did not have a defibrillator and the aim of the fund is to install the life-saving machines in all emergency service vehicles.

Moray Council's environmental protection manager, Colin Bell, said: *"We knew Ged was a keen cyclist anyway and providing him with a bike for his routine inspection patrols had been spoken of for a while."*

"We are delighted that he now has the bike which is very much in keeping with the council's policy of reducing its carbon footprint wherever possible."

The council already has a fleet of pool bikes at its headquarters in Elgin which are available for use by staff.



There will be another 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:

Phone Halfords on 08450 778850 or log on to www.cycle2work.info – use the employer code, MORAYCOUNCILC2W (conditions apply).

WHAT TO DO:

- ☞ have a look at the bicycles and safety accessories available at either the Halfords store, Elgin or online at www.halfords.com
- ☞ decide how much you need to spend
- ☞ complete the Halfords Hire Agreement either by phoning Halfords on the above number or logging on to www.cycle2work.info
- ☞ 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
- ☞ return the whole Hire Agreement to Project Team, Personnel Services, Headquarters, Elgin, IV30 1BX
- ☞ after processing the Hire Agreement it will be countersigned by Human Resources and a copy sent back to you and a copy filed
- ☞ Halfords will issue a Letter of Collection to your home address
- ☞ once you receive your Letter of Collection go to Halfords and place your order.

The council's commitment to green travel has won it recognition as a cycle friendly employer.

The award has come from Cycling Scotland and is the latest feather in the cap for sustainable transport officer Pat Douglass and her colleagues in the transportation section.

Separate awards have been given to the main HQ building and the annexe, both of which have facilities to encourage staff to cycle to and from work.

The HQ Annexe and Ashgrove have a pool of bikes which staff can use to cycle between sites in Elgin.

In order to qualify for the award, employers have to demonstrate that they are doing everything possible to encourage cycling and to provide all the necessary facilities for cyclists.

The council was assessed earlier this year and both the main HQ building and the annexe passed the strict checks with flying colours.

Transportation manager Nicola Moss said: *"We are working hard to encourage people to travel to work and on short work journeys by bike rather than getting behind the wheel of a car."*

"It is great to see the commitment of so many people across the council recognised by others."

How safe are we?

Safer Communities is a priority of the Community Planning Partnership in its ten-year plan, 'Moray 2026'.

Community Safety is there to 'protect people's rights to live in confidence without fear for their own or other people's safety. It's to ensure that people are safe from crime, disorder and danger, and free from injury and harm'.

Current priorities are reducing violence, anti-social behaviour, alcohol abuse, and improve road and fire safety. We're also looking at domestic abuse, online safety, social exclusion and community capacity building.

The current Moray 2026 plan will be replaced in time by the emerging Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This covers the whole of Moray. One or more of the new Locality Plans will cover a much smaller area and be targeted at the specific issues in an area. In terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 these plans must be in place from October 2017 and further information will be provided in *Connect* as these plans are finalised.

Why is community safety important? Levels of domestic abuse have increased in Moray in recent years; the impact of this can be very damaging to family life and can affect many areas.

Moray has an issue with alcohol consumption levels, a significant factor in the level of community safety. It's a well-known fact that alcohol abuse will increase the chances of being a perpetrator or victim of crime, or suffering accidental injury in or out of the home.

Moray has an increasingly ageing population, with those 65+yrs anticipated to reach by 40% in the next 10 years; this group are more vulnerable in many ways and the emerging plan will factor this in.

What next?

In developing the Local Outcome Improvement Plan we'll be revising our strategies to reflect current and emerging trends, be more proactive in identifying problems and taking preventative measures.

We all want to live longer, healthier lives safe from crime and danger, see improvement the life chances of children, young people and care for families at risk.

Overall we want Moray to have strong, resilient and supportive communities, remembering that a safe community encourages wellbeing and attracts people and commerce into the area. People of all ages will flourish more readily in a safe environment.



HR Noticeboard

BRIGHT IDEAS

Our staff suggestion scheme Bright Ideas! went live on 01 June giving you the opportunity to share your ideas and help shape the future of Moray Council. All ideas are welcomed whether big or small, but we are particularly interested in those which will result in service efficiencies or financial savings.

We all talk about what we could do to make things more efficient at work or what changes we would make to save money if we were in charge, so now is your opportunity to speak up and share your thoughts. It may be that you have your own idea or perhaps your whole team has an idea – whatever it is we would love to hear it.

Suggestions should be submitted electronically using the suggestion form on [interchange](#). Paper copies have also been provided within depots for employees who do not have access to a PC. All suggestions will be considered and responded to as follows:

Activity	Deadline
Launch of Bright Ideas	Thurs 01 Jun
Deadline for submissions	Fri 28 July
Consideration of ideas	Fri 11 Aug
Invite workforce feedback on short-listed suggestions	Mon 21 Aug until Fri 01 Sept
Display short-listed suggestions at the Employee Conferences	Tues 19 Sept Thurs 28 Sept Tues 03 Oct
Finalise outcomes with CMT	Fri 20 Oct
Respond to and publish Bright Ideas	Fri 03 Nov

We look forward to hearing your ideas!

YOUR VOICE

IT'S LIVE, CLICK HERE

Your Invitation

Employee Conference 2017

Transforming Together

to 1:30pm

Hall,

Check which
conference to
attend: Keith,
Forres or Elgin

REMINDERS!

SUN 18 JUNE:

FATHER'S DAY, PICK UP
A CARD!

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:

connectnews@moray.gov.uk

GREETINGS!

Two groups of new colleagues took part in their corporate inductions in May.

Not pictured – but welcome all the same – are Gemma Daly, Benefits Processor; Chris Gransden, Development Worker (Engagement); and Gemma Pirie, Care Assistant.

Brian Fraser, Supporting Accommodation Manager, joined us from Action for Children in Aberdeen.



Maree Geddes, Housing Support Worker, has been with us for a year – you might recognise her from the [December issue](#)!



Joanna Shirriffs, Senior Project Manager (Education and Social Care), took part in the induction at the start of May.

Karen James, Residential Childcare Support Worker, has been with us for a year and has just had the chance to take part.



Stephen McLeod, Senior Task Supervisor (Criminal Justice), joined in at the early May session as well.

Rachael Bain, Residential Childcare Support Worker, has also had a very busy first year with us.



Paul Borland, Caretaker (Cameron Park Brae), also took part in the induction at the beginning of the month.

Molly McGrail has joined us as a Library and Information Assistant at Cullen Library, from a background in the charity sector.



FARE THEE WELLS

There are some fond farewells to be said this month as several long-serving members of staff retire.



Margaret Wilson, Head of Financial Services, who has been with us since the Grampian Regional Council reorganisation in 1996, is looking forward to a three-month road trip around Scotland in her beloved Audi to celebrate her retirement. If you've got any favourite spots she should visit on her travels, drop her a line!



Mark Palmer, Corporate Director for Corporate Services, who has been with us since the days of Grampian Regional Council in 1996, is looking forward to retiring to spend more time cycling and building his dream house.



Raymond Shewan, Public Relations Co-ordinator, who retires after nearly 10 years with us is looking forward to spending more time 'twitching' – a dedicated bird-watcher, he is off to South Africa in the autumn for his next ornithological adventure.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY SHONAGH

The Legal & Democratic Services admin room was in party mode as Shonagh Jancsics, Clerical Assistant WPO, rang in June with birthday bells – turning 60! Many happy returns.



DEPARTING DUO

Farewells have also been said to Lorraine Sutherland, a social worker who retired in December 2016, and to Norma Burley from Business Support, who retired in March 2017. Norma had been with us since 1991 at the Gordon Street office as clerical admin and received an Employee Recognition Award in 2013 for customer service. Lorraine retired after 21 years with us, working with children and families.



40 YEARS FOR MARY

Mary Watt, a Social Care Assistant, celebrated her 40th anniversary with the Care at Home Department in 09 May. At 72, Mary is the longest serving member of staff in the department – and she has no intention just now of retiring! Mary began in 1977 and back then she didn't even have an interview; the local GP recommended her. Mary (second left) with her colleagues in the Lossiemouth Care Team celebrates her achievement with a small presentation at Lossiemouth Medical Practice.

Making dreams possible



Staff at the Cedarwood Day Centre in Elgin have rallied round to help a young cancer sufferer realise her dreams in the time she has left. They raised £750 for five-year-old Eileidh Paterson's 'bucket list' by holding a spring ball. Eileidh and her mum Gail were presented with the proceeds by day service co-ordinator Evelyn Griffiths and service users at Cedarwood.

Her 'bucket list' includes swimming with dolphins, being a zookeeper for a day, seeing real snow and having a wedding. Eileidh, from Forres, was diagnosed with neuroblastoma when she was just two and despite intensive treatment, including a clinical trial in the US, has relapsed three times.

Purple Day

Alzheimer's Purple Day 2017 collection fundraiser was exceeded from the £700 raised last year as a greater awareness is now filtering through with people touched by the condition. Shona Morrison joined Lorna Creswell to support the charity and to meet some of the staff as they shared their own lived stories.

A huge thanks to the staff in HQ and Annexe buildings for their generous donations.



YOUR VOICE

THE SURVEY IS LIVE...

So take this opportunity to have your say!

It's available [online](#) and on paper.

In 2015, 1 in 3 staff shared their voice and their views, which was up 6% from 2013, and we believe we can do better in 2017 – let's make a difference. There is no point saying 'nothing ever changes' if you are not prepared to speak up.

Take 10 minutes to complete your survey now and watch the survey-ometer on the [interchange](#) to see which service is top of the leader board on survey returns.

Rhona Gunn, Corporate Director, has been out and about meeting the workforce and is determined to continue to improve issues for the workforce across the council. Rhona says, *"I really hope that our employees will share with us how they feel about work. We have worked hard to make changes to improve things based on the 2015 results, including team meetings and ERDPs. Additional targeted work was done with a number of teams in Environmental Services and I am interested to hear how we can continue to make things better both in these teams and across the whole workforce."*

Laurence Findlay, Corporate Director says, *"I know that things have been tough for people working across education and social work services with pressure of workload and shortage of resources. Our colleagues across Moray make a real difference and I want to be able to support them by listening to what they say in the survey and making improvements where I can. I'd really like our response rate to tip the 50% mark – and if we can get a higher percentage than the other services that would be the cherry on the cake!"*

Please take a few minutes to make Your Voice count.



YOUR CHANCE TO SPEAK UP...
EMPLOYEE SURVEY JUNE 2017



Representing the two teams playing the first inter-department 'friendly' match are Gary Munro, Mark Aldridge, Allan Robertson and David Sweeney. Hoping to keep his coloured cards in his pocket for the game is referee Darren Westmacott.

COONCIL CUP



With no World Cup or European championships this summer, life may not seem worth living for followers of the beautiful game.

But there is nothing that football fans hate more than a vacuum.

And so, to fill the gaping hole, players young – and some not so young – from across the council will be taking part in a challenge match for the coveted Cooncil Cup.

In what promises to be a game of two halves, the Property and Maintenance Select will pit their skills against Facilities' finest at Pinefield in Elgin. Kick-off is at 4:45pm on Friday 09, and spectators are welcome.

The match will be refereed by Darren Westmacott who will have his work cut out and has been busy polishing his yellow and red cards in eager anticipation.

Both sides have been tight-lipped about their team selections but they have been leaked to *Connect* and we can reveal exclusively the line-ups, which are:

Property and Maintenance – Allan Robertson, Chris Clare, Colin Urquhart, David Sweeney, Duncan MacLean, Eddie Milne, Gary Leslie, Graeme Davidson, Ian Walker, Mark Kidd, Ronnie Macdonald, Scott Little, Stewart Taylor.

Facilities – Gary Munro, Peter Wilson, Gordon McCluskey, Ronnie Taylor, Bryan Attridge, James Thomson, Andy McKenzie, Peter Leeman, Alistair Cameron, Charlie Watt, Stuart McQuaker, Colin Hutchison, Chris Robertson, Mark Aldridge, Harry Gordon, Martin Beattie, Alan Johnstone, Grahame Davidson.

There will be no oranges at half-time (only beer), and a bottle of whisky will go to the best player on either side thanks to a generous donor.

The post-match analysis will take place in the Muckle Cross immediately after the final whistle and all WAGS and hangers-on are cordially invited.